

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE FESTIVAL OF THE ASCENSION OF ST. MARY
(AUGUST 20TH 2006)

Dearly beloved:

Next Sunday, August 20th is the First Sunday after the Festival of the Ascension of St. Mary (Shoonoyo). The Holy Gospel reading for this Sunday is about Jesus telling the people three different parables and advises.

Jesus' parables for today's readings allude to the proverb: *Without vision, the people perish* (proverbs 29: 18). The illustration of a blind man leads a blind man to disaster. We can only teach others what we have been taught ourselves. And how can we help others overcome their faults if we are blinded by our own faults?. If we are to be guides and teachers for others, then we must have a clear vision with direction. Our judgment of others is usually "off the mark" because we cannot see inside a person. We do not have access to all the facts, our unreasoning reactions of people are influenced by instinct. It is easier to find fault in others than in oneself. Jesus here states a heavenly principle that "what you give to others or how you treat others will return to you".

Jesus also advises the people that every tree is known by its' fruit and people do not pick fig fruits from thorn trees and grapes from wild bushes. There is no doubt that a good tree does not bear bad fruit and a bad tree does not bear good fruit. Jesus set figs and grapes over against thorns and wild bushes. The fig tree was the favorite of all trees for the people of Palestine. It symbolized fertility, peace and prosperity. Grapes likewise produced wine, the symbol of joy. Thorns and wild bushes were only good for burning for fire. There is a proverbial saying that *a tree is known by its fruit*. Likewise, a person will produce good or bad fruit depending on what is in their heart.

○ Lord, give us the humility which realizes its ignorance, admits its mistakes and help us always to praise rather than to criticize, to sympathize rather than to discourage, to build rather than to destroy".

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

Bible readings for Sunday, August 20th, 2006.
(First Sunday After Shoonoyo)

Before Holy Qurbana:

Exodus	-	14: 21-31
I Samuel	-	8: 4-9
Isaiah	-	43: 1-5

Holy Qurbana

General Epistles:	I John	-	2: 22-29
Epistles of St. Paul:	Ephesians	-	6: 10-17
Holy Gospel:	St. Luke	-	6: 39-45

With prayers,
Thomas Alex