

GOSPEL PEARLS

Signs of the cross, bows, and genuflections

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“Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone. “Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and respectful greetings in the marketplaces. “Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, which people walk over without knowing it.” One of the experts in the law answered him, “Teacher, when you say these things, you insult us also.” Jesus replied, “And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with

burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them. (Luke 11: 42-46)

Jesus does not condemn the Pharisees' pious acts of devotion nor, much less, the pious persons themselves. These acts, however, must be the expression of our authentic love for God. However, we mustn't think that all pious people are hypocrites. Let us ask our Lord to help us understand the right degree to which we are called to serve Him through sincere acts of devotion, such as signs of the cross, bows, genuflections and any other external way we bear witness to our faith.