

## **Reflection on Mark 7: 1-8, 14-15, 21-23**

The Pharisees continue to scrutinize Jesus' preaching and his behavior. Today they observe that some of Jesus' disciples did not observe the purification ritual that was required before eating any meal. For the Pharisees, this gave them the perfect opportunity to once again criticize Jesus. For the Pharisees, the law always reigned supreme.

They came to Jesus and asked him: "Why don't you and your followers observe the proper purification rites? They are eating their meal with unclean hands." Jesus responds to them by quoting the prophet Isaiah: "This people honors me with their lips but their hearts are far from me. In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrine what are human traditions and precepts." Then Jesus bluntly tells them: "You disregard God's commandments and cling to human tradition."

Jesus then proclaims to the crowd: "Listen to me and hear me! Nothing that enters a person from outside can defile that person! It is what comes from within that defiles the individual." Jesus then names fifteen emotions and acts that defile individuals.

Today may be a good day for us to ask ourselves: At times, do we judge or critique others because they are not following the law, be that the law of God or the law of the land? I assume we do. Many of our judgments are automatic. They may be leftovers from what we were taught as a child. Judgments simply are part of our human condition. And often we may not be fully aware that we are judging another person for breaking one of the laws or rules we consider to be important. Most all of us do not like it when another person judges us. Yet at times, we automatically judge others when we may not have the complete picture. It is not our place to judge others. This is God's work to do.

If/when you find yourself beginning to judge another today, stop, breathe, and pray. Then go on about your day. You may find your day is lighter and brighter without so much judgment!