

**TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**  
**September 1, 2024**

**Gospel: (Mark 7: 1-8)**

Jesus 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.”*

**Reflection:**

It's easier to clean the pots and pans than to clean one's heart! It's also easy to dismiss this gospel because our tradition has never emphasized this kind of ritual impurity. Yet, the gospel hits home closer than we may think. What traditions do we blindly cling to? Perhaps it is enough for us just to go to Mass on Sunday; after all, this is what most of us grew up doing. Or perhaps we cling to rote prayers that we learned as a child rather than stretch our relationship with God to find new prayer expressions. Perhaps we relegate God in our lives to an hour on Sunday. Do we keep the letter of the law and miss entirely the spirit of the law? Interior righteousness means a heart turned to God. We need to look at the way we live, and this will tell us whether we have hearts truly turned toward God, all of the time. Purity of heart is expressed in righteous living: self-giving for the sake of others. This is how we have life. (Living Liturgy, p.200)

**Vincenian Meditation:**

For St. Vincent, simplicity consisted in referring things to God alone, or purity of intention. In this sense simplicity is doing everything for love of God and for no other end. It entails avoiding “human respect” or doing things merely to look good in the eyes of others. Simplicity is speaking the truth. It is saying things as they are, without concealing or hiding anything. The heart must not think one thing while the mouth says another. Vincentians must avoid all duplicity, dissimulation, cunning, and double meaning. (Maloney, *He Hears the Cry of the Poor*, p.144-145)

**Discussion:** (*Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

**How do we live our core value of Simplicity in the spirit of St. Vincent?**

**Closing Prayer:**

Through Christ, the merciful Servant,

**-give us interior righteousness and a heart turned to God.**

Through Christ, the Healer,

**-give us the grace to always speak the truth.**

Through Christ, the Holy One,

**-give us the grace to avoid all duplicity, cunning and double meaning. Amen.**

