



## **Scripture nugget – What defiles us comes from inside**

*He said to them, “Are even you still without understanding? Do you not realize that everything that enters the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled into the latrine? But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile. For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, unchastity, theft, false witness, blasphemy. These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.” (Matthew 15:16-20).*

**False gods defile the human heart.** God made the human heart to love Him above all else (cf. Mt 22:37) and to be ardently and selflessly loved by Him (cf. John 3:16). It is in His design that the human heart finds its deepest joy and highest fulfillment in God alone (cf. Psalm 63:2). Once we do not carefully nurture our inmost desire to seek and love God above all else, the heart is vulnerable and seeks to give its love to some lesser objects replacing God for Whom it is created, thus, opening the door to false gods in our hearts. A false god can be anything that takes the rightful place of God in our hearts. It could be a preoccupation or disorderly love of some aspect of self e.g. beauty, power, ambition, popularity, ego, health, sensual pleasures, etc. Or it could be a material object e.g. money and all the trappings of wealth, luxury and comfort, etc. Or it could be a preoccupation over another person e.g. a spouse, friend, etc. A false god in our hearts that elevates itself and takes the place of God in our hearts is a violation of the first commandment. What are the false gods in my heart? No matter how entrenched they are, God can help us make a good spring cleaning of our hearts if we have the sincere desire to be rid of these stumbling blocks in our lives which make us lead mediocre Christian lives which are no different from that of non-believers, and which inspire no one and please neither God nor ourselves.

***Encourage yourselves daily while it is still “today,” so that none of you may grow hardened by the deceit of sin (Hebrews 3:13).*** We are to guard our hearts against the deceitfulness of sin. Prophet Jeremiah warns us that the human heart is more deceitful than anything else and beyond comprehension (cf. Jeremiah 17:9). Once we tolerate the presence of sins in our souls, we fall under the deceitfulness of sin. We become comfortable in our sins since we lose the horror we should have for sins. Our hearts become hardened and we trivialize sin, not realizing how far our souls have fallen in the eyes of God, but still under the delusion of complacency of the state of our souls (cf. Psalm 36:2-3). Jesus warns of the things that can make the life of a soul unfruitful: the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things (cf. Mark 4:19). We can make our lives more effective in witnessing to Christ by cultivating a greater love of God and a horror of sin by simple spiritual exercises such as daily examination of conscience, frequent availing of the Sacrament of Confession and meditation of Christ’s Passion. Frequent Confession and meditation on Christ’s Passion makes us spiritually strong and increases our abhorrence of sin, making it difficult for false gods to enthrone themselves in our hearts.

**Conversation with Jesus:** Precious Lord, my heart is made for You alone. I consecrate my heart and my mind to You. Be enthroned in my heart. Show me the areas in my life I must effect a change. Take away my self-love and ignite the fire of divine love in my soul. I ask Mother Mary to mold my heart to be pure like hers and to love You as You deserve. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.