

8TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME 2022

“Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven”. (cf Luke 6:37) These are very strong words!

We are called to take a good look at ourselves. To see beyond the mirror image of ourselves. It calls us to avoid judging others and to look inwardly examining ourselves before we speak. It calls to avoid gossiping, judging, detraction, condemning, or harming the reputation of others by our careless and unbridled utterances.

How can we understand if our view is clear or if it is obstructed by a log? And again, Jesus tells us so: “no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; for each tree is known by its own fruit” (vv. 43-44). The fruits are actions but also words. A tree’s quality can also be understood from words. Indeed, those who are good draw good from their hearts and their mouths, and those who are bad draw bad, by practicing the most damaging exercise among us, which is grumbling, gossiping, speaking ill of others. This destroys. It destroys the family, destroys school, destroys the workplace, destroys the neighborhood. Wars begin from the tongue. When unleashed it is more powerful than an atomic bomb. Let us consider a bit this lesson of Jesus and ask ourselves the question: do I speak ill of others? Do I always seek to tarnish others? Is it easier for me to see others’ flaws than my own? To I understand the way others react towards me is because of me. Let us try to correct ourselves at least a little: it will do us all good.

A responsible man or woman is he who thinks before he speaks, and who knows when to keep silence and when to talk. Good words flow from a generous and kind heart while evil and destructive words flow from the same source. A tree is known by its fruit and out of the

abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, were all we heard in the readings of today.

Each one of us has had experiences of saying things we deeply regretted later, but by then, the harm has already been done. Even though we may revoke our words, but the initial damage or harm may not be reversed. In our relationships, we often say abominable and hurtful things when there is a conflict or misunderstanding only to regret them later. We judge others a lot. We complain about what we suffer from others without thinking about what they suffer from us. The root of it all is selfishness!

When we judge others, we make reconciliation with them a difficult task.” *If you judge people, you have no time to love them*” – Mother St. Theresa. This is most powerful statement. Learn to love others with the love of God. “*Kind words are like honey—sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.*” (cf proverbs 16:24)

Whatever be the reason, such could be avoided when we are reserved in speech, when we pause reaction to consider all the evidence on the ground and when we speak with a compassionate and empathic spirit.

Purity of intention matters a lot in our relationship with God and others. When we mistakenly hurt others by our words, our intention if it is pure, will evoke a feeling of remorse, which will lead to a sincere request for forgiveness. But most times our hearts are not pure, so we sound judgmental and condemnatory. We may say it is they who have hurt me. We fail to see it is we who have hurt.

~No one except God is good enough to judge others because only God sees the whole truth, and only He can read the human heart. Hence, only He has the ability, right and authority to judge us. There are constant examples of God’s mercy to the greatest of sinners.

~We do not see all the facts or circumstances or the power of the temptation which has led a person to do something evil.

~ We are often prejudiced in our judgment of others, and total fairness cannot be expected from us, especially when we are judging those near or dear to us.

~ We have no right to judge because we have the same faults as the one, we are judging and often in a greater degree (Do not judge another because if you found yourself in the same situation as that person, you might even do the worst- be compassionate.

Abraham Lincoln said *that the only one who has the right to criticize is the one who has the heart to help.*

~Hence, we should leave all judgment to God, practice mercy and forgiveness, and pray for God's grace to get rid of all forms of hypocrisy in our lives. Let us remember the warning of saints: "*When you point one finger of accusation at another, three of your fingers point at you*"

Father forgive them. Father forgive me. For we know not what we do!

Our Lord said to sister Faustina:

Let souls who are striving for perfection particularly adore My mercy, because the abundance of graces which I grant them flows from My mercy. I desire that these souls distinguish themselves by boundless trust in My mercy. I myself will attend to the sanctification of such souls. I will provide them with everything they will need to attain sanctity.

(1578)

Let our judgment of souls cease, for God's mercy upon them is extraordinary. (1684)

--St Faustina