

8th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

GOSPEL

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Jesus told a parable to his disciples: 'Can one blind man guide another? Surely both will fall into a pit? The disciple is not superior to his teacher; the fully trained disciple will always be like his teacher. Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the plank in your own? How can you say to your brother, "Brother, let me take out the splinter that is in your eye," when you cannot see the plank in your own? Hypocrite! Take the plank out of your own eye first, and then you will see clearly enough to take out the splinter that is in your brother's eye.

'There is no sound tree that produces rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree that produces sound fruit. For every tree can be told by its own fruit: people do not pick figs from thorns, nor gather grapes from brambles. A good man draws what is good from the store of goodness in his heart; a bad man draws what is bad from the store of badness. For a man's words flow out of what fills his heart.'

(Luke 6:39-45)

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

Parables are often used by Jesus as a teaching tool. They are generally brief stories with a double meaning, and we should read them for their metaphorical interpretation rather than their literal meaning.

EXPLORING THE WORD

Luke continues with his examination of the new order ushered in by discipleship and turns to a very personal dimension of what it means to be a follower of Christ. The 'fully trained disciple will always be like his teacher.' Jesus offers himself as a model of non-judgment. This, after all, belongs only to God. There are echoes here of last week's text: 'Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge and you will not be judged yourselves; grant pardon and you will be pardoned.' Disciples must recognise their own shortcomings and work tirelessly to rectify these so that what issues forth from their hearts are the good fruits that only true goodness of heart can produce.

- How easy or difficult do you find it to be self-reflective or self-critical?
- How can you encourage each other to recognise and nurture the goodness inside us all?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- Do you find it easier to judge the shortcomings of others than to face your own shortcomings?
- What fills your heart?
- Take a brief period of quiet time each day this week to undertake an 'examination of conscience' to discern what truly fills your heart and what fruit you can produce.
- Try not to judge others for what you may see as their shortcomings.
- Have you ever been the victim of someone's unfair judgment or criticism? How did this make you feel? Have you ever been too quick to judge someone else or been forced to confront your own failings? What steps did you take to make changes? Share your reflections together.
- You could use today's communion antiphon as your prayer this week:

I will sing to the Lord who has been bountiful to me, sing psalms to the name of the Lord Most High.

