

VIII TRINITY 2019

SERMON-SAINT JOSEPH PARISH

FATHER CRAIG LOONEY

ROMANS 8.12-17 ST. MATTHEW 7.15-21

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It's time again for a visit from our good friend...Hyacinth Bucket. She's the main character in the 1990s British sitcom **Keeping up Appearances** superbly acted by Dame Patricia Routledge. Hyacinth insists on pronouncing her last name *bouquet*.

Hyacinth is married to Richard who is forced to take early retirement from some unspecified position as a local government official. Richard is content living a normal life and has no desire to mingle with aristocracy. Hyacinth can best be described as a social-climbing snob...and Richard tolerates her eccentric behavior to a fault.

Keeping up Appearances is a funny show...and does reflect real-life. We have all known people who try to present themselves as something other than who they really are. Maybe we have even played the part of trying to impress someone into thinking we are more important than we really are.

The problem with Hyacinth is that her life is a lie. All of her scheming and pretending to be something she isn't gets her into trouble. Everyone has figured her out...she is a likeable person...but she is a fraud. In the end Hyacinth is her own worst enemy. It can be the same with us when we play "let's pretend". We will get found out.

The Collect for Purity said at the beginning of every Mass makes it very clear it is not possible for us to keep up appearances with God. We are open books in God's eyes and he knows every chapter and verse. That's a good thing. We want to be open and transparent to God and to others...we want our work to be God's work and for it to be honest...sincere...productive...and to reflect who we really are.

Jesus tells us in the Gospel to be on our guard against false prophets who try to fool us. The warning is directed at anyone who uses the church to achieve fame, glory or power at the expense of others. Jesus says those people might look good on the outside, but inside they are like wild wolves ready to chew us up and spit us out. Their true motives will eventually be found out...their lies cannot produce good works.

The Church is the visible way God makes his presence known to the world. The word **Church** comes from the Greek word *ekklesia* and means **those who are called**. We are all blessed with the gift of the Holy Spirit...beyond which we each have individual gifts that help us do God's work. We want to be seen by our good works...because they glorify God.

Because we are the Church we are supposed to live like those who have been called to live according to God's will. Jesus makes the possibility of heaven a reality for everyone. But he also says not everyone who calls him Lord will go to heaven. Those who do God's will go to heaven.

In the verses from Matthew immediately following today's Gospel reading, Jesus goes on to say...

...“When the Judgment Day comes, many will say to me ‘Lord, Lord’. In your name we spoke God’s message, by your name we drove out demons, and performed miracles. Then will I say to them, ‘I never knew you. Get away from me you wicked people!’”.

We want to do God's will and that means being open to him and to others. It isn't possible to keep up appearances with God. We shouldn't even try. He knows what's in our hearts, our minds, and our souls. That shouldn't frighten us...it should give us peace-of-mind...and encourage us to do our work.

Saint Paul reinforces the idea we should be open with God and others when he tells us the Holy Spirit makes us God's children and by the power of the Holy Spirit we have the same relationship with God that Jesus has...we are able to call God by the name Jesus calls him...*Abba...Papa...Daddy!*

Hyacinth Bucket was all about **Keeping up Appearances**. She was never successful at getting people to think she was an aristocrat. She was always seen for the ordinary person she really was.

We are not about **Keeping up Appearances!** We are about being honest with God. We are about being open books with God and others.

That's how we want to be seen...for who we really are!

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