

From the PASTOR'S DESK



From the Fullness of the Heart the Mouth Speaks

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.

Today's Gospel passage is difficult for us to accept. None of us is innocent when it comes to there being a gap between what we are and what we say. We resist the idea that we can only say good things if we are good ourselves. But this is what Jesus is teaching today.

Our ability to speak is a powerful and dangerous tool. It allows us to communicate in ways that are often creative and subtle. Language permits us to speak what we imagine and what we feel. Language enables us to realize some truth or feel some emotion as we follow through an argument or read a moving story.

On the other hand, language can be used to manipulate others - often to their harm. Language can destroy, undermine, conceal, lie, and flatter. So, our wonderful gift of speech can criticize the actions of others when we are secretly guilty of the same faults. The negative side of language makes us feel uncomfortable with this Gospel. We might convince ourselves that our good words can have positive effects even if we remain sinners. They can't. Jesus admonishes us to remedy our faults before we try to correct others.

This Gospel sets out a vision of the integrity between what we are and what we say. It tells us to cultivate goodness in ourselves. It tells us to be concerned with our own spiritual and moral welfare if we want to be certain to help others.

We cannot give good advice to others if there is an absence of good in ourselves. We can't be sure it is good advice if we do not have the pattern of our own lives to guide. We owe it to others to make sure that our advice is effective. It is effective when we have struggled with ourselves to put it into practice.

Harmony within the elements of our lives brings us closer to God, who is perfect harmony. Disharmony between what we are and what we say leads to limited good. Harmony in our whole being holds out the promise of supreme goodness.

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