

12 February 2025, Wednesday 5th week of Ordinary Time

[Gen 2:4b-9,15-17; Mk 7:14-15,17-23](#)

Homily

The Gospel reading we have just heard is a continuation of yesterday's. In it, Mark tells us about one of the difficult and painful encounters between Jesus and the authorities of the people - that is to say, the Pharisees and Scribes - who set themselves the task of finding fault with Him, in order to get rid of Him. Jesus once again calls them hypocrites, because they ended up attaching so much importance to external religious practices that they lost sight of the relationship between these practices and the personal experience of God.

Already in the Old Testament, several centuries after Moses, the great prophets of Israel had denounced the separation between religious practice and union with God - a practice by which one tried to ease one's conscience without having to practice justice and solidarity. (see, for example, Is 1:10-18; 58:1-12; Am 5:18-25; Zech 7) When the Pharisees and Scribes criticized Jesus for the fact that his disciples did not comply with the ritual requirements established by their traditions, Jesus could easily answer them by quoting one of these prophetic invectives.

Jesus' teaching in this Gospel is carried out in three stages and at three different levels. To the Pharisees and Scribes, who are in no way interested in receiving teaching from Him, but rather in setting traps for Him to lead Him to His downfall, Jesus is content to reproach them for their hypocrisy and the fundamental error that has led them to prefer their own precepts to the supreme law of love of God and neighbor. To the crowd, still willing to receive His teaching, He affirms the nature of true purity before God. This lies in the righteousness of the heart and not in having performed or omitted certain actions. Finally, he adds a warning to the disciples. Yes, they must guard themselves against all impurity - not the ritual impurities of which the Pharisees and Scribes had drawn up long lists, but the impurity that comes from a false heart, which leads to misconduct, theft, murder, etc. It all boils down to a lapidary formula: what makes a person impure is not what they eat, but what comes out of their heart, if their heart is not totally given to God.

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