

## 8<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIMES

Today's first reading and the Gospel call us to self-examination. What kind of fruit are we producing in our lives as Christians?

As Christians we are to bear good fruit, not rotten or bad fruit.

As Ben Sira tells us in the first reading and as we know the fruit of a tree shows the care it has had.

We know the care we give to a tree for it to have good fruit: pruning, mulching, fertilizing, watering etc.

The fact is great efforts have to be made if we want our farms, plantations to do well and to have a good harvest.

In view of this, for us to bear good fruit, not rotten fruit the readings of today challenge us to be mindful of our thoughts, words and actions.

Ben Sira says in the first reading, **"Praise no one before he speaks, for it is then that people are tested."**

Jesus also says in the Gospel, **"...for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks."**

It is said that how we talk is the evidence of our interior lives, our consciences, attitudes, intentions and affection. It is also said that our speech reveals where we have allowed ourselves to be planted and take root.

The point is we are advised to hold fast to words of encouragement when we engage others in conversation.

As human beings we have the tendency to overlook our faults but judge others. We sometimes act harshly towards others while kindly to ourselves. We fail to notice the “wooden beam” in our eye but see the “particle” in our brother or sister’s eye.

The defects we recognize with more accuracy are those of our neighbor.

We have an excellent teacher who bore good fruit in his life as the savior sent to redeem us. He is our true guide on our Christian journey. He is with us to help us bear good fruit.

He tells us in the Gospel that no disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained every disciple will be like his teacher.

We are his disciples so, as we gather to give thanks and praise to him in the Eucharistic celebration let us follow in his footsteps so that our Christian life may be characterized by love, joy, kindness, compassion, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. And by these fruits people will know that we are his true disciples and we can truly guide them

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, to use the words of St Paul in the second reading, let us be firm, steadfast, and always fully devoted to the Lord, knowing that in the Lord our labor is not in vain.