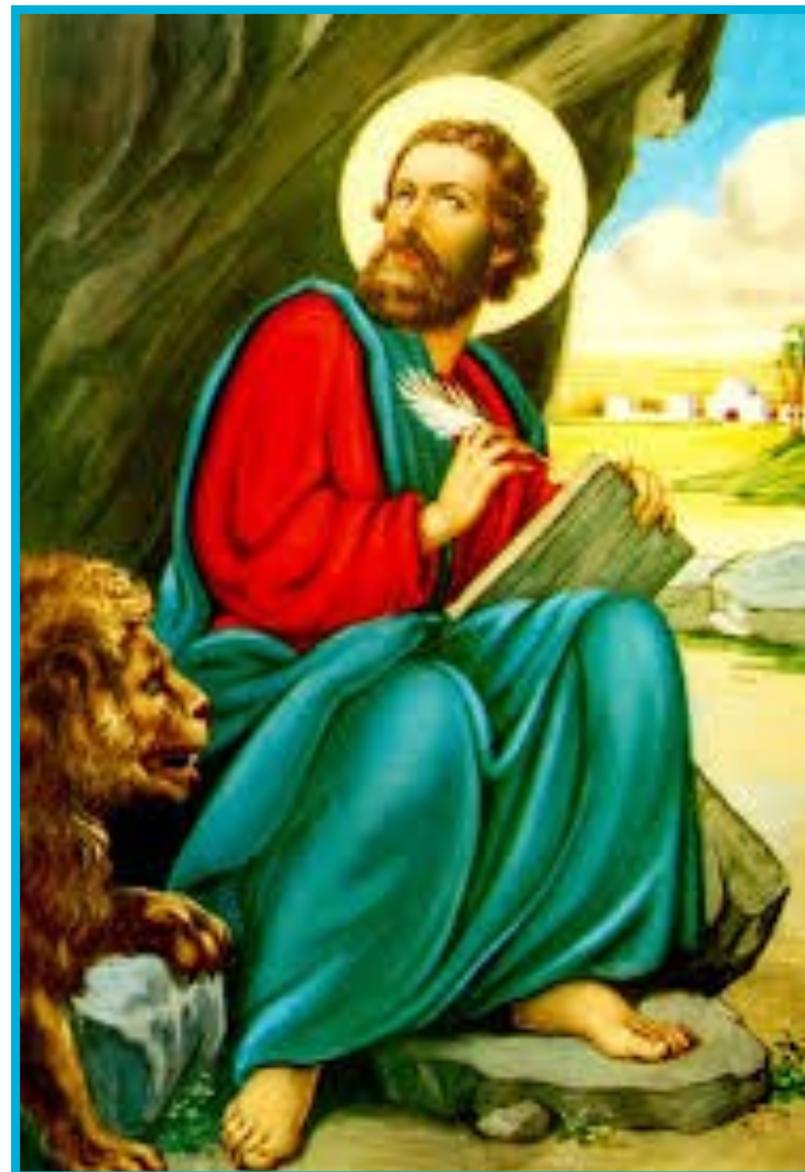


THE GOSPEL OF MARK

CHAPTER 7: 1-37



For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent* that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.

Mark wrote down Peter's account of the 'good news'. Peter was one of the first twelve of Jesus' disciples, and the first to publicly recognize Him as the Messiah. Peter, through Mark, shows us that Jesus fulfills all the criteria of the Servant-Messiah our Ransom, who was prophesied by Isaiah some 750 years earlier (Isaiah 42:1-9; 49:5-7; 52:13-53:12). Jesus is portrayed as a slave, caring for people and serving God (Mark 1:32-35). There are therefore no details of His birth, only of the beginning of His service (Mark 1:1,9).

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

Mark 7: 1-37

Douay Rheims Version

Christ rebukes the Pharisees. He heals the daughter of the woman of Chanaan; and the man that was deaf and dumb.

1. And there assembled together unto him the Pharisees and some of the scribes, coming from Jerusalem.
2. And when they had seen some of his disciples eat bread with common, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault.
3. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews eat not without often washing their hands, holding the tradition of the ancients:
4. And when they come from the market, unless they be washed, they eat not: and many other things there are that have been delivered to them to observe, the washings of cups and of pots, and of brazen vessels, and of beds.

Tropologically: Every one ought to seek the same thing, and say with the Psalmist, “O Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise” (Ps. li. 17). We ought to do the same as regards our ears, that we may be able to sing aloud with Isaiah (1. 4), “The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to *him that is weary*: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.” Now this is done when He Himself with His own *Finger*, that is, the Holy Ghost (for He is “the Finger of God,” Exod. viii. 19), and the spittle of Heavenly Wisdom, which is He Himself proceeding forth from the mouth of the Most High, touches the tongue of the soul.

Ver. 34. *And looking up to heaven* (because from thence come words to the dumb, hearing to the deaf, healing for all infirmities, says Bede), *He groaned*; both because He sympathised with the misery of the deaf and dumb man, as because in groaning He prayed and obtained healing for him from God.

Ephpheta, which is, Be thou opened, ie., which so signifies. “Where,” says Bede, “the two natures of the one and the same Mediator between God and man are plainly set forth. For, looking up to heaven as man, He groaned, being about to pray to God; presently by a single word, as having the power of Divine Majesty, He healed.” For we all have eyes, but the blind have theirs shut and closed, which in the Syriac idiom are elegantly said to be opened when their shutters are unclosed, as Angelus Caninius says (*in Nom. Heb. c. 10*). Moreover, the Heb. *patach* signifies *to open*. From whence is the imperative passive, or *Niph'al, hippateach, by crasis hippatach*, for which the Syrians use *Ephpheta, be open*.

Ver. 36. *He charged them that they should tell no man*. This was not properly a command, involving a fault if disobeyed, but merely a token of urbanity and modesty, that, indeed, He might signify He would not make a parade of His miracles, or by their means obtain the vain glory of men. Wherefore they did not commit sin who nevertheless divulged them. Wherefore it follows, *the more He charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it*. “We are taught by this,” says Theophylact, “that when we confer benefits we should not seek for applause therefrom; but when we have received benefits we should praise our benefactors, even though they are unwilling to be praised.” And S. Augustine says, “By His prohibition the Lord wished to teach us how very fervently they ought to preach to whom He has given a command to preach, when they who were commanded to be silent could not hold their peace”

Ver. 37. *He hath done all things well*: Gr. *καλῶς*, i.e., *beautifully, becomingly, harmoniously*. Christ did nothing which the Pharisees or such like fault-finders could justly blame. Again, the Heb. for *well* is *heteb*, i.e., *beneficently*, because He gave hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb. Indeed, Christ’s whole life was one continuous beneficence.

5. And the Pharisees and scribes asked him: Why do not thy disciples walk according to the tradition of the ancients, but they eat bread with common hands?
6. But he answering, said to them: Well did Isaias prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.
7. And in vain do they worship me, teaching *doctrines and precepts of men*. (*Doctrines and precepts of men*: See the annotations, Matt. 15. 9, 11).
8. *For leaving the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men, the washing of pots and of cups: and many other things you do like to these.*
9. *And he said to them: Well do you make void the commandment of God, that you may keep your own tradition.*
10. *For Moses said: Honour thy father and thy mother; and He that shall curse father or mother, dying let him die.*
11. But you say: If a man shall say to his father or mother, Corban, (which is a gift,) whatsoever is from me, shall profit thee.
12. And further you suffer him not to do any thing for his father or mother,
13. Making void the word of God by your own tradition, which you have given forth. And many other such like things you do.
14. And calling again the multitude unto him, he said to them: Hear ye me all, and understand.
15. There is nothing from without a man that entering into him, can defile him. But the things which come from a man, those are they that defile a man.
16. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.
17. And when he was come into the house from the multitude, his disciples asked him the parable.
18. And he saith to them: So are you also without knowledge? understand you not that every thing from without, entering into a man cannot defile him:
19. Because it entereth not into his heart, but goeth into the belly, and goeth out into the privy, purging all meats?
20. But he said that the things which come out from a man, they defile a man.
21. For from within out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,
22. Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.
23. All these evil things come from within, and defile a man.
24. And rising from thence he went into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon: and entering into a house, he would that no man should know it, and he could not be hid.
25. For a woman as soon as she heard of him, whose daughter had an unclean spirit, came in and fell down at his feet.
26. For the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician born. And she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

27. Who said to her: Suffer first the children to be filled: for it is not good to take the bread of the children, and cast it to the dogs.

28. But she answered and said to him: Yea, Lord; for the whelps also eat under the table of the crumbs of the children.

29. And he said to her: For this saying go thy way, the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

30. And when she was come into her house, she found the girl lying upon the bed, and that the devil was gone out.

31. And again going out of the coasts of Tyre, he came by Sidon to the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

32. And they bring to him one deaf and dumb; and they besought him that he would lay his hand upon him.

33. And taking him from the multitude apart, he put his fingers into his ears, and spitting, he touched his tongue:

34. And looking up to heaven, he groaned, and said to him: Ephpheta, which is, Be thou opened.

35. And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right.

36. And he charged them that they should tell no man. But the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it.

37. And so much the more did they wonder, saying: He hath done all things well; he hath made both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

1 *The Pharisees find fault at the disciples for eating with unwashen hands.* 8 *They break the commandment of God by the traditions of men.* 14 *Meat defileth not the man.* 24 *He healeth the Syrophenician woman's daughter of an unclean spirit,* 31 *and one that was deaf, and stammered in his speech.*

Ver. 2. *To eat with common, that is, with unwashen hands.* Hands unwashed were called *common*, because unclean and profane things were *common* to both Jews and Gentiles, to clean and unclean persons alike.

Observe, the Apostles were not so boorish as not to wash their hands before dining or supping, which even husbandmen and artisans do before meals; but they abstained from the ceremonial, or rather the superstitious washing of the Pharisees, which they scrupulously observed from the tradition of their ancestors.

Ver. 3. *Often washing:* Syr. *betilarth*, i.e., *diligently or carefully*; Gr. *πυγμαῖ*, *zealously*; Heb. *caph el cabh*, i.e., *hand to hand*, namely, by constant rubbing, as they do who wish to cleanse defiled hands.

Ver. 4. *From the market.* Because in the market are all kinds, both of persons and things, clean and unclean, by coming in contact with which they feared they had incurred pollution, and so they thought they could not cleanse themselves from such contamination except by washing, not their hands only, but their whole body.

Whence it follows: *Unless they be baptized*, i.e., unless they immerse and wash their whole body, as the Jews do frequently, even at the present time. For *to be baptized* is more than *to wash the hands*. Because, therefore, by conversing with and touching Gentiles in the market they were compelled to handle some things that were unclean, they washed themselves all over when they came home.

Of pots: Gr. *ξεστῶν*, i.e., of wine-drinking vessels. The Syriac has *ænophororun*, *vessels in which wine is carried*. Vatablus understands wooden vessels, which were turned and polished, or ornamented with carving.

And beds: on which they reclined at table.

Ver. 15. *Make a man common* (Vulg.), i.e., *defile him*, as some MSS. read.

Ver. 19. *Because it entereth not into his heart*, i.e., into his soul, and cannot therefore defile it. *But goeth into the belly*, where the purer portion of the food, being separated, proceeds to the liver and heart; but that which is impure and feculent *into the draught*, by its going forth, *purging*, i.e., leaving pure *all meats*. For in that it, the impure, goeth away, it cleanses and purifies the remainder of the food.

Ver. 26. *A Gentile:* Gr. *ἐλληνίς*, i.e., *a Grecian woman*, for where the Greeks bore sway, all Gentiles were called Greeks. Hence the expression in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, "The Jew first, and also the Greek" i.e., the Gentile.

A Syrophenician, i.e., belonging to that part of Phœnicia which looks towards Syria.

Ver. 32. *And dumb:* Gr. *μογλάλον*, i.e., *speaking with difficulty or an impediment, stammering*. For when he was healed by Christ *he spake right*, i.e., *freely*, as it is in the 35th verse. He was not, therefore, entirely dumb, as they are who are born deaf. These are called in Greek *ἀλαλοί*.

Ver. 33. *And spitting, He touched his tongue.* Christ wrought harmoniously, as though by His healing saliva He would moisten and loosen the dumb mouth, which was bound through drought.

Now He spat not upon the mouth of the mute, but upon His own finger, and by means of His finger applied the saliva to the mouth of the mute, as may be gathered from the Greek. This was required by propriety and decorum. Moreover, when Christ opened the ears and unloosed the tongue of the body, He opened also the ears and tongue of the soul, that they might listen to His inspiration, and believe that He was the Messiah, and that they might ask and obtain of Him pardon of their sins.