



LIVING THE GOSPEL

**8th Sunday of Ordinary Time
March 2nd 2025**

Theme: "For every tree is known by its own fruit."

Gathering Prayer

All: Grant us, O Lord, we pray, that the course of our world may be directed by your peaceful rule and that your Church may rejoice, untroubled in her devotion. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Luke 6:39-45

³⁹ He also told them a parable: "Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? ⁴⁰ A disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher. ⁴¹ Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? ⁴² Or how can you say to your neighbor, 'Friend, let me take out the speck in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye. ⁴³ "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; ⁴⁴ for each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵ The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.

Gospel Focus

In this gospel, Jesus preaches the importance of being careful with our trust. Many voices claim to have spiritual leadership (now more than ever with the rise of influencer culture), but many of these do not see clearly enough to act as trustworthy guides. It is, of course, unrealistic to find a human teacher who is without sin or who will be perfect at all times. But Jesus offers us a parameter for discerning a good teacher: "every tree is known by its own fruit." When we find that someone's life and teaching bear good fruit, we can be reasonably confident that their heart is also good-and that god is at work in them.

Gospel Reflection

The most moving homily I ever heard was at a Mass with your Catholics who had a variety of physical disabilities. It was given by a young woman with cerebral palsy. The message straightforward and simple. "God loves you. God loves me. God loves

everybody. We have to love everybody, too. "Three times she repeated this message, as she turned to each side of the gathered assembly. She beamed as she struggles to get out the words and looked earnestly at everyone in the group to be sure they understood. There was no doubt in anyone's mind that she passionately believed this profound message and that her words came straight from her heart.

Both the first readings and the gospel today offer proverbs and admonition, several of which centred on God, can speak as did the young preacher who so moved me.

The readings today prompt us to reflect on the care that is needed in speaking. In an age where public discourse, particularly during election season, often degenerates into name-calling, spinning false accusations, and impugning the character of others, a person of faith stands out by his or her refusal to speak ill of others. Moreover, the gospel warns that one who is blind to the goodness in others, and who speaks evil of them instead, reveals his or her own puny measure of openness to God's goodness. These who see only their neighbours' tiny faults and rush to point those out expose the logjam that blocks their own hearts from receiving and giving God's unfathomable love. A starting point toward transformation of the heart that results in kind words can be vigilance over what one says, curbing the impulse to speak ill of another. That is only a beginning. The gospel envisions a point where the faithful disciple reaches maturity in cultivating inner goodness to such an extent that only good and kind speech would well up from within and pass through the lips.

The first notes that it is particularly in adversity that the inner disposition is revealed. "When a sieve is shaken, the husks appear." Anyone can speak well of others when all is going smoothly. But those who can resist returning insult for insult when others speak harshly or make false accusation show their inner mettle refined in tribulation. Like pottery that has passed through the fiery kiln, they emerge stronger, as their inner goodness is shaped to reflect all the more fully that of their master.

The power to be transformed in this way, as the second reading reminds us, comes from the One who has passed through the crucible of death, thus overcoming all sin and evil. "God loves you. God loves me. God loves everybody. We have to love everybody too." This is a pretty good summary of all that Christ said and did. What more would one want to say?

Old/New Testament and CCC links

First Reading — Sir 27:4-7

⁴ When a sieve is shaken, the husks appear; so do one's faults when one speaks.

⁵ As the test of what the potter molds is in the furnace, so in tribulation is the test of the just. ⁶ The fruit of a tree shows the care it has had; so too does one's speech disclose the bent of one's mind. ⁷ Praise no one before he speaks, for it is then that people are tested.

Responsorial Reading — "Ps 92:2-3, 13-14, 15-16."

R: Lord, it is good to give thanks to you. (R)

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praise to your name, Most High, to proclaim your kindness at dawn and your faithfulness throughout the night. **(R)**

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. **(R)**

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. **(R)**

Second Reading — 1 Cor 15:54-58

Brothers and sisters: ⁵⁴ 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. ⁵⁵ Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ 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.

Catechism of The Catholic Church

1755. A morally good act requires the goodness of the object, of the end, and of the circumstances together. An evil end corrupts the action, even if the object is good in itself (such as praying and fasting "in order to be seen by men"). The object of the choice can by itself vitiate an act in its entirety. There are some concrete acts - such as fornication - that it is always wrong to choose, because choosing them entails a disorder of the will, that is, a moral evil.

1756. It is therefore an error to judge the morality of human acts by considering only the intention that inspires them or the circumstances (environment, social pressure, duress or emergency, etc.) which supply their context. There are acts which, in and of themselves, independently of circumstances and intentions, are always gravely illicit by reason of their object; such as blasphemy and perjury, murder and adultery. One may not do evil so that good may result from it.

1783. Conscience must be informed and moral judgment enlightened. A well-formed conscience is upright and truthful. It formulates its judgments according to reason, in conformity with the true good willed by the wisdom of the Creator. The education of conscience is indispensable for human beings who are subjected to negative influences and tempted by sin to prefer their own judgment and to reject authoritative teachings.

2563. The heart is the dwelling-place where I am, where I live; according to the Semitic or Biblical expression, the heart is the place "to which I withdraw." The heart is our hidden center, beyond the grasp of our reason and of others; only the Spirit of God can fathom the human heart and know it fully. The heart is the place of decision, deeper than our psychic drives. It is the place of truth, where we choose life or death. It is the place of encounter, because as image of God we live in relation: it is the place of covenant.

2690 The Holy Spirit gives to certain of the faithful the gifts of wisdom, faith and discernment for the sake of this common good which is prayer (*spiritual direction*). Men and women so endowed are true servants of the living tradition of prayer.

According to St. John of the Cross, the person wishing to advance toward perfection should "take care into whose hands he entrusts himself, for as the master is, so will the disciple be, and as the father is so will be the son." And further: "In addition to being learned and discreet a director should be experienced. . . . If the spiritual director has no experience of the spiritual life, he will be incapable of leading into it the souls whom God is calling to it, and he will not even understand them."⁴⁷

Sharing and Discussion

- 1.** In verses 39-40, Jesus uses the metaphor of the blind leading the blind. What are the dangers, hidden or otherwise, of a blind leading the blind? What are some examples in our world today? Are these applicable to our spiritual journey?
- 2.** In what ways can we fill our hearts with good things, so that our words and actions reflect Christ's love?
- 3.** "What are some of your personal insights on this passage? How do you see its relevance in today's world?"

Closing Prayer

All: God our Father, you sent your Son into the world so that we might know you more perfectly. Hear our prayers this day as we seek to perfect our love for all your children throughout the world. We ask this through Christ or Lord. Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.