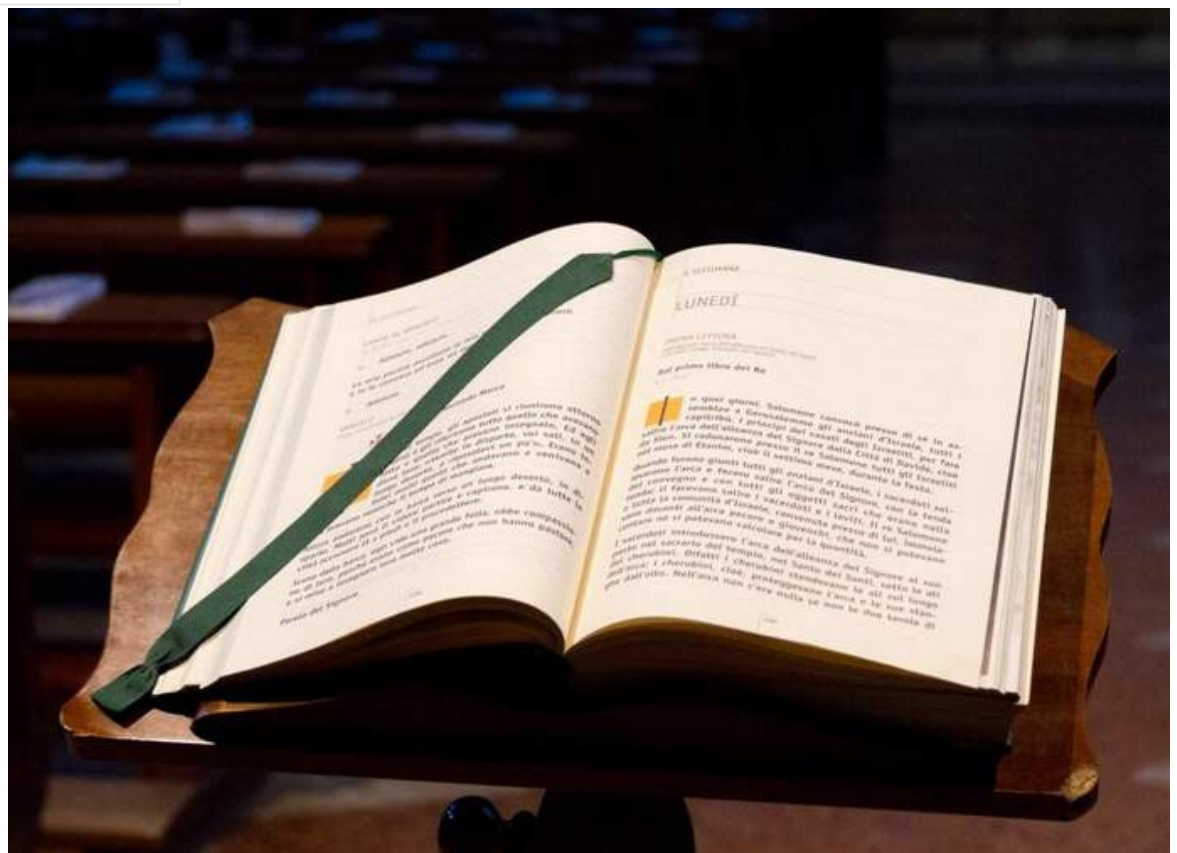


GOSPEL PEARLS

When our fidelity to God becomes a crime

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Jesus said to his disciples: "But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." Peter asked, "Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?" The Lord answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his

possessions. But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the other servants, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers. "The servant who knows the master's will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. (Luke 12:39-48)

The unfaithful servant Christ refers to behaves as if he is not accountable to God for his decisions. On the contrary, knowing full well that he is committing acts of evil, the unfaithful servant beats and persecutes his fellow servants who, by merely confessing their faith in God, indirectly reprimand but unbearably his conscience. This happens, even today when liberal democratic nations pass civil laws that consider it a crime to remain faithful to God's Law. What should we do? Adapt to the secular world? No, as Christians we are called to obey God rather than mankind. This is a winning choice since we can decide, at the very most, the fate of our earthly lives but never our eternal destiny. The pain and suffering of God's faithful, in fact, are temporary, while those of His unfaithful servants will be everlasting.