



September 2, 2018

GOSPEL MARK 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

When the Pharisees with some scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus, they observed that some of his disciples ate their meals with unclean, that is, unwashed, hands.

—For the Pharisees and, in fact, all Jews, do not eat without carefully washing their hands, keeping the tradition of the elders. And on coming from the marketplace they do not eat without purifying themselves. And there are many other things that they have traditionally observed, the purification of cups and jugs and kettles and beds. —

So the Pharisees and scribes questioned him, "Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders but instead eat a meal with unclean hands?" He responded, "Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written:

This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts. You disregard God's commandment but cling to human tradition."

He summoned the crowd again and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand. Nothing that enters one from outside can defile that person; but the things that come out from within are what defile.

"From within people, from their hearts, come evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly. All these evils come from within and they defile."





September 2, 2018 GOSPEL MARK 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Taken from The Better Part, p 409

God wants our hearts. It is quite possible to appear perfectly Christian on the outside—going to Mass, avoiding drunkenness and obviously lewd behaviour, saying prayers—while giving in to evil thoughts and entertaining selfish desires over and over again on the inside. That kind of divided life cannot endure for long. Where our hearts are, there our treasure is, as our Lord says elsewhere in the Gospels. (Matthew 6:21) We can never be satisfied with merely exterior piety, and we can never consider ourselves superior to others just because our sins are less visible. The heart that loves is never satisfied with how much it can do for its beloved; if we find ourselves smug in our life of faith, like the Pharisees, chances are we are running low on love.

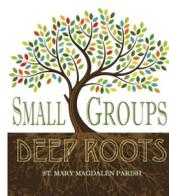
When do I pay too much attention to appearances? On what occasions do I worry excessively about my outside appearance and forget about working on my interior life?

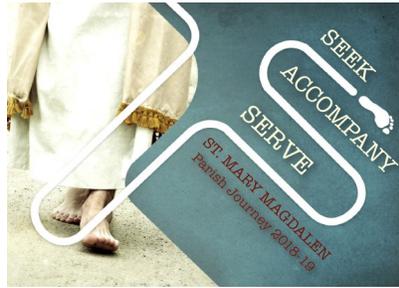
What about the appearance of those close to me that I know better than most: my family, my spouse, my children. Do I focus more on their misgivings or see more of the total person?

Jesus mentions that from the heart come ...”evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly. All these evils come from within and they defile.”

It's not always easy to see this in ourselves. It is so much easier to see this in everyone else, especially those whose sins are spread across the daily media. But Jesus calls us to a serious self examination to root out those areas that are infected with sin in our hearts. What are some spiritual practices that would help me reflect more on what goes on in my thoughts, in my heart? One suggestion is to find a “Daily Balance” or “Examination of Conscience” guide online to examine our hearts and motives.

Our Parish Theme for the year is “Seek, Accompany, Serve”. What aspect of this theme do you see in this passage? Which aspect of this theme can you live a little more intentionally this week? ***What action can I carry out this week to live out this Gospel message (resolution):***





September 9, 2018
GOSPEL **MARK 7: 31-37**

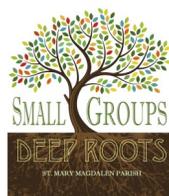
TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

Again Jesus left the district of Tyre and went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, into the district of the Decapolis. And people brought to him a deaf man who had a speech impediment and begged him to lay his hand on him.

He took him off by himself away from the crowd. He put his finger into the man's ears and, spitting, touched his tongue; then he looked up to heaven and groaned, and said to him, "*Ephphatha!*"— that is, "Be opened!" —

And immediately the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly.

He ordered them not to tell anyone. But the more he ordered them not to, the more they proclaimed it. They were exceedingly astonished and they said, "He has done all things well. He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."





September 9, 2018

GOSPEL MARK 7: 31-37

Taken from The Better Part, p 415

Did Jesus need to go through that whole ritual of touching this poor man's ears and tongue and speaking the word of command? Certainly not. More than once Jesus performed miracles without any tangible contact with the beneficiary. What comes across in this encounter is God's humility. Christ deigns to bring the healing power of God into this man's life through symbolic gestures and visible signs. He continues using this tactic through the ministry of his Church: the sacraments (as well as many of the Church's other ministries) are tangible connections between concrete individuals and divine grace. God made us to exist in the unity of body and soul, and he comes to save us in a way appropriate to that nature. We should be grateful for his patience and condescension, and we should be careful to imitate it as we try to bring Christ to those around us.

What struck you most in this passage?

When have you been touched by Jesus in a tangible way? It could be through a sacramental encounter with Jesus; it could be with a family member in a moment of healing; or at the hospital or other situation, where you knew it was the Lord acting.... Share that experience.

Does Jesus always come to you through tangible means? Has he ever come to you any other way?

The crowds said of Jesus, "He has done all things well." Why don't today's crowds say that about Catholics? What can we do improve the Church's witness in our own community? What can we do to improve our personal witness to Jesus' love?

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