

Homily for VIII (8) Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C 27-02-2022 by Fr. Lubem Robert Waya, osj.

First Reading: Sirach 27:4-7

Psalm: Psalm 92

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 15: 54-58

Gospel: Luke 6: 39-45

AM I PRODUCING GOOD FRUITS?

It is often said that a tree is known by its fruits and that the test of fire makes fine steel. This means that everything in life is evaluated in one way or the other, and this does not exclude man. Man's test however is premised on the kinds of deeds he produces through his words and actions. Those are the fruits he bears. And just as by fruits a tree is known so also by actions which are the human fruits, our personality is known. That is why the wise sage in the first reading recommends suspension of judgement of a person until after having heard them speak. Because as out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, so too the defects of a man appear in his talk and the test of a man appears in his conversation since words betray what we feel. Therefore, the sage concludes 'do not praise a man before he has spoken, since this is the test of men.' Ask yourself today then, what kinds of words do you utter when you speak, and what kinds of actions do you produce? Whatever we bring forth becomes our fruits and this shows the type of tree we are. Are you a good tree or a bad tree? A good tree produces good fruits, but how can I become one?

A good tree is such a tree that must be free from defect, decay, or disease, and remains healthy producing good fruits. Such a tree remains joined to Christ our source and the true vine (cf. John 15:1-8) at all times. This is possible when we remain true to God, to His word and commandments, and open to the grace and help He constantly gives us so that we can turn away from evil and sin. On the other hand, we become bad trees when we cut ourselves off from Him who is our source, and at this point we can do nothing but end up producing bad fruits. These bad fruits stem from falsehood and deception which attempt to produce an easy religion that eliminates the hard sayings of Jesus in Christianity, pushing the judgements of God into the fringes in a manner capable of making us think lightly of sin. With the loss of the sense of our sins, we become blind to our faults and judgmental of others. But if we are truthful, we deal with others' faults the same way we deal with ours. So, ask yourself, how do you deal with others' faults? Do you take delight in exposing and condemning them or in correcting them with gentleness and love?

Honesty in the face of others' faults requires we see ourselves in them and accept that we too are not perfect masters but disciples still on the way. A disciple humbly submits to be taught by the master so as to learn and teach others the truth learned. Christ is our master and without learning from Him we can only lead others into the pit. This happens when we do not practice what we preach and we do not live out what we profess. A double standard life is inauthentic Christianity and that is hypocrisy. The Lord invites us today to shun hypocrisy and go into ourselves to evaluate the quality of our witnessing. We must each ask ourselves, what must I do to get closer to Christ and have a better rapport with Him? What is that plank in my eye that I must remove so that I can see better and in what manner I can add value to the life of my brother and sister? What must I do to draw others closer to Christ? In the end it is not about the titles we held in society, but what we did for humanity. If our life and death are lessons, this is practical Christianity that is enough to produce good fruits. May the Lord make us good trees producing good fruits for His greater glory and for the good of one another. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.