

Readings: Saint AUGUSTINE, Bishop, Doctor, Memorial

First Reading: 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13

You recall, brothers and sisters, our toil and drudgery.
Working night and day in order not to burden any of you,
we proclaimed to you the Gospel of God.
You are witnesses, and so is God,
how devoutly and justly and blamelessly
we behaved toward you believers.
As you know, we treated each one of you as a father treats his children,
exhorting and encouraging you and insisting
that you walk in a manner worthy of the God
who calls you into his Kingdom and glory.

And for this reason we too give thanks to God unceasingly,
that, in receiving the word of God from hearing us,
you received it not as the word of men, but as it truly is, the word of God,

which is now at work in you who believe.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 139:7-8, 9-10, 11-12ab

R/ You have searched me and you know me, Lord.

Where can I go from your spirit?
From your presence where can I flee?
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;

if I sink to the nether world, you are present there.

R/ You have searched me and you know me, Lord.

If I take the wings of the dawn,
if I settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
Even there your hand shall guide me,
and your right hand hold me fast.

R/ You have searched me and you know me, Lord.

If I say, "Surely the darkness shall hide me,
and night shall be my light!"
For you darkness itself is not dark,
and night shines as the day.

R/ You have searched me and you know me, Lord.

Introduction to Gospel Reading

We probably agree with Jesus' strong condemnation of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. But hypocrisy is still with us today. The whitewashing of tombs goes on, and from an individual corruption it has pervaded society itself. The wrongs of the state, and the Church too, are covered up. Injustices and exploitation are passed over in silence or are condemned in such general terms that even oppressors agree. We close our eyes and our consciences are undisturbed because we think we have no share in the evil that goes on. Our deeds do not match our words.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 23:23-26

Jesus said:

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites.
You pay tithes of mint and dill and cummin,
and have neglected the weightier things of the law:
judgment and mercy and fidelity.
But these you should have done, without neglecting the others.
Blind guides, who strain out the gnat and swallow the camel!

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites.
You cleanse the outside of cup and dish,
but inside they are full of plunder and self-indulgence.
Blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup,

so that the outside also may be clean."
