



February 27, 2022

Eighth Sunday of Ordinary Time

*When a sieve is shaken, the husks appear;
so do one's faults when one speaks.*
—Sirach 27:4



Dear Friends;

Someone said, *"What we see and love in others we see and love in ourselves; what we see and hate in others we see and hate in ourselves."* What happens when you have a lot of uncomfortable, embarrassing and nagging emotions that you don't want to unconsciously deal with? Beginning with Freud, psychologists tell us that we have a knack for projecting these unsettling emotions onto other people.

Other people can become the bearers of our unconscious self-perceived flaws. This kind of emotional displacement tries to make it easier to live with ourselves. We think everyone else is responsible for our emotional misery—not us! This does not work though. When we externalize our emotions and think we see them in others we continue to suffer. We create false self-images that portray us as *"the victim"* or the *"good person"* when in truth we are not.

The negative emotions that we project onto others are called the *"shadow."* Jesus calls it *"the plank in our eye."* We all have our shadow side or plank. The best way to healing our shadow or plank is to first accept that it exists. We need to come to terms with how we can project our own insecurities, failings, and inadequacies onto others. We must become aware of the sneaky habitual cycles in which we engage daily.

For example, we can convince ourselves that family members, in-laws, coworkers, or others *"hate us for no reason."* We are convinced that their words, tone of voice, or brief looks are signs of their inner hatred. Believing that someone "hates us" may come from our own insecurities or self loathing.

Another example is endemic in American culture, *"If I can do it, other people can as well."* While it can be flattering or motivating it is also completely unrealistic in others. Often with our children we can commit this kind of projection. *"If I was a good athlete, she will be as well."* Or with co-workers we think, *"If I could organize that project, he can as well."* This kind of projection fails to consider that we are not all exactly alike or equipped with the same talents and abilities. This kind of projection creates a lot of frustration and disappointment.

Finally, a *fear that a spouse/partner is having an affair* or is untrustworthy can be a reflection of how you may feel about yourself. All normal people at one point or another can feel an attraction to other people. Sometimes when we discover that about ourselves, we meet it with fear and shame which then we project on the other.

It is important to remember that these examples only reflect what *sometimes happens not what always happens*. For example a relative may really dislike you, or your partner may really be cheating on you, in which case we must do something about it. However, we should not rule out automatically that we may be projecting our own insecurities onto others.

Jesus invites us to first consider our own hearts with their own faults, failings and insecurities. Facing that in ourselves of which we are afraid or disapprove, we can see things more clearly. Only then can we gently aid others with gentle fraternal correction. And the fruit of such an encounter needs to be respect and peace, because it is rooted in honesty, self-knowledge and love. *"For every tree is known by its fruit."* This week we begin the Season of Lent. This is a great time for us to explore our shadows and remove our planks so we can see our way to Divine Love.

Peace,

Fr Ron

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