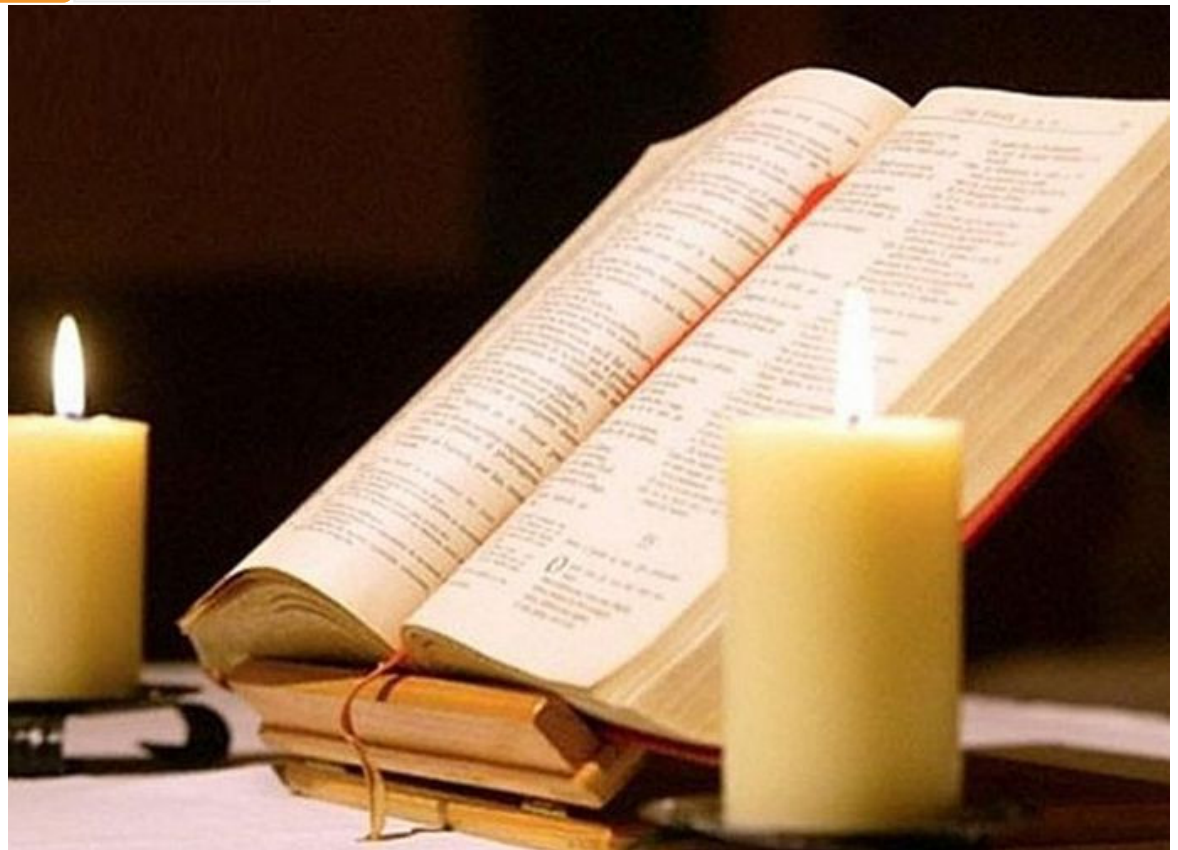


GOSPEL PEARLS

God's approval

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Jesus said to his disciples: "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. "Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. "And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the

hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6: 1-6; 16-18)

Vainglory is a very insidious temptation by which the devil attempts to remove us from God's Grace. Whoever falls from Grace seems to be unaware that, at the time of our own judgment, we will stand alone before God. Then how will we act? Being used to substituting God's approval with the praise of men, the latter is useless when we are judged by God. Today, may we seek God's approval rather than the approval of men.