

Welcome back to St Joseph's after your summer break. We hope you all had good, restful break where you have happy memories of spending time with loved ones and friends. To all of year 7, year 12s who are joining us from another school and anyone else new to St Joseph's, welcome. Not only do we hope you too had a good break but we hope you are not worried about starting secondary school. Most things we worry about never happen, so don't spend your time worrying about the future, enjoy the present, make new friends, be proud of being part of our school community and 'Unlock Belief' in yourself and others around you.

In the Gospel on Sunday, Jesus is only interested in the stirring of our human hearts. He wants to know our personal issues that preoccupy us and influence our choices and behaviour. In the Gospel, the Pharisees are so concerned with the external laws/traditions around them (the idea of washing your hands before the meal) they forget the importance of themselves, their thoughts and actions. What people do should be based on what comes within (from their hearts). When our hearts are set on God they are freed from the multitude of human rules that tie us down that hinder a direct personal relationship with God and prevent us from proper action and worship. When we lose this, we sin and ultimately it is us who decide to do this.

The start of a new school year allows us to change our hearts. By putting aside the wrongs of the past and allowing us to make amends by living a more Christian life by following our hearts with Jesus at the centre of this. How can you be ***Intentional and Prophetic?***

In private, set yourself a goal/target or even better still goals/targets by listening to your own hearts and affirm your belief in Christ.

The Commandment of God

Weekly Reflections
1st September 2024
22nd Sunday in Ordinary



From the Gospel of Mark (7:1-8, 14-15, 21 - 23)

The Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered round Jesus, and they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with unclean hands, that is, without washing them. For the Pharisees, and the Jews in general, follow the tradition of the elders and never eat without washing their arms as far as the elbow; and on returning from the market place they never eat without first sprinkling themselves. There are also many other observances which have been handed down to them concerning the washing of cups and pots and bronze dishes. So these Pharisees and scribes asked him, 'Why do your disciples not respect the tradition of the elders but eat their food with unclean hands?' He answered, 'It was of you hypocrites that Isaiah so rightly prophesied in this passage of scripture:

This people honours me only with lip-service,
while their hearts are far from me.
The worship they offer me is worthless,
the doctrines they teach are only human regulations.

You put aside the commandment of God to cling to human traditions.' He called the people to him again and said, 'Listen to me, all of you, and understand. Nothing that goes into a man from outside can make him unclean; it is the things that come out of a man that make him unclean. For it is from within, from men's hearts, that evil intentions emerge: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, malice, deceit, indecency, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within and make a man unclean.'

Prayer for the Week

Lord Jesus,

Sometimes out of fear we listen to others around us rather than following our loving hearts. At the beginning of this new academic year, make us understand that it is only through listening to you within that we can achieve great things, and that it is only in each other's service that we can find true happiness. In your name we pray.

Amen.

Day 1

Talk to the person next to you, what did you do during your holidays?
Do you have worries for this year? If so what are they and are they any solutions for these?

Day 2

What are some 'human regulations' in today's world that you find difficult to conform to? Why? What might need to change in order to live the Christian life more fully (to be **intentional and prophetic**)? What might Jesus affirm in your own heart, and how might he challenge you to grow further?