

## PREOCCUPIED WITH APPEARANCE

*Matthew 23:27-32*

Jesus continues to disapprove the religious leaders of his time, pointing out their faults for giving so much thought to appearances and to what is on the outside, neglecting what is within, what Scripture call the heart. Today, even more than in the time of Jesus, appearances, image, has become all important. People who have a certain image receive excessive admiration and praise. They have the biggest following and, often, some of them get the biggest salaries. We are easily taken in by appearances. Jesus invites us to look a little deeper, which is how God looks. As the we read from Samuel one of the books of the Jewish Scriptures says, ***“man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.”***(1Samuel 16:7)

The “heart” is the seat of the emotions, the intellect and the will. What matters to God is the heart, how we feel, how we think, how and what we desire. We are to bring our feeling, our thoughts, our desires into line with how God feels, how God thinks, what God desires for us. Our hearts are to reflect, in some way, God’s heart, which means Jesus’ heart. As Jesus says in Matthew’s gospel, ***“Learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart.”*** *Matthew 11:29*. It is the Holy Spirit who comes to us from God and the risen Lord who can mould our hearts into images of the Lord’s heart. We pray today that this work of the Spirit will be brought to completion in us