

31st Sunday in Ordinary Time November 4th 2017

IN today's scriptures Jesus and the Old testament prophet Malachi speak challenging words to those leaders who have been pretenders. These leaders were given a sacred trust. Instead they put on costumes of importance and prestige but instead of serving others they demanded service from others. Jesus is not only warning church leaders not to be actors or hypocrites but is speaking to all of us here as well

The Pharisees did not practice what they preached. There is a bit of the Pharisee in all of us. The Lord says "their words are bold, but their deeds are few" We all have a gap between what we say, and what we do.

We hold our leaders to high standards. (as we should) but we make many exceptions for ourselves. We expect competence from sales people, professionals, fellow workers, but excuse ourselves with *great frequency*. We write abusive letters of complaint to others, but are ourselves easily insulted. We question others' motives and good faith but are ready to litigate if anyone dares to question our own. We excuse little in anybody else but will always find an excuse for ourselves.

This should give us all a healthy dose of humility. One thing that is central to the lives

of all the saints is humility when we acknowledge that we all fall short of the glory of God ,and are all in need of grace. Suppose there were no written Gospels and the only source from which people could learn about Christ was ourselves , what conclusion would they draw about Jesus from us.

Every time we come to Mass , the Lord calls us to take off our masks and costumes and to let the Word of God work within us , to make our life a living Gospel for all people to hear and to see. To grow in Christ ,we never have to be afraid of the truth about ourselves. We only have to be afraid of the masks we wear, If there is a little bit of the Phrisee in us , there is also a little bit of Christ. In each of us.

Which one are we letting grow? AMEN