



7th Sunday Ord. Time, Yr C

Lectio Divina

Lectio: Jesus is starting out in his public ministry. He began with proclaiming his mission in his home town. The people there empathized with his mission to bring Good News¹ to the poor. But they rejected him because he couldn't be a prophet, they 'knew' him cf Lk 4:14-30! He continued teaching and his authority as a prophet was accepted elsewhere Lk 4:31-32. His miracles caused confusion. People were asking: "*What does this mean?*" Lk 5:36a. He chooses his first disciples but then confuses them: *You will catch people from now on.*", Lk 5:10c. He forgives a paralytic but they say: "*What a blasphemy!*", Lk 5:20a. Jesus calls a presumed sinner to be one of his disciples and the religious authorities complain, Lk 5:30a. Jesus says he is master of the Sabbath but this causes the authorities to plan to get rid of Jesus, Lk 6:5&11 resp.. Jesus names his twelve disciples to be apostles but they are a motley crew, Lk 6:12-16! Jesus was not being understood; there was indecision about his identity!

Jesus began to explain himself in the list of 'Blessings and Woes' (last Sunday's text). The 'blessings' were the Good News proclaimed to the poor and oppressed². The 'woes' were warnings for the rich and renowned³. The Good News was to create a new world. Everyone³, the rich to the poor, must come to live in total dependence on God's love, care and blessings; we are all equal under God! With this trust in God, an honest openness to each other is possible, i.e. the ground for true reconciliation and a new world.

► In our text, Jesus continues to illustrate his total trust in the will of God the Father which he comes to fulfil; those ways which shape his very self⁴. He is a man (and a God) of selfless and total love.

Read: Luke 6: 27 - 38

Meditatio: What opportunities do I take/make to listen to Jesus? Do I take Jesus' teachings seriously? Do I just 'keep the peace' – keep things balanced, or, do I risk to do even more to 'shift the goalposts' to love and service? For me, are enemies those out to hurt me, or, those who don't yet know love that I could help by surprising them by love? How have I been hurt by hate, disparagement or mistreatment – how did I react? Do I give back as good as I received – 'tooth for tooth'? Is my instinct in relationships, one or more of: to pray with/for the other, to ask a blessing, to 'hold my peace', to do enough and a bit more, to better the lot of both parties, or to ...? Do I need to treasure relationships and build my relationships more closely around the ways of love? Am I a generous giver? Have I people I shun because they are 'not good people' and/or not worthy of me or my standards⁵ – yet Jesus chose a motley crew and came to save sinners? Do I only do things when there is a reward for doing them? Am I ready to suffer with (i.e. be compassionate to) others or do I blind myself to people's sufferings? For me in relationships, is 'being with' others important, or, do I always have to be doing something? Do I resist the temptation to judge or even condemn others? Do I trust that God sees all the good I do and he will reward me far in excess of the good I did – it's true, it's Good News!?

Oratio: Pray that we can be better listeners. Pray that we will live by Jesus' teachings and not 'pick and choose' between them. Pray that we will treat everybody as loved and special to God even enemies and those who mistreat us. Pray that the cycle of 'violence for violence' will be broken by selfless and courageous love. Pray that we will work together at improving our relationships with each other. Pray that we will never choose hurtful ways to solve problems, disputes or misunderstandings. Pray that we will be known for our generosity and magnanimous care. Pray that will not look to any reward for the good we do. Pray for the right use of money. Pray in wonder of God's love for all. Pray that we will leave judgement to God. Pray for judges.

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

After your prayer – Do enough but also a bit more.

✍ Fr Joe

Luke 6: 27 - 38

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I say this to you who are listening⁶: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly. To the man who slaps you on one cheek, present the other cheek too; to the man who takes your cloak from you, do not refuse your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and do not ask for your property back from the man who robs you. Treat others as you would like them to treat you. If you love those who love you, what thanks can you expect? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what thanks can you expect? For even sinners do that much. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what thanks can you expect? Even sinners lend to sinners to get back the same amount. Instead, love your enemies and do good, and lend without any hope of return. You will have a great reward, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.'

'Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge, and you will not be judged yourselves; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned yourselves; grant pardon, and you will be pardoned. Give, and there will be gifts for you: a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap; because the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given back.'

Notes:

1 It is the Good News: of freedom, of salvation, of how God has sent his Son, in Jesus, to save us from our sinning, of the coming of the kingdom of God, of the creation of a new and eternal world where all are at home with God in his glory, and, of a reward far in excess of the good we may do.

2 The blessings are the fruits of the coming of the kingdom of God. These blessings were being denied to the poor by the rich and their oppressors. The Good News was that these blessings would be restored to the poor and oppressed through the gift from God of salvation in Jesus. The rich had the blessings already but woe to them, they thought of these blessings as their right and not as gifts from God.

3 Consider: Lk 6:35b&c: "... you will be sons of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked."

4 These same understandings will be the foundation of the New World, the object of the Good News.

5 I.e. Do I judge others? Do others have to meet standards I set?

6 These words are added for clarity; it is not in the text in the Bible. It refers back to Lk 6:18 when people gathered to hear Jesus. Jesus began speaking to this 'listening' crowd with the 'Blessings and Woes'. He immediately continues with his 'Love of Enemies' speech, our text. It reminds us to listen not just hear but to listen. Listening compels us to (re)act. Jesus refers to this compulsion, to listen & act, at the end of his teaching to this 'listening' crowd Lk 6:49.

N.B. magnanimous means: *generous in forgiving an insult or injury; free from petty resentfulness or vindictiveness.* Quoted from Macquarie Encyclopedic Dictionary Heritage Pub. 2nd Edn 2011 © 2010, p749, 1.