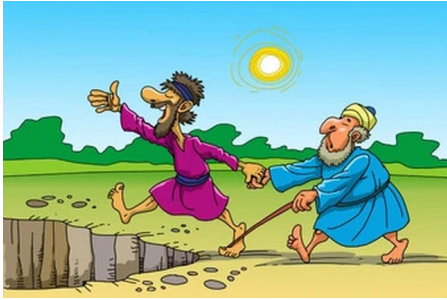


# LOOKING AT LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPEL

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**EIGHTH SUNDAY IN  
ORDINARY TIME**

**17th February 2022**

**Luke 6:39** Jesus told his disciples a parable: “Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? <sup>40</sup> A disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher. <sup>41</sup> Why do you see the speck in your neighbour’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? <sup>42</sup> Or how can you say to your neighbour, ‘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 neighbour’s eye.

**Luke 6:43** “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; <sup>44</sup> for each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. <sup>45</sup> 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.

Much of the teaching of Jesus reflects the style of the wisdom writing of the Old Testament that was based on simple reflections on human experience. In this gospel those who would be disciples of Jesus are reminded that you cannot give what you do not have. As disciples we must ‘learn’ from the teacher (this is the root meaning of the word disciple) and in the process become like him. Otherwise we are simply hypocrites who enjoy lording it over others and who lack the humility to see themselves as they really are.

**SEAN GOAN—Let the Reader Understand, Year C**

## COMMENTARY

**v.40** For Luke, Jesus is the teacher and cannot be surpassed. Nevertheless, Luke inserts an adjective “fully qualified”. The emphasis is not so much on matching the teacher’s knowledge but rather on the formation and development of the disciple’s moral imagination.

**v.41-42** There must be some humour in the outlandish contrast between speck and a log! Again, the emphasis falls on the training and formation of the true disciple, attending to his/her own faults first of all. This is not a general educational or psychological principle; rather, Luke has in mind that the guidance needed is to be found precisely in the teaching of Jesus, the teaching par excellence. The new “seeing” involved takes in a range of reactions and realities such as perceptions, disposition of the heart and intentions of the mind. As Luke Timothy Johnson puts it: “character precedes action.”

The use of the word “hypocrite” in Luke is instructive. The root meaning of hypocrite is an actor, one who wears a mask.

**v.43** The whole point of the Sermon is to shape the inner person so that s/he may bear good fruit. Unlike the decorations on a Christmas tree, the fruits of the Christian life must grow from within.

To complete the picture, the concluding verses (6.46-49) should be read. They function as a conclusion to the whole Sermon on the Plain.

## Thought for the day

For many, it is seemingly possible to sleep-walk through life, to live on an entirely sentient level. Perhaps our current culture of distraction supports such superficial so-called living. Many, however, are dissatisfied and long for an awakening, a conversion, a transformation, for something more. Such a hunger of the heart is acknowledged in many religions and philosophies — Jesus’ teaching here could just as easily be on the lips of the Gautama Buddha. The difference for Christians is the grace of God in Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, it is all grace, grace upon grace as the Prologue of John puts it.

**KIERAN O’MAHONY OSA — [www.tarsus.ie](http://www.tarsus.ie)**

Today we have forgotten what it means to be still, to interrupt our hurrying for a few minutes, to free ourselves from our tensions for some moments and let the quiet and calm of sacred space permeate our souls. Many men and women are surprised on discovering that frequently it is enough to pause and remain in silence for a time to soothe the spirit and recover clarity and peace. How badly today we need this peacefulness to help us enter into contact with ourselves, to regain our freedom, and to release all our inner energy.

Accustomed as we are to noise and talk, we have no idea of the benefits of silence and solitude. We are eager for news, images and impressions. Only that which we can listen to in the depths of our being is capable of truly nourishing and enriching us. We have forgotten this.

Without this inner peace, one cannot listen to God, recognise God's presence in our lives, and grow from within as human beings and believers. According to Jesus, we draw good "out of the good stored in our hearts". Good does not arise in us spontaneously. We need to cultivate it and let it build up in the depths of the heart. Many people could begin to change their lives if they succeeded in pausing to listen to the good that God awakens in the stillness of their souls.

### **JOSÉ A PAGOLA—Following in the Footsteps of Jesus, Year C**

#### **POINTERS FOR PRAYER**

1. Can you remember an occasion when you were giving out about the behaviour of another person, and later realised you had some of the same fault yourself? Was that a wake-up call for you? Jesus tells us it is more constructive to correct our own faults, than complain about the faults of others.
2. If we want to help other people, we need to have our feet on the ground, with a realistic awareness of our gifts and our limitations. Otherwise we will be impractical, like the blind leading the blind. What has helped you to be realistic about what you can and cannot do?
3. "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit." This parable invites us to examine the motivation behind what we do. If our basic motivation is love, then our lives will bear good fruit. If love is absent from our lives, then the fruits will be conflict, disharmony and abuse of people for our own selfish ends.

#### **JOHN BYRNE OSA—Intercom**

Jesus reminds the disciples that if they are to teach others, then they must first be students who have learned to imitate their Teacher. This is a reminder to each of us to remain close to Jesus, so that we are continuously nourished and taught by him.

There is another warning in this text too: against hypocrisy. Pope Francis writes about 'universal love'. This involves loving actual human beings in all their messiness and brokenness. We are urged to stop and think before we make harsh judgements about others, because we never really know what is going on in another person's life.

The final part of this gospel speaks about what fills our hearts. If the media we consume is littered with fake news, bitterness, suspicion and hatred, then this is probably what we are cultivating in ourselves. On the other hand if we spend time with the Teacher, where we experience healing, learn to forgive, and listen to another's point of view, then our hearts will cultivate universal love.

*This week, pay more attention to what you feed your mind and heart. Are you nourishing your whole self in a positive way? What spiritual practices do you have to help you to learn from Jesus, the Teacher?*

#### **TRÍONA DOHERTY & JANE MELLETT—Go Deeper**

This passage can be read in the context of last week's reading, as four parables, four concrete applications of the two central principles stated in last week's passage – loving our enemies and sharing our possession with the poor:

- verse 39: enlightened leadership
- verse 40: trained disciples
- verses 41-42: hypocrisy in correcting others
- verses 43 – 45: action must flow from faith, from inner conviction. Using words for good rather than for evil is a very concrete application which we might want to reflect on. There are many ways in which we can make a destructive use of words, forgetting that they have tremendous power.

#### **Reflection on the Text**

Good news: the fully trained disciple will be like his teacher. We, Jesus' disciples, are called to be like him. Our doubts about ourselves, our feelings of inadequacy arise, in part, from the fact that we forget that we did not choose him – he chose us; no one can come to Jesus unless God draws them. We have been chosen, God has chosen to trust us, God believes that we can be true disciples. This should be for us a source of great joy and great humility, and determination to become "fully trained," and self-confident. I am chosen. This is something to be celebrated gratefully.

#### **MICHEL DE VERTEUIL—Lectio Divina on the Sunday Gospels, Year C**