ON INTEGRATING SPIRITUAL AND SECULAR LIFE

Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears ought to hear. -Matt 13:43).

Friends,
God is good all the time

If you have ever observed the morning sunrise, you probably have noticed the beauty and positive energy that it exudes. You can almost gaze at the magnificence of the sky around it all day without experiencing boredom. Jesus utilizes the metaphor of the elegance of sunshine to hint His followers of the glittering end that awaits us if we keep the Christian mark.

The unique thing about Jesus as a leader and the son of God is how real He is. He takes the human condition into account in His demands on us and He gives us graces to meet them if we choose to meet such expectations. In the story of the weeds in the wheat farm, He clearly portrays God’s patience with us without rushing His judgement against us. However, He indicates to us that such patience will not remain eternally; for in the end, our commitment to righteous living will appear to be relevant.

We have the belief and evidence that there are benefits to having our spiritual and secular lives properly integrated. Those who keep their hearts from sin, their "minds from vanity," and "preserve the innocence" of their hands will be brought together to "shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father"(Matt 13: 43). But for us to shine like the sun, our deeds must shine first in the world. Jesus said, "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt 5:16).

Farmers know well that once planted, wheat will not become weeds though the weeds can reduce its productivity. Similarly our Christian identity never alters once baptized, but excessive involvement in the secular affairs of the world by embracing everything permissible by the culture can trigger a loss of grounding and reduce our commitment and fidelity to God, the church, and our personal values.

Motivation and commitment scholars have told us that the two concepts are related. Motivation, especially implicitly motivated people become highly committed to cause they believe in. The commitment derives from inner drive. If we believe in God and the judgement that will come to us later, we will maintain our Christian mark and buttress with deeds that are worthy and honorable; we will live by Paul's philosophy that “Everything is permissible,” but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible,” but not everything is edifying” (1 Cor 10:23). This philosophy undergirds the parable of the wheat and the weeds.

Prayer blessings: Father, turn our hearts towards you and never permit us to go our own way. Give us your blessings so that we can strive to keep our hearts from sinful pride, our minds from all that is vane. Amen.