

## 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday OT - Luke 6:39-45

The author Peter Kreeft writes, "Of the five parables or analogies in this passage, the most important one is Jesus' poking fun at pride and our sense of superiority by saying, 'Can a blind person guide a blind person?' The image of blind leading the blind is straight out of Charlie Chaplin, or Monty Python.

"...Jesus is deliberately poking fun at pride here in using an outrageous image like a log in the eye. If we take the analogy literally, as a robot or a computer would, we will think it really stupid: logs don't fit into eyes. But that would only prove our own stupidity. *The point is not literal but analogical*; as a log is much bigger than a splinter, so our own faults are much bigger than the fault we criticize in others."

In the gospel of John, the passage of the *Man Born Blind*, shows the blindness of the Pharisees by their refusing to admit Jesus' miracle because he cured the man on the Sabbath. Jesus' reply was, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those *who do not see might see*, and those *who do see might become blind*." The above passage is really about the eyes of faith. But it cannot stop there, since faith is the beginning of our journey to follow Christ in love; a *tough love that reminds us to **examine ourselves first*** before we criticize others.

Sister Verna Holyhead writes in *Give Us This Day*, "What Jesus teaches, he lives, and in today's continuation of the Sermon on the Plain he is the wisdom teacher who voices his expectation of this same integrity in his disciples. If we are blind to our own shortcomings, yet judgmental about those of our sisters and brothers, we have no right to guide them with our advice; we will only succeed in dragging them down into the metaphorical ditch rather than helping them out of their difficulties."

The third parable concerns trees and their fruits. The tree is a common biblical image for the wise individual or for the people as a whole, as in the preaching of Isaiah and of the Baptist. In Jesus' parable of the fig tree in Luke and in his cursing of the tree in Mark, it symbolizes unfruitful Israel. Here, it must also be applied to Jesus' *Sermon on the Plains* in Luke's gospel. The fruit that the Christian disciple is expected to bear, is the teaching of the Sermon on the plains put into practice. This is what a good man produces from the treasure of his heart, the hundredfold that comes from faithful listening to the Word through contemplation. The words that the believer speaks, are to well out of a heart full to the brim with the teaching of Christ.

That is where a ***well formed conscious*** is so important that even the Church realized this, though they do not always respect our conscious by telling us how to vote. John Henry Newman explains this quite well in his major writings on conscious. "Conscious," he writes, "has to do with persons and with actions only insofar as they are "**personal**"—though not insofar as they concern any persons; rather, my conscience is concerned with me alone and with my actions and with others only insofar as they have something to do with me."

What Newman is saying is that our conscious is personal simply because God is directing us in our actions from within each and every individual, even though we have to choose in the end to act or not to act on our personal conscious. And continuing, he writes, "If I am asked why I believe in a God, I answer that it is because I believe in myself, for I feel it impossible to believe in my own existence without believing also in the existence of Him, who believes as a Personal, All-seeing, All-judging **Being in my conscience.**"

If you truly believe in this human mental faculty called ***conscious*** that separates our actions into good and bad, along with but separate from our memory, imagination and our sense of beauty, then how can anyone not believe in a personal God?!. But unlike *memory* and our *sense of beauty*, which have to do with ***objects***, conscience has to do with ***persons*** and with actions only insofar as they are personal, our own.

If you can understand this, then today's gospel will not only make sense, but justifies Jesus' exaggeration of someone trying to take the splinter out of another person's eye! Only God can see into someone else's personal life history and guide that person how they should act day by day because of our **personal** relationship with the Divine.

We only trust other people's judgement if we sense that they are open to understanding ours. And the more the other person has experienced what we have, the more we may even trust them, including the Church. "The fact that besides me there is another participant who has a concern in my behavior is contained in the experience of conscience, and conscience know that it is dealing with **Someone**, not something."

And what is the foundation of the relationship between God and our personal conscious? It is **agape**, Divine Love.