



**Five Important Spiritual Thoughts from the Liturgy of the Word
...and follow up for the Secular Franciscan
February 23 – March 1**

1 -- "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." (Lk 9:23)

...Deny, Cross and Follow: the way of the Spiritual Life. Am I doing it?

2 -- "Follow me." (Lk 5:27)

...The Lord's words to Levi have also been spoken to me to be a Secular Franciscan. Am I truly following the Lord?

3 -- "Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil." (Mt 4:1)

...Like us, Jesus was tempted, and said "no" to the temptation with quotes from Scripture. Is Scripture and especially the Gospels part of my life?

4 -- "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." (Mt 25:40)

...Really, how do I treat the people in my acquaintance?

5 -- "This is how you are to pray: 'Our Father who art in heaven...'" (Mt 6:9) ...When I pray the Our Father, do I think of the words?

Special Meditation

The Songs of Meaning

"Waiting On the World to Change"

WAITING TO CHANGE

The Gospel

MATTHEW 23:16-22

[Jesus said,] "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'If one swears by the temple, it means nothing, but if one swears by the gold of the temple, one is obligated.' Blind fools, which is greater, the gold, or the temple that made the gold sacred? And you say, 'If one swears by the altar, it means nothing, but if one swears by the gift on the altar, one is obligated.' You blind ones, which is greater, the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? One who swears by the altar swears by it and all that is upon it, one who swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it; one who swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who is seated on it."

The Media

"Waiting on the World to Change"

John Mayer

"They say we stand for nothing and there's no way we ever could. Now we see everything that's going wrong with the world and those who lead it. We just feel like we don't have the means to rise above and beat it, so we keep waiting, waiting on the world to change. It's hard to beat the system when we're standing at a distance. Now if we had the power to bring our



neighbors home from war, they would have never missed a Christmas, no more ribbons on their door, and when you trust your television, what you get is what you got, 'cause when they own the information, oh, they can bend it all they want. One day our generation is gonna rule the population, so we keep on waiting."

Criticizing authority is a dangerous thing among people who are prone to violence, even when the criticism is correct. Jesus knew that, but he felt compelled to let those in charge of religious thought know that they were doing wrong. He called them "blind" and "fools," strong language for a man who called himself dedicated to God. He attacked their religious laws with abandon, making fun of their sacred traditions and practices. His decision to criticize later brought about his death.

Every once in a while, modern music decides to make a statement about misuse of authority. Such is the case with John Mayer's song "Waiting on the World to Change." The person in the song is aware that the older generation is criticizing those who are young for being lazy and without principle. But at the same time, the young people see what is happening in the world, and they cannot help criticizing, saying that someday all their criticism will lead them to do something.

What do you do about the evil you cannot change? You criticize by calling attention to what should be, and you wait for the chance to change that evil when you have an opportunity to do it. Jesus paid a price, but he set up a Kingdom that led people back to God. The person in John Mayer's song is promising to change the evil when his generation is in charge.

But future change is not the only thing that is necessary. Even as we are criticizing, saying that we will change the future, our lives right now must show that we are willing to fight the evil, and change what must be changed in ourselves. We may have to wait to change some of the evil in our lives because we may not be able to do anything about it with present circumstances, but we can change the evil that we have control over right now--our bad language, our prejudices, and our ill treatment of others.

THOUGHT

What is most in need of change in the world right now?

PRAYER

Good and gracious God, your Son was critical of the people in charge of religious thought in his lifetime because they were leading people to evil. Help us truly desire to change the evil that has crept into our world, and to begin changing evil with our lives right now. Be with us, we pray.