

February 08, 2022
Tuesday of the 5th Week
1 Kgs 8:22-23, 27-30
Mk 7:1-13

Sometimes it's worthwhile to take a step back and observe human behavior from a distance. Sometimes it's comical; often it's just plain folly, kind of like hamsters on a treadmill. God must have a truly great sense of humor.

Here we are, creatures surrounded and infinitely loved by that Infinite Love that we call God, but we can't just let things be and luxuriate in that loving relationship. No, not us. We got to control things. We make rules, set boundaries, and otherwise try to box in that Infinite Love that just wants to love us. We want to control not only our own relationship with God, but we want to control how others relate to God as well.

This is what Jesus is railing against in today's gospel. God only wants to dwell in our hearts. Yet people like the Pharisees, and by extension us, make rules that try to place human conditions on how one should relate to God, conditions like washing hands and purifying bodies and purifying stuff like cups, kettles, jugs, and beds, and many other such practices that are meaningless to God. Humans even try to justify doing things for themselves in the name of the Church at the expense of providing for dependents like parents or fulfilling other societal obligations. Jesus calls such behavior hypocritical. God doesn't need us to take care of Him. He needs us to help Him take care of others.

After 20 years and countless expense and with a workforce of 180,000 workers and 3300 foremen, the wise King Solomon comes to the realization that as great as is the Temple he constructed, the Lord

cannot be boxed in. Solomon says in his Temple dedication prayer: "Is God indeed to dwell on earth? If the heavens and the highest heavens cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built!" Solomon realizes that he has merely built a gathering place for people to pray, not a dwelling for the Lord.

What I find truly humbling in all this is that the only place God wants to be confined to is our hearts—nothing more; nothing less. That, my sisters, and brothers, is Infinite Love. That is our blessing and our gift. No need try manage it or control it. Just accept it, enjoy it, and follow wherever it leads.