

Tuesday of the Fifth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mk 7:1-13): When the Pharisees with some scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus (...). They (...) 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.” (...).

Jesus, the prophetic interpreter of "Moses' Law"

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)

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Today, Jesus denounces the scribes and Pharisees who cling indiscriminately to the “traditions of the ancestors”. Jesus is neither a rebel nor a liberal, but the prophetic interpreter of the Law of Moses: He does not suppress it, but fulfills it by demanding a reasoned moral responsibility (because the laws are not necessarily good simply for its tradition). Isaiah and other prophets had made the same complaint.

Inside the “Torah” we distinguish: 1) a “casuistic law”, suitable for a historical Israel but subject to change; 2) the “essential principles” of the Divine Law with which the practical rules —of Israel and all the people— must be confronted, developed and corrected. Jesus did not do anything unusual when He opposed the practiced casuistic rules developed in the “Torah” with the pure will of God as the “greatest justice” expected from the children of God.

—Jesus, as the “Chosen” and the prophet who is with God “face to face”, asks the fullest observance of the “Torah”.