



**Five Important Spiritual Thoughts from the Liturgy of the Word  
...and follow up for the Secular Franciscan  
January 12 – January 18**

**1 – “If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”** (Ps 95:7c-8)

...How well do I listen to the words of Scripture?

**2 -- “We have never seen anything like this.”** (Mk 2:12)

...Jesus is still a force in Christians’ lives. Has Jesus’s doctrine permeated everything I do?

**3 – “The word of God is living and effective.”** (Heb 4:12)

...Do I live by the word of God?

**4 -- “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”** (Mk 2:27)

Extended meditation:

**THE IMPORTANCE OF PEOPLE**

**‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least brothers of mine, you did for me.’  
(Matthew 25:40)**

**“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”  
(Mk 2:27)**

There is little doubt that one of the great Popes of all time was a most recent one, St. Pope John Paul II. He was known for trying to bring the whole world together by his many travels. Perhaps the most inspiring visit that he ever made was on December 27, 1983 and not to any country, but to an Italian prison. He made it not to a multitude of people, but to one man by the name of Mehmet Ali Agca who had tried to kill Pope John Paul two and a half years before. Pope John Paul, recognizing Jesus in him, completely forgave him. Pope John Paul was living out what Jesus said in the Gospel. Other people may not act like Jesus, but they are Jesus. **Whatever you do to others, you do to me.** These may be the most radical words that Jesus ever spoke.

## SHAPING THE FRANCISCAN FOOTPRINT

by Father Mike Scully OFM Cap., Regional Spiritual Assistant



One of the best ways to improve our spiritual lives is to think about what should be guiding our behavior at the moment of our deaths. The Hebrew religious mind would expect Jesus to say that at the judgment at the end of our lives we should be following the Law of Moses that which was the criterion of everything the devout Jewish person did in Jesus's day. When Jesus spoke of the judgment, he did not mention the Law of Moses.

The religious person might expect Jesus to say that we should be thinking of God in some form, the God whose name was so sacred to the Hebrew people that they would not even pronounce it. The religious people would have thought that at the end of our lives, Jesus would say something about that God, their approaches to God, their lives with God, the name they used for God. Jesus did not mention God.

In fact, Jesus did not mention the Law; he did not mention tradition, he did not refer to the prophets, the patriarchs, religious practices and prayers, synagogue, church, none of these. Instead, when it came down to the final analysis of a person, when judgment had to be made concerning what a person had done, at that moment, the most sacred of all moments in a person's whole life, Jesus says *everything* depends on **how much the person has given to others**. The whole after-life depends on giving to people. That is, how a person gives to others will be the measure that a person will be measured with for all eternity. That was an absolutely incredible statement for a Hebrew religious leader to make.

And, as if that was not enough to shock people, Jesus even goes further than that. He talks about *the least* brothers and sisters. Perhaps we can define "least" to be the way we view "least" in our view of things. That is, those who criticize us, those who do not like us, those who refuse to understand us, those who are evil, those who do bad things, those who are terrorists, those who are unable to understand the evil of their actions, those who have serious addiction problems, those who hate our families, those who are so sick that they do not know what they are doing, those who have no homes and look so helpless. We must give even to the least brothers and sisters.

### **5 – "Looking around at them with anger and grieved at their hardness of heart..." (Mk 3:5)**

...In his human nature, Jesus was very upset with those who would not listen to his words... Am I listening and following the way I should?