

Father Goffine's instructions for the 7th Sunday after Pentecost.

From the *Explanation of the Epistles and Gospels* by Father Leonard Goffine. Imprimatur: Rt. Rev. Joseph F. Mooney, V.G. September 28, 1918. (Copyright 1880):



At the Introit the Church invites us to give praise to God in the following words: Oh, clap your hands, all ye nations: shout unto God with the voice of joy. For the Lord is most high, he is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth. (*Ps.* xlvi.) Glory &c.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH. O God, whose providence is unerring in what it ordains, we humbly beseech Thee to put away from us all hurtful things, and to give us all things which will profit us. Thro'.

EPISTLE. (*Rom.* vi., 19-23.) BRETHREN, I speak a human thing, because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity unto iniquity, so now yield your members to serve justice unto sanctification. For when you were the servants of sin, you were free from justice. What fruit therefore had you then in those things, of which you are now ashamed? For the end of them, is death. But now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end life everlasting. For the wages of sin is death. But the grace of God, life everlasting, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

EXPLANATION. St. Paul here admonishes the Romans who had been converted to Christianity, but were still sensual and weak, that they ought to be much more zealous in serving God and mastering their passions. He demands of them that they should at least strive, now as hard to save their souls as they once did to destroy them. This certainly is but right, for many a man would become just and holy if he would do as much for heaven, as he does for sin and hell. But to know how wholesome it is to consecrate themselves to justice and sanctity, he wishes them to consider what advantage they derived from sin. Nothing is gained from it but shame, confusion, sorrow, and death, but by a pious life, God's grace and eternal life. - Often consider this, Christian soul, and do not defile yourself by sins, which profit nothing, but bring shame, grief, and the retributive wrath of God.

GOSPEL. (*Matt.* vii. 15-21.) AT THAT TIME, Jesus said to his disciples: Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves: by their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them. Not every one that saith to me: Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Who are the false prophets?

Those seducers who under an appearance of virtue and honesty lure innocent, simple souls from the right path, and lead them to vice and shame; who by sweet words, such as: “God is full of love, and will not be severe on sin, He does not require so very much of us, He knows we are weak, and if a person sins, he can be converted,” seek to steal from souls all modesty and fear of God. Guard against such hypocrites, for they have the poison of vipers on their tongues. By the false prophets are also understood those who propagate error, who by superficial words degrade the true faith, who speak always of love and liberty, and who under the pretence of making people free and happy bring many a soul to doubt and error, depriving it of true faith and peace of heart.

How can we know the false prophets?

By their works; for evil, corrupted men can produce only bad fruit. If we look into their life we will find that at heart they are immoral hypocrites who observe external propriety only that they may the more easily spread their poison. The false teachers and messengers of error may be known by their lives, but especially by their intentions, which are to subvert all divine order, and to put the unrestrained lust of the flesh and tyranny in its place.

Who else are understood by the false prophets?

Those who under pretence of making men happy and rich, induce the credulous to make use of superstition, of wicked arts, deceit, and injustice; especially those who under the deceiving appearance of liberty and equality, independence and public good, incite them to open or secret revolt against civil and ecclesiastical authority.

Be not deceived by these so-called public benefactors who look always to their own advantage, but trust in God, support yourself honestly, live like a Christian, and you will find true liberty and happiness here and hereafter.

Why does Christ say: “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire?”

He warns us that faith without good works is not sufficient for salvation; and he therefore adds; Not every one that saith: Lord, Lord (who outwardly professes himself my servant, but is not really such) shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who, (by the fulfilment of the duties of his state of life and by the practice of good works), does the will of my Father, merits heaven. Strive then, Christian soul, to fulfil God's will in all things, perform your daily duties with a good intention, and you will certainly obtain the kingdom of heaven.

INSTRUCTION ON GOOD WORKS

What are good works?

All the actions of man which are performed according to the will of God, while in the state of grace, for the love of God.

Which are the principal good works?

Prayer, fasting, and alms deeds. These are especially inculcated in holy Scripture. (*Tob.* xiii. 8.) By prayer is here understood all religious services; by fasting all mortification of soul and body; by alms-deeds all works of charity.

How many kinds of charitable works are there?

Two kinds: spiritual and corporal.

Which are the spiritual works of mercy?

Those that are performed for the good of the soul: to admonish sinners; to teach the ignorant; to counsel the doubtful; to console the afflicted; to suffer injustice patiently; to forgive all injuries, and to pray for the living and the dead.

Which are the corporal works?

Those which are performed for the good of the body: to feed the hungry; to give drink to the thirsty; to clothe the naked; to visit and ransom the captives; to harbor the harborless; to visit the sick; and to bury the dead.

Can we be saved without good works?

No, for Christ expressly, says: Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. The servant in the gospel who did not even waste the talent received, but only hid it in the ground, was therefore cast into outer darkness. How greatly do those err who hope to reach heaven, simply because they do no evil! Of this great mistake St. Chrysostom plainly says: "If you had a servant who was in truth no robber, no glutton or drunkard, but who sat at home idle, neglecting everything for which you had employed him, would you not pay him with the whip and send him off? Is it not bad enough to neglect that which duty demands?" Such a servant is the Christian who, doing neither good nor evil, makes himself thereby unfit for heaven which is the reward of work performed, and if no work has been done, no reward is to be expected.

SUPPLICATION. O Lord, guard me from false prophets, heretics, and seducers, and grant me the grace, that according to St. Paul's instructions I may become fruitful in all good works. Inflammé my heart, that I may adorn my faith with them, thus do the will of the Heavenly Father, and render myself worthy of heaven.

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