



The Holy Scriptures
are our letters
from home

8th Sunday Ord. Time, Yr C

Lectio Divina

Lectio: Jesus is beginning his public ministry and in the midst of presenting his unique understandings. How would he live up to his announced purpose to bring Good News to the poor? He went about preaching in synagogues curing the sick and people were crowding around Jesus to listen to him. Along the way, he was gathering (with a miracle) the first of his disciples (cf Lk 4:14-6:11)¹. What sort of teacher or preacher was he? Would he be a teacher like they knew? Teachers would gather disciples who would then spread the teacher's teachings. Finally he named his twelve apostles from all of his disciples² (Lk 6:12-16). Would the Twelve become disciples as they knew of disciples?³ Jesus' preaching and actions seemed contradictory to usual practice and riled the religious authorities. Jesus needed to explain himself. So, this lengthy presentation⁴ is Jesus' way of explaining himself and helping people to 'get on his wavelength'. Jesus began with his notion of the 'Blessings and Woes'. He then went on to explain his notion of love as: selfless and total (the last two Sundays' texts). But these notions were counter-cultural and sounded like unachievable goals.

► So, our text presents these same notions through examples (parables) that people could understand. With faith these notions are natural and achievable! Who would be given the gift of faith to believe in, and so act on, Jesus' teachings? Would the people, the disciples, the Twelve, the religious authorities, the nations, be so gifted??⁵ And when gifted, how open would they be to respond to the gift of faith?⁶

Read: Luke 6: 39 - 45

Meditatio: Have I the stamina to keep listening to Jesus, not just to this text but to the whole Gospel? Am I looking to find new ways for my life in Jesus? Am I blinding myself to the challenges and/or opportunities before me? How trustworthy are the people and/or the sources that I use to guide or inspire me? Do I think I know better than Jesus? Am I shaping my life on Jesus' life? Am I critical of other people's failings? Do I pray for sinners and wait, as long as it may take, for them to ask me for advice? Am I honest with myself about my failings? Am I timely in confessing my sins and using the Sacrament of Reconciliation? How clearly can I see the reasons why other people choose to do what they do? Can I ever fully understand another person – only God knows the heart? What motivates me; what's filling my heart? Can I start to be known to others by the words I speak, the actions I do? Am I reflecting the blessings of the Lord or am I cringing before the Lord's woes (warnings)? Is my loving, selfless and total? Am I a true follower and disciple of Jesus?

Oratio: Pray that we will closely follow Jesus. Pray for sinners. Pray that we may reflect the patience of Jesus. Pray that love will fill our hearts. Pray that we will be shielded from misconceptions and deceptions and anyone who promotes them. Pray for world leaders that their concern will always be the good of those they lead. Pray that we refrain from judgment of evil doers; while never condoning the evil they do. Pray that our faith will guide our actions. Pray that we will seek forgiveness for our failings. Pray that we will 'wear our hearts on our sleeves' – i.e. that we be proud of being known for selfless and total love. Pray that we will receive with joy and thanksgiving the blessings of the Lord. Pray that we will heed the woes (warnings) of the Lord. Pray that we will produce good fruit for the kingdom of God.

Contemplatio – Dwell in stillness, simply aware of the boundless expanse of mercy that surrounds you.

After your prayer – Be good examples to others.

✍ Fr Joe

Luke 6: 39 - 45

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 disciples 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 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 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.'

Notes:

N.B. Ordinary Time's Sunday readings are suspended for the Seasons of Lent, and Easter. Also, the four feasts of Pentecost, Ascension, Trinity and Corpus Christi, 'are' in Ordinary Time and their readings replace the readings from Ordinary time. Effectively there is a movable gap in Ordinary Time readings each year. This gap of 4 to 5 weeks can range from the 6th to 12th Sundays in Ordinary Time; it depends on the movable Feast of Easter. Sunday readings that are skipped are still worth your (Lenten) reflection.

1 All these first actions of Jesus have been covered in 3rd to 5th Sundays of Ordinary Time Yr B.

2 Disciples are followers intent on listening to a teacher. They may or may not be committed to following the teacher or true believers in the teacher. Jesus names some from his disciples as apostles. The word 'disciple' has its Latin roots in the word 'to learn'. Disciples are learners, not yet teachers; they are not assured of ever becoming teachers. Whatever, they will always be building on or repeating the teachings of the teacher who taught them. An apostle is one 'sent out' by the teacher. There is a sort of contradiction at this point in Luke's Gospel. Though chosen as apostles they have not yet been 'sent out'. They will not be sent out until this first period of Jesus' teachings are complete, Lk 9:1.

3 This question was first posed when Jesus was about to call fishermen as I indicated in Lectio introduction to Lk 5:1-11 for 5th Sunday Ordinary Time Year C. Jesus indicates, in our text, that his disciples would be listeners to him as the teacher i.e. in the way the people knew of the disciple-teacher relationship.

4 This lengthy presentation goes from Lk 6:17 to the end Lk Ch. 8. The first 'speech', on the plain, ends with the end of Ch. 6, Lk 6:49. This 'speech' concludes with Jesus lamenting those who hear his words (teachings), but do not act on them.

5 Jesus will move on and talk about faith after his 'speech' on the plain starting Lk 7:1.

6 Jesus would give the 'parable of the Sower' to highlight the varying responses to the gift of faith, Lk 8:4-15. This is part of the lengthy presentation which, at least in part, was to prepare the Twelve to be 'sent out' on mission, Lk 9:1ff.