

8th Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 27, 2022

Reflection by Sister Patricia Crowley, OSB

Sirach 27;4-7; Psalm 92: 2-3 – 13-16; I Cor 15:54-58; Luke 6: 39-45

- I. Introduction
 - A. A dark week sprinkled with bits of light and good news
 - B. Ukraine invasion, Putin threats, winter storms
 - C. Russian protests, a groundbreaking SCOTUS appointee, Ketanji Brown Jackson, end of mask mandate coming up, our Federation's 100th anniversary, the end of black History month, a wonderful retreat in the Oasis Room yesterday, a celebration last evening of Maissa's being granted asylum...
 - D. In these first weeks of Ordinary Time, we have heard the beginning of the Gospel according to Luke. In the gospel passages of the last weeks, it seems Luke is trying to recount Jesus' basic message in many different dictums and images for those who will hear.
 - E. This passage continues the Sermon on the plains which began a few weeks ago on the shores of the Lake where Jesus urged Peter and his companions to put their nets out into the deep and then, followed with:
 - i. 4 Positives and 4 negatives, Blessed are you and 4 statements of Woe to you.....
 - ii. Love of one's enemies; be kind to those who are ungrateful to you.....
 - iii. Other.....
 - F. Matthew addresses this to the Scribes and Pharisees and Luke to the disciples "who must exercise self-criticism in the example and inspiration of Jesus"

- II. One of the main teachings that Luke presents is one that is challenging for me and, I presume, for each of us. There is a story which demonstrates that teaching:

Here is a story rather well-known in India attributed to Mahatma Gandhi...

A woman walked with her son many miles to come to Gandhi. She was very worried about her son's health because he was eating too much sugar. She came to Gandhi and said, "Please, sir, can you tell my son to stop eating sugar."

Gandhi looked at her and thought for a while and finally said, "Ok, but not today. Bring him back in two weeks time."

She was disappointed and took her son home. Two weeks later she made that long journey again and went to Gandhi with her son.

Gandhi simply said to the boy, "You must stop eating sugar. It's not good for your health, my boy!"

The woman was confused and asked him, "Gandhi, please tell me: why did you want me to wait two weeks to bring back my son, just to say this one sentence."

Gandhi said, "Because before I could tell your son to stop eating sugar, I had to stop eating sugar first."

It is said, the boy had such respect for Gandhi that he stopped eating sugar and lived a healthy life.

Remove the splinter from your eye..... Easier said than done!

- III. This passage is chock full of metaphors and images.....
- A. A measure
 - B. Splinter or a whole log in your eye
 - C. A tree and its fruits
 - D. The treasure of the heart
 - E. A teacher and students
 - F. A sieve shaken and husks coming out
 - G. A potter with clay in the furnace
 - H. Blind leading the blind

- I. In the gospels, parables and images are usually intended to invite us to “play with” , to turn over in our mind some part of what is told. We are urged to listen to what is unexpected in that image or parable.

IV. Can a blind person lead a blind person?

The questions that are posed are “can a blind person lead a blind person?” or “will they both fall into a pit?”.

- V. So...to what is all this pointing? The message is perhaps in the psalm refrain and in the alleluia versicle and the last line of the gospel....

- A. Shine like lights in the world as you hold on to the word of life.

Our own practice of Lectio teaches us to “hold on to the word of life”.

We are called to *act* externally and to *be* internally what Jesus teaches. We are called to shine like lights in the world and How? By “holding on to the word of Life”!

In the last line of this Lucan passage – “From the fullness of the heart, the mouth speaks.” Of course, that takes work!

- B. Remember that the Sermon on the Plain was introduced by a story about fishing all night and getting nothing and being told then to launch the net out into the deep.
- C. Perhaps the message today is to nurture our own depths for it is there that each of us experiences in the fullness of the heart and there, the fullness of life in the Divine if we can remove the splinter in our own eyes..

VI. Conclusion

Luke’s message has Jesus directing this all to the disciples. We are those disciples. Let us hold this Word and Shine like lights in the world as we do so and not be afraid to lower our nets into the deep of our own being!