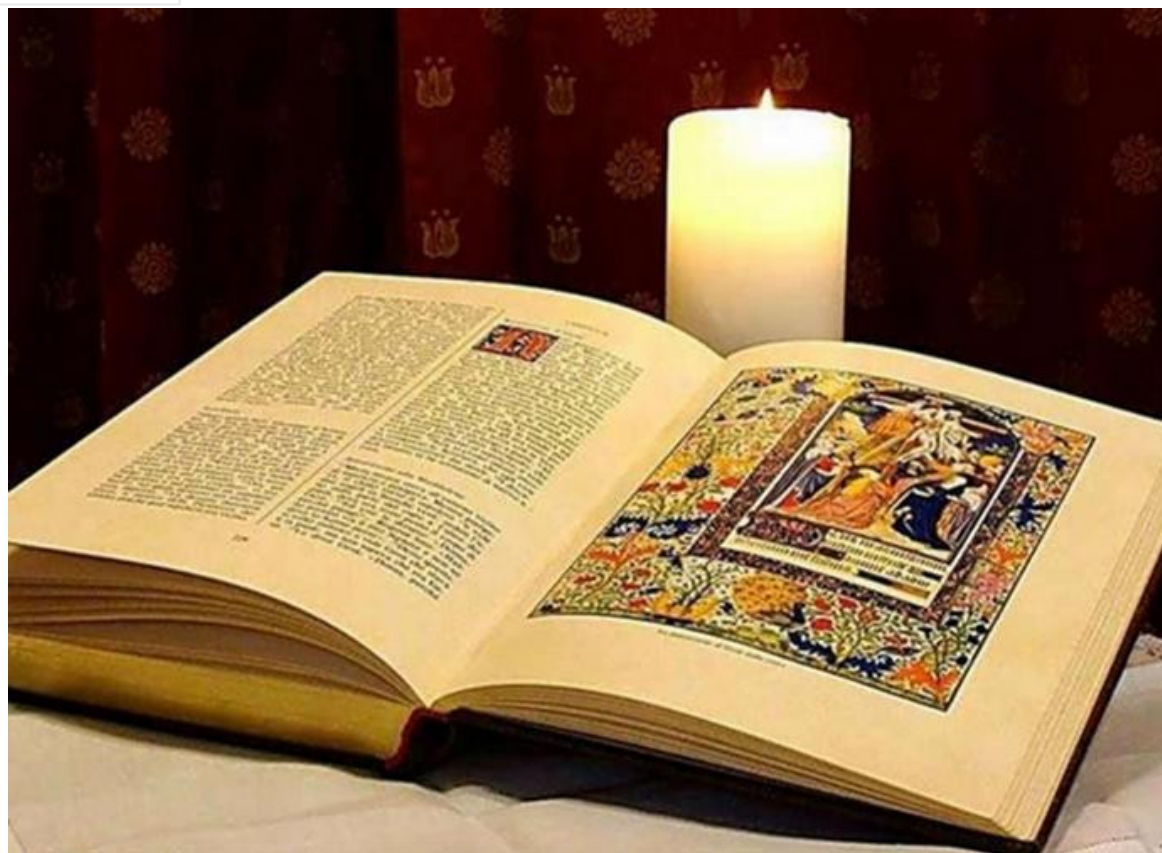


GOSPEL PEARLS

Recognizing God's envoys

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And the disciples asked him, "Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?" He answered, "Elijah does come, and he will restore all things. But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands." Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist. (Matthew 17: 10-13)

In every age of human history God has sent his prophets to invite men to conversion. But for those who do not feel the need to change their lives, it is more convenient neither to recognize God's envoys nor even His own Son, to the point of denigrating and persecuting them. For those who love sin - the wicked - the mere presence of holy people is unbearable because their lives bear witness to a life which is not only possible, but also beautiful and, hence, desirable. Let us ask the Lord for the grace of proper discernment in order to understand who are the people in our lives who can really bring us closer to Him and those who, even under the best appearances, lead us away from Him.