

February 27, 2022
8th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Luke 6:39-45

Jesus told his disciples a parable, "Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove that splinter in your eye,' when you do not even notice the wooden beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother's eye. A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For people do not pick figs from thornbushes, nor do they gather grapes from brambles. A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil; for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks."

Background:

This gospel text is a continuation of Jesus's instruction to his disciples that began two weeks ago with the blessings and woes. That instruction continued last week with Jesus' instruction to love your enemies and do good to those who cannot repay you.

The human person at the time of Jesus was understood to have three facets, each associated with parts of the body. The eyes and the head were understood as those parts of the body that collected information. The ears and the mouth were looked upon as the centers of self-expression. Lastly, the hands and feet were understood as the parts of the body that put into action what a person had taken in from the eye and the head and was now centered in the heart. The authentic person was the one whose three parts were in harmony. They were also aware that there were those who would deliberately disguise their true self in order to win favor and approval from others.

In the synoptic gospels, Jesus was the only person who used the word hypocrite. In Luke 6:39-42, he used the term to characterize certain people as misguided teachers. He later called the crowd hypocrites, who knew how to accurately read the signs in nature but were unable to predict the present situation. Later in Luke, Jesus would once again use the term "hypocrite" to describe the crowd who criticized him for healing a woman on the Sabbath, while they would rescue an ox or donkey on the sabbath when necessary (Luke 13:15). In both cases, Jesus challenged the crowd to examine what their actions revealed about their interiors. The challenge to see clearly one's own life is not something to be undertaken with a blind guide.

Reflection Questions:

1. Who are the people who have helped you understand yourself, and your relationship to God?
2. Have there been individuals who may have acted like mentors, but who you eventually learned were not truly helpful?
3. Are there people who look to you as a mentor for their life? How does having that role for others affect you?
4. When you hear Jesus call some people hypocrites in today's gospel, what happens within you?
5. What do you hear Jesus saying to you when he exhorts his disciples to remove the beam in their own eye before removing the splinter in the eye of another?
6. Can you talk to God honestly about your desire to see the truth of your own life, the parts of your life that you find difficult to talk about, or some other aspect of your own life that arose as you read this gospel?

The gospel background and reflection questions are written by Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM. They are edited by Sister Anne Marie Lom, OSF and Joe Thiel. The excerpts from the Sunday readings are prepared by Joe Thiel. To be added to the distribution list, send your name and email address to annemarie.lom@gmail.com

Our Gospel Reflections are hosted by the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. Their homepage is <https://fscclalledtobe.org/>. One link there is labeled Franciscan Gospel Reflections. A click on the icon will take you to the Gospel reflections for the upcoming Sunday. By following this link, you will be able to blog or comment on the reflection questions. The material will be posted on Fridays and will be available until the following Friday when the new material is posted.

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Excerpts from the readings for February 27, 2022, the Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

When a sieve is shaken, the husks appear; so do one's faults when one speaks.
As the test of what the potter molds is in the furnace, so in tribulation is the test of the just.
The fruit of a tree shows the care it has had; so too does one's speech disclose the bent of one's mind.
Praise no one before he speaks, for it is then that people are tested.

Lord, it is good to give thanks to you, to sing praise to your name, Most High,
to proclaim your kindness at dawn and your faithfulness throughout the night.
The just one shall flourish like the palm tree, like a cedar of Lebanon shall he grow.
They that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.
They shall bear fruit even in old age; vigorous and sturdy shall they be,
Declaring how just is the Lord, my rock, in whom there is no wrong.

Brothers and sisters: When this which is corruptible clothes itself with incorruptibility
and this which is mortal clothes itself with immortality, then the word that is written shall come about:
Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?
The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.
But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted
to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

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do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own?
How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove that splinter in your eye,'
when you do not even notice the wooden beam in your own eye?
You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly
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nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit.
For people do not pick figs from thornbushes, nor do they gather grapes from brambles.
A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person
out of a store of evil produces evil; for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks."

Excerpts from Sirach 27:4-7; Psalm 92:2-3, 13-16; 1 Corinthians 15:54-58; and Luke 6:39-45

From Joe:

Friends,

Here are the gospel background and reflection questions for February 27th, as prepared by Franciscan spiritual director Fr. Paul Gallagher. The gospel from Luke has several familiar references in the one reading: "Can the blind guide the blind?" "Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye but not perceive the beam in your own?" "A rotten tree does not bear good fruit. A good person out of the goodness in his heart produces good." "From the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks."

The other readings also refer to a tree bearing fruit according to how it has been cared for, and that the spoken word reveals what has been nurtured within the speaker. In the first reading from Sirach: "One's faults appear when one speaks. As the fruit of a tree shows the care it has had; so does one's speech disclose one's mind..." "In tribulation is the test of the just." Psalm 92 proclaims, "It is good to give thanks and sing praise to the Lord Most High. The just one planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God." In the second reading, continuing from 1 Corinthians, Paul writes, "When this which is corruptible clothes itself with incorruptibility, and this which is mortal clothes itself with immortality, then death is swallowed up in victory through Jesus Christ, thanks be to God. In the Lord, your labor is not in vain."

Joe

> i < May the Word light your way each day!