



MEDITATIONS FOR LENT by Father Robbie Low

SECOND WEEK OF LENT – TUESDAY Matthew 23: 1-12

This, I have to tell you, isn't getting any easier for the preacher.....

Jesus says: *'Practise what you preach.'* Don't load it up on other people while you go and do something else while 'whistling Dixie' to cover your tracks.

You only have to tune in to some of those awful cable channels where men in shiny suits and 'lifestyle' theology drum up a storm and soak the poor to know what Jesus is on about. You know it's not the real deal- like the tough talking Catholic ascetic, laying it on the faithful while, back at his ranch there could be found, on any particular day, his enviable collection of Harley Davidsons and a queue of young women who weren't there for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Mercifully, living a double life is beyond the energies or aspirations of most of us. But I put my hand up to the charge of hypocrisy. Like most of my fellow pilgrims, I assent to the highest of standards – God's standards – and regularly and embarrassingly fall short of them. An eavesdropper on my confession would be reassured of my humanity but less than convinced of my sanctity.

So, when I preach to you, know that the first person I am preaching to is ME. The preacher is a channel for God's Word. It follows then that it should not pass through him without doing at least some damage to his pride. His aim is not to share his personal opinions on whatever but to elucidate the Word. If he does this then, whether you like him or not, you have no complaints. If you choose a preacher because, in St Paul's words, he 'tickles your ears' i.e. says what you want to hear, then, brothers and sisters, you will get what you deserve. And a personal chaplain to your ego is unlikely to be a trailblazer on the path of holiness and virtue.

We are all, I trust, in pursuit of integrity, wholeness, an unity of body, mind and soul. What I say is what I do is what I am. Ideally we should not be able to put a

cigarette paper between the three. In places where you can get a big fat Corona cigar and a case of wine in the gaps, it's time to take action.

Spiritual exercise: Choose one of the gaps and do some work on it.