

SMALL GROUP REFLECTIONS
EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
February 27, 2022

SIR 27: 4-7; 1 COR 15: 54-58; LK 6: 39-45

GOSPEL OF LUKE



Jesus told his disciples a parable, "Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove that splinter in your eye,' when you do not even notice the wooden beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother's eye.

"A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For people do not pick figs from thornbushes, nor do they gather grapes from brambles. 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."

REFLECTION

Today's readings exhort us Christian disciples to form ourselves — mind and heart — in imitation of Christ so we can better reflect His goodness in our daily lives.

The first reading from Sirach offers timeless counsel: "the fruit of a tree shows the care it has had: so too does one's speech disclose the bent of one's mind. Praise no one before he speaks." Jesus uses the very same analogy in today's Gospel reading from Luke: "A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit."

Everything we have is a gift from God to be used for His honor and glory. This includes the gift of speech and, even more broadly, even forms of modern-day communication — email, text, Twitter, Facebook, and the rest. What comes forth from our mouths, or keyboard, or phone, reflects what is in our minds and hearts. Our ability to communicate with each other is itself a gift which we must steward well.

SPIRITUAL TRAINING WITH THE MASTER

Jesus reminds us in this week's Gospel, "No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher." How do we obtain this training? From Jesus!

Be trained by the Teacher so that our minds and hearts will be aligned with His mind and heart, and our speech and actions will reflect His goodness. Shortly, we will enter Lent. Begin to consider ways to go into 40 days of spiritual training this Lent, spending dedicated time with the Teacher – Discuss.

- We can seek more opportunities to listen and speak with Him in quiet, regular times of prayer.
- We can study His life through reading the Scriptures.
- We can find healing and strength in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- We can partake of His Body and Blood in the Eucharist.

FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT LISTENING SESSIONS

Our Parish Synod formal listening sessions are drawing to a close. We have done a lot of speaking and listening. By doing so, we've made ourselves vulnerable. As we hear in the first reading from Sirach: "When a sieve is shaken, the husks appear; so, do one's faults when one speaks." Hopefully, then, we have become more attentive to removing the planks from our own eyes than the splinter in the eyes of others (Lk).

As this portion of our journey draws to a close, we hope and pray that the process we have undertaken will bear good fruit. If we have listened and spoken out of the goodness of our hearts, we are promised that it will (Lk). So, let us go back to two of the fundamental questions at the heart of the Synod on Synodality:

- How can we be good companions on the journey – to people we pray with at Church, people who are seekers of faith, people who are lost?
- How do we continue to "journey together"? Who do we need to do a better job of inviting to our walking together?
- What about your faith journey brings you joy?
- What do you hope for the Church in the next millennium?

THE PARISH SYNOD – Feb.27 On-Campus and ONLINE SURVEY through March 5 - English and Spanish – and check out the Topics & Reflection questions and more.

<https://www.stmarymagdalen.org/ParishInfo/synod/ParishSynod.htm>



PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR THE SYNOD

*We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name.
With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts;
Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.
We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor partiality influence our actions.
Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together
to eternal life and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.
All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever. Amen.*

Sources: Ascension Catholic, CatholicStewards.com