

Daily Reflection

March 21, 2020

The Pharisees were men for this time. In today's Daily Office Gospel, they chide the disciples for not washing their hands (and singing the birthday song 2x !): <https://www.missionstclare.com/english/March/whole/morning/21m.html>

The jury is out on whether the Pharisees knew hand-washing was good hygiene. We know this: Their rules regulated the whole day for a purpose: to make ordinary things holy. The prescribed methods for every function directed thoughts towards God's faithful care and prompted prayer.

Nothing wrong with any of that, right? So why did Jesus lambaste them? He had steam built up from watching them fail to walk the talk. They put aside God's commands when it suited them. Their hearts weren't in the right place.

Today is also the feast day of Thomas Cranmer, faithful Archbishop of Canterbury under King Henry the VIII and his son Edward, whose beautiful prose still fills our *Book of Common Prayer*. He was burnt at the stake when Bloody Mary forcefully re-imposed Roman Catholic practice. She thought her heart was in the right place. She thought she was agent of the one, true faith.

So how do we monitor our hearts? Rules alone weren't enough for the Pharisees or Bloody Mary. We do so by staying connected to other people who share our core faith and values, by staying connected in community, and listening for the guidance of the Spirit in one another. Our life's work right now is to simply stay in touch however we can.

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