

GOSPEL PEARLS

An excuse not to change your life

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Some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They do not wash their hands when they eat a meal." He summoned the crowd and said to them, "Hear and understand. It is not what enters one's mouth that defiles the man; but what comes out of the mouth is what defiles one." Then his disciples approached and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?" He said in reply, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit." (Matthew 15,1-2.10-14)

The value of acts of devotion is not absolute, yet they are an accessory to the two precepts that inspired the Ten Commandments (to love God above all things and our neighbours as ourselves). This is why Jesus corrects the interpretation that scribes and Pharisees gave to the Word of God. In doing acts of devotion we must be a witness of love for God and they must genuinely help us along our path of conversion. If, on the other hand, such acts merely serve to make conscience feel right with God and, perhaps, as an excuse for not changing our life by continuing to sin against ourselves and our neighbour, then let us remember that we are only deceiving ourselves. Let's ask ourselves if we have ever used acts of piety as an excuse.