

**1. Read** — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

**2. Meditate** — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage. **God what are you saying to me through this?**

**3. Pray** — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

**4. Contemplate** — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence.  
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**How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

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# Quick Connect

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**What is God saying to you through this passage?** Page 4

## **Gospel Reading – Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23 –Roman Missal**

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."

## **Spiritual Reading**

*From Saint Augustine, Bishop and Doctor of the Church: The Lord has had pity on us*

We were not good, but God had pity on us and sent his Son to die, not for good men but for bad ones, not for the just but for the wicked. Yes, Christ died for the ungodly. Notice what is written next: *One will hardly die for a righteous man, though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die.* Perhaps someone can be found who will dare to die for a good man; but for the unjust man, for the wicked one, the sinner, who would be willing to die except Christ alone who is so just that he justifies even the unjust? Let us then follow Christ's paths which he has revealed to us, above all the path of humility, which he himself became for us. He showed us that path by his precepts, and he himself followed it by his suffering on our behalf. In order to die for us—because as God he could not die— *the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.* The immortal One took on mortality that he might die for us, and by dying put to death our death.

## **Good vs. Evil from Within – Lesson and Discussion**

*"All these evils come from within and they defile."*

Jesus rebukes the Jews for nit picking physical uncleanness when their hearts were unclean and without God. In Mark 7:19, Jesus shows that if we worry too much about food etiquette then we will miss the point of God. Food goes into the body to nourish us, and then passes from us. It does nothing to the soul. But couldn't food kill the body? Yes, food can kill the body, but it cannot kill the soul. Nothing of substance from the outside can kill the soul. It is only from within a man's heart that brings evil and death to the soul.

**Why does evil come from within?** It comes from our first parents and original sin. After the original sin man "was changed for the worse" in both body and soul and more prone to evil.[1] Just as we inherit physically traits that we do not like, we also inherit the tendency to go against God. Through original sin we have the tendency, but this tendency does not mean we are going to commit a sin, only that we are weak and in need of grace. For example, we might have the tendency to eat too much or to oversleep, but this does not mean we are going to do it; we choose to do or to abstain from these actions.

"Sin is a human act that presumes three elements: objective malice in the action performed, or at least the person considers it wrong; actual advertence of mind by which the sinner is at least confusedly aware of the malice of conduct; and consent of the will, which formally constitutes actual sin and without which the sin is said to be only material." [2]

**What is the evil that can come from within man?** Jesus tells us what evil comes from within:

**Evil thoughts (Evil Desire)** – Wishing or longing to do something forbidden; an absolute desire for what is sinful is a sin of the same moral species and gravity as the evil action desired, whether the desire is effective or not.[3]

**Unchastity** – Lacking in the moral virtue for the successful integration of sexuality within the person, which leads to the inner unity of the bodily and spiritual being.

**Theft** – The secret taking of an object against the legitimate owner's reasonable will for the purpose of gain. If secrecy is absent, the act is called robbery. If the lawful owner is not reasonably opposed to the act, no theft is committed. Generally speaking, theft is a serious sin. According to St. Paul, "Thieves...and swindlers will never inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:10). But as an owner may be opposed in different ways to the loss of property belonging to him or her, so too the sin of theft admits degrees, even to the point of constituting only a slight sin. Theft is considered more or less grave according to the manner in which it is committed. A person may be more opposed to a large theft committed at one time than to a series of small thefts although amounting to the same value. Yet repeated petty theft—venial sins if taken separately—may become a mortal sin either because of the conspiracy with which they are perpetrated or because the frequency of small thefts really constitutes a single large act of thievery.[4]

**Murder** – The unjust killing of an innocent person. Direct intention to kill an innocent person is forbidden, whether as a private citizen or as the State, even in order to secure the common good. God has supreme and exclusive ownership over human life, so He is the only one who has the right to allow the taking of a human life. He confers on civil authority the right to take the life of a condemned criminal only when this is necessary for achieving the just purposes of the State. In a commentary passage on the Decalogue, divine revelation commands: "See that the man who is innocent and just is not done to death and do not acquit the guilty" (Exodus 23:7).[5]

**Adultery** – Sexual intercourse of a married person and another who is not the wife or husband. Forbidden by the sixth commandment of the Decalogue, it was extended in meaning by Christ, who forbade divorce with the right to remarry during the lifetime of one's legitimate spouse. [6] In Matthew 5:27-28, Jesus also extends the sixth commandment by saying that if we even look at another person lustfully, we've already committed adultery in our hearts.

**Greed** – Avarice or cupidity. It implies a controlling passion for wealth or possessions, suggesting not so much a strong, but an inordinate desire, and is commonly associated with the lust for power.[7]

**Malice** – The evil of a conscious and deliberate transgression of the law of God. It is contempt of the divine Author of the law, and an implicit denial of reverence toward God, who, as Creator, has a right to demand obedience of His creatures. It is the basic evil of sin.[8]

**Deceit** – A deliberate effort to conceal the truth, whether in speech, writing, or action. It is commonly said to spring from avarice, which offends against justice, But may also be the result of pride, in which a person's lack of humility leads him to act deceitfully in order to obtain or maintain a false recognition from others. In canon law, those who enter a novitiate by deceit enter invalidly. In general, an action entered into through deceit may be declared null and void and indemnity may be obtained.[9]

**Licentiousness** - lacking legal or moral restraints, *especially* disregarding sexual restraints; marked by disregard for strict rules of correctness.[10]

**Envy** – Resentment or sadness at another's good fortune and the desire to have it for oneself. One of the seven capital sins, envy is contrary to the tenth commandment (CCC 2539).[11]

**Blasphemy** – Speech, thought, or action involving contempt for God, the Church, or persons or things dedicated to God. Blasphemy is directly opposed to the second commandment (CCC 2148).[12]

**Arrogance** – An attitude of superiority manifested in an overbearing manner or in presumptuous claims or assumptions.[13]

**Folly** – Lack of good sense or normal prudence and foresight—criminally or tragically foolish actions or conduct.[14]

**Which evils do you see the Pharisees fall into? Which one(s) do you think is(are) the greatest sin(s) in our generation? Why?** Pope Pius XII said of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, "...the sin of the century is the loss of the sense of sin." When we no longer know what a sin, it becomes easy to not recognize sin, and thus allow it, ignore it, or redefine it.