

**"That your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly (Matthew 6 : 4)**

The Greek word for invisibility, κρυπτῶ (kryptō), means to conceal, hide, or keep secret. Therefore, our worship must be done in secret. Jesus warns against practicing righteousness to be seen by others, saying:

**"Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, "that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly" (Mat 6 :1 -4)**

### **Jesus Warns Against Practicing Righteousness to Be Seen by Others:**

The message emphasizes the importance of sincerity in our spiritual practices and warns against doing them for public recognition or approval. Jesus advises us to practice our spiritual disciplines in private to avoid the pursuit of vain glory and to maintain the purity of our intentions.

**Indication of Incorrect Goals:** The motivation behind the pursuit of vain glory is fleeting and useless. Christ our God rejected such glory when He said, **"I do not receive honor from men" (Joh 5 :41)**. Christ is **"The light of the world" (Joh 9 :5)**, and light cannot be hidden. However, He resorted to invisibility, as He said after the Transfiguration: **"Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead" (Mat 17 :9)**. He emphasized that He did not seek glory from men, for He came to teach us and save us, not to impress us. Thus, His teaching was not in secret (John 18:20).

A person who gives charity in public is not aiming to help the poor for God's sake but seeks people's praise and a few words of thanksgiving. Such a person prays not to talk to God but to show others an image of piety and formal religiosity. Similarly, they fast to display their ability to self-control in front of others.

**In public, "they have their reward" (Mat 6:2):** Works of self-righteousness are no longer rewarded and lose their practical spiritual value. A work that does not lead to a result is sterile and meaningless. St. Paul the Apostle says: **"For he is not**

**a Jew who [is one] outwardly, nor [is] circumcision that which [is] outward in the flesh” (Rom 2 :28),** One reason for the weakness of Jewish worship is its focus on the appearance of spiritual life rather than its interior. Public spiritual practices can lead to cunning and malicious sins, arrogance, and love of pretense. Hypocrisy, if it takes hold of us, will destroy us, like **“Dead flies putrefy the perfumer's ointment, And cause it to give off a foul odor; [So does] a little folly to one respected for wisdom [and] honor” (Ecc 10 : 1),** “north” refers to the soul, symbolizing self-righteousness and self-admiration. A person must exercise the means of grace with a sense of unworthiness, always seeking to develop themselves.

**In Secret:** Issued from the heart and not from pretense, prayer, fasting, and charity are spiritual and mental acts of worship in which the body also participates. **“Shut your door and pray to your Father who is in the secret place”** to prevent the world from entering your thoughts. Mar Isaak says: “Let it be known to you that all good will not be acceptable unless it works in secret.”

#### **In Secret:**

**“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3).** Hidden means concealed and not visible, which is an essential feature of spiritual life. The spiritual life is not about outward appearances but about what God sees in secret. We live with Christ, who gives life, and "When Christ, who is our life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory" (Colossians 3:4). We do not separate Christ's teachings from Christ Himself.

Charity is not for the sake of men. **“And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me” (Matthew 25:40).** Therefore, do not give charity out of a desire for praise, thanks, or reciprocation from men. Instead, wait for the Lord Himself to reward you for your charity, and your heavenly Father will reward you openly.

#### **God Sees in Secret:**

**“Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him? says the LORD; "Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the LORD” (Jer 23:24).** Our teacher St. Paul the Apostle says: **“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God” (1Cor 4:5).** **“On the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel” (Rom 2:16),** acceptable worship is that in secret: **“but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God” (Rom 2:29).**

Our teacher, Saint Peter, asks Christian wives to live in holiness with inner adornment: **“rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God” (1Peter 3:4).**