



5 July 2026
GREAT DECEPTIONS
“Self-Deception (II)”

Starting yesterday, we have been reflecting on an important topic for our spiritual life—one that will help us fully awaken to the truth, so that our following of Christ may be free from illusions and our witness may shine more brightly in the world. It is crucial not only to put these teachings into practice to shield ourselves from self-deception, but also to identify and overcome all kinds of deception more easily.

The psalmist exclaims: *“But who can discern his errors? Clear thou me from hidden faults.”* (Psalm 19:12) In several New Testament passages, Jesus points out the blindness of the Pharisees and scribes (cf. Mt 23:13). God knows the human heart, and nothing is hidden from Him.

For those who follow Christ, it is of utmost importance to know oneself in the light of God, thus establishing a more realistic and sincere relationship with Him. Of course, we often avoid facing our reality, even fearing to acknowledge it because we worry about losing our good image and feeling ashamed. But these fears must be overcome, for the One before whom we stand is a loving Father who does not despise us for our mistakes and sins, but wants to lift us up and invite us to surrender ourselves completely to His mercy.

Therefore, we must not be afraid to acknowledge ourselves as we truly are. On the contrary, what should concern us is that we may still be living in blindness and self-deception, unwilling to abandon the illusions we have created about ourselves.

Next, we will hear some words from Fr. Sladek, OSA:

“God’s grace can only work with its healing power when the heart opens to Him with sincerity and trust, confessing to Him the whole truth about its own sinfulness. Therefore, God’s merciful love cannot be effective as long as a person minimizes or justifies their guilt and sinfulness, even unconsciously.”

True conversion to God does not occur until a person surrenders their heart to Him—with all their longings and desires, and even the unconscious depths of their soul. Here lies the beginning of sanctification.

The saints, who have taken conversion to the depths of their souls and are fully aware of it, glorify God in everything, for they know that all that is good in them is a gift of His divine goodness; whereas their weaknesses and sins, whether great or small, reveal what they are and what they possess in and of themselves. This is how Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque was able to acknowledge: 'From my wickedness, I fear everything; but from your love, I hope for everything.' In light of these truths, we see that overcoming self-deception—the foundation of self-justification—is the prerequisite for a fruitful life and ministry.”

To avoid the danger of self-deception, and to overcome it if we have already fallen into it, it is essential to have an authentic image of God, a humble knowledge of ourselves, and to overcome human respect.

As far as God is concerned, I will never tire of insisting that we can turn to Him with complete confidence and without fear. God is willing and able to forgive even our most repugnant sins, if only we confess them sincerely. It is undoubtedly terrible that we offend Him with our sins and plunge our souls into darkness. We do not intend to minimize the gravity of sin in any way. However, God's love is greater still, and by consciously recognizing this truth, we come to love Him more. Sacred Scripture is full of passages bearing witness to the fact that God wants to cast all our sins behind His back (cf. Is 38:17) and no longer remember them (cf. Is 43:25). He looks upon us with eyes of love. Awareness of this love, which He offers us through His Word, in the sacraments, and in many other ways, should help us never to close our hearts to God and to trust fully in His mercy. Even Judas could have turned to Jesus after betraying Him.

As far as self-knowledge is concerned, it is the second most important thing. This is where what we heard from Fr. Sladek comes into play. If we do not truly know ourselves—that is, if we do not recognize our weaknesses, self-love, pride, and the darkness lurking in the human heart in the light of God—then we sink deeper and deeper into self-deception. We relegate to the unconscious everything that objectively separates us from God and keep it there. This is not a conscious decision, but the will acting in the unconscious brings it about. Consequently, we adopt attitudes that create an illusory and perfect image of ourselves. It is difficult to awaken from this self-deception. On the other hand, it takes a great deal of effort to live up to the artificial image we have created of ourselves. The people around us will also suffer the consequences. The tragedy is that our relationship with God cannot unfold organically and trustingly because access to the human heart has been blocked.

We have yet to address the issue of human respect, which can also prevent us from

seeing ourselves as we truly are before God, since we have constructed a certain image of ourselves in the eyes of others and do not want it to crumble.

We will continue with this topic tomorrow.

Meditation on the day's Gospel: <https://en.elijamission.net/the-yoke-of-jesus-3/>