

GOSPEL PEARLS

Too conservative and too progressive

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Some in the crowd who heard these words said, "This is truly the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Messiah." But others said, "The Messiah will not come from Galilee, will he? Does not scripture say that the Messiah will be of David's family and come from Bethlehem, the village where David lived? So a division occurred in the crowd because of him. Some of them even wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him. So the guards went to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, "Why did you not bring him?" The guards answered, "Never before has anyone spoken like this one." So the Pharisees answered them, "Have you also

been deceived? Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd, which does not know the law, is accursed." Nicodemus, one of their members who had come to him earlier, said to them, "Does our law condemn a person before it first hears him and finds out what he is doing?" They answered and said to him, "You are not from Galilee also, are you? Look and see that no prophet arises from Galilee." Then each went to his own house. (John 7: 40-53)

At that time Jesus was "too conservative" for the Pharisees and "too progressive" for Sadducees. For first time, the two rival factions form an alliance because they cannot bear the idea that Jesus is truly the Son of God. Otherwise, they would be forced to reassess all their "wisdom" in the light of Jesus's preaching. Indeed, Jesus had not come to abolish, but to fulfil the law. On closer inspection, therefore, what the Pharisees and Sadducees sought to defend was not so much the Will of God but their way of understanding it. We must obey the Word of God and interpret it correctly with the aid of the timeless traditions of our Holy Church.