

## Live by the Spirit

Let us take a look at the origin and development of this ritual washing of hands referred to in Mark 7; perhaps it will shed some light on why Jesus said to the scribes and the Pharisees that they teach as doctrines human precepts and they disregard God's commandment but cling to human tradition. (cf. Mark 7:6-8; Isaiah 29:13). This tradition of ritual purification, called *netilat yadaim* in Hebrew, originated with the rabbis of the Talmud from the ancient Temple period in Jerusalem. The Mosaic Law required priests and Levites to wash their hands and feet before approaching the altar (Exodus 30:17–21). For various reasons, the ancient rabbis extended this practice to all Jews before eating meals.

Religious leaders like rabbis, scribes and the Pharisees interpreted this law to mean that all Jews should wash their hands and say a blessing before eating any meal that includes bread or matzoh to avoid defiling their food and themselves. There are various customs regarding how the water should be poured, but a common practice is to pour twice on the right hand followed by twice on the left (this is reversed for those who are left-handed). This tradition has no relation to personal hygiene and Jews are still required to perform this ritual even if their hands are clean.

How serious is this ritual washing? Some passages in the Talmud indicate that failing to wash hands before a meal is a serious transgression. It has also been said that eating bread without ritual washing is tantamount to having sex with a prostitute.



As we can infer from the Gospel passage, the ritual washing in itself is not the real issue here; it is just one of the examples in which the scribes and the Pharisees have diverted the people's focus away from God and towards human precepts. The scribes and the Pharisees taught the strict adherence to the Mosaic Law, such that it became all about following directions and rules rather than about knowing and understanding God, drawing near to Him and loving Him. The practice of religion has gravitated to external actions, rather than the strengthening of one's spirit and the deepening of one's spiritual affections towards God and neighbor.

In his Letters to the Gentile Christians in the early Church, St. Paul often spoke about "freedom" from the Mosaic Law; i.e., they are not bound to the observance of the Mosaic Law; e.g., circumcision, ritual purifications, food restrictions, etc. in order to be saved. St. Paul admonished the Galatians: "You were called for freedom, brothers. But do not use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; rather, serve one another through love... Live by the Spirit, so that you will not gratify the desire of the flesh; for the flesh has desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; these are opposed to each other" (cf. Galatians 5:13, 16-17).

What does this mean? It means that they must not abuse this "freedom" by making it an occasion for sin; i.e., that they give their bodies more "freedom" in following their desires of lust, self-indulgence and lack of self-discipline, which leads to: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like. St. Paul warns them that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God (cf. Gal 5:19-21). They must not think that the Gospel had set them free from obedience of the law; for the law still binds them to the duty of love, both to God and to their fellow men.

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每周公告 Weekly Bulletin

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## PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Are you an adult and have not yet received the Sacrament of Confirmation? If so, we invite you to join our Confirmation program to prepare you for the Sacrament of Confirmation at the Easter Vigil in 2025. If you are interested, please contact Fr. Bill.



Prayer List: Eva Mullins, David Wang, Chen Jianxin, Liang Chenjing, Pan Bohao and Xu Taicheng.



Attention children and parents: We will have Sunday School on Sunday, September 1, 2024. Parents are welcome to sit in the Sunday School classes.

We will have our monthly faith workshop in the Conference Room immediately after Mass this morning. The topic will be "4 Marks of the Catholic Church." Concurrently, Fr. Bill will administer the Anointing of the Sick in the Sanctuary.

Reserve the date: Fr. Bill encourages all parishioners to make plans to participate in the Eucharistic Congress in Atlanta next year on June 20-21, 2025. Our church will host the first-ever Chinese Track in the Eucharistic Congress. This is an incredible opportunity for all of us to see and experience the great number of Catholics in Atlanta united under the One Body of Christ!

The Convocation of Priests in the Archdiocese of Atlanta will be held next week from September 9-12. There will be regularly scheduled Mass on Monday at noon, but there will be no Mass on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

**Printed copies of the Financial Statement for fiscal year 2023 to 2024, ending in June 30, 2024 are available in this Sunday's church bulletin. Thank you for your support!**



Our Fall garage sale will be on Saturday, September 7, 2024 from 8am to 2pm. Please sign up with Daisy and Angela Ooi if you can help during the garage sale.

Come and celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival with us on September 15, 2024. We will have a lantern parade by the children of our parish after the 10:30am Mass, our community potluck, riddles for adults and prizes for the best lantern and riddle winner!



Mass Schedule	Confessions	Bible Study
Sundays 10:30 AM (Chinese)	Sundays 9:00-9:30 AM	Wednesdays 10:00 AM (Chinese)
Sundays 2:00 PM (English)	Tuesdays 2:00-3:00 PM	Mondays 6:00 PM (English)
	By Appointment	
Mondays 12:00 PM (English)		<b>Eucharistic Adoration</b>
Tuesdays 12:00 PM (English)	<b>Anointing of the Sick</b>	Sundays 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM
Wednesdays 12:00 PM (Chinese)	First Sundays after 10:30 AM Mass	Tuesdays 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Fridays 12:00 PM (English)		
First Friday 7:00 PM (English)		
First Saturday 10:00 AM (Chinese)		