

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE FESTIVAL OF HOLY CROSS
(OCTOBER 15TH 2006)

Dearly beloved:

Next Sunday, October 15th, is the Fifth Sunday after the Festival of Holy Cross. In the Holy Gospel reading, Jesus tells His disciples that “*Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted*”.

In today’s Gospel, we hear one of the hard sayings of Jesus, “you are not to be called Rabbi, for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth father, for you have one Father and he is in heaven. Neither call anyone teacher, for you have one Teacher, the Christ. He who is greatest among you shall be your servant.

Jesus rebukes the Scribes and Pharisees for their showy practices. They made the practice of their faith a burden for the people they were supposed to serve. As our achen said last Sunday, Pharisees wanted to live by rules of the Bible, which for them was the Law of Moses. Most of them had memorized it. And their rabbis had set it out in 613 rules, which they thought must be obeyed to please God. It was very burdensome for ordinary people. These rules were heavy burdens; hard to bear, they laid them on the shoulders of others. They do all their deeds to be seen by others. They love to have places of honour at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues. Jesus said, “My yoke (discipline) is easy, and my burden is light. We should not make religion a burden to the faithful.

We have to practice what we preach. The Pharisees teach but do not practice what they teach. Lots of us are like that. Christianity is not just for exhortations and advices, but a way to lead a righteous life. Humility is the basis for all good virtues.

Jesus showed us the way by lowering Himself as a servant for our sake. He humbled himself, even to death on a cross. The humble do not trust in themselves, but trust in God and in the power of His love. True humility is a servant-like quality, which enables one to place his or her life at the service of God and others.

“Lord, teach us your way of servanthood and humility that we may love as You have loved. Fill us with the joy of servanthood that we may inspire others to walk in Your way of happiness and holiness”.

Please read the following Bible verses, in preparation for this Sunday's commemoration.

Bible readings for Sunday, October 15th 2006.
(Fifthth Sunday After the Festival of Holy Cross)

Before Holy Qurbana:

Leviticus	-	2: 1-3
Psalms	-	46: 1-11
Isaiah	-	40: 27-31

Holy Qurbana

General Epistles:	Acts	-	22: 22-29
Epistles of St. Paul:	I Timothy	-	6: 13-21
Holy Gospel:	St. Matthew	-	23: 1-12

With prayers,
Thomas Alex