

When I saw the ministry schedule and noticed I was preaching on these readings I initially wasn't looking forward to it. Two quotes from today's scriptures made me feel a little self-conscious; quotes a homilist believes the audience doesn't need to be reminded of. The first is from Sirach; "so too does one's speech disclose the bent of one's mind." The other from the Gospel of Luke; "for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks." I was hoping to have a couple of weeks distance between these readings and my homily, hopefully you would not remember those words. I didn't want my words to reveal where I stood spiritually; but I guess there is no avoiding that.

What is our heart full of; joy, patience, peace? How do we speak from the heart; with love and mercy? How are we perceived as Christians? Do our actions and words call us beyond just a minimum response, normal reciprocity, when our Savior demands a radical response?

This Gospel should not be taken outside the context of the Gospels from the last two Sundays. For three (3) consecutive weeks the Gospel has been taken from Luke's "Sermon on the Plain."<sup>1</sup> Two weeks ago we heard of the blessings and woes. God's message of hope to believers who are poor, hungry, weeping, and hated as well as a warning for the rich, full, laughing, and well spoken. Last week we heard of God's love and how to put that in a contemporary context. Taking love to the next level, beyond a minimalist approach. This week we conclude our reading of the Sermon with spiritual application of those previous lessons. Jesus speaks to us regarding what it will take to be one of his true disciples... Knowing what a disciple will encounter, Jesus gives us a

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 6:20-49

practical lesson by way of a parable/proverb to prepare us. Jesus tells us we need to fully embrace his concept of love to be able to see clearly, and live it out in order to recognize the truth... So how we do this; how do we see more clearly and become one of his disciples?

Let's start with a simple analogy. My daughter Kara gave me an interesting present last Christmas; a pair of "enchroma" glasses. I didn't know what they were, at first I thought they were ski goggles. She is a little obsessed with the chance her two sons might be color blind. I am, and the trait is passed on to male children every other generation through the mother's genes. The glasses she gave me are supposed to let colored blind persons see true colors. I got ready to put them on, anticipating a big revelation... perhaps the grass was not really the green that I perceived. Was it really what everyone else perceived as purple or blue...? I put them on, and with some disappointment, didn't see any substantial difference. I lifted them on and off trying to identify any changes... none. Then, of course, I read the directions, I need to wear them in natural light and keep them on for a longer period of time; for my eyes and brain to adjust to the changes. Over time I began to see more clearly and my perception of colors changed; but sorry no purple grass.

Blindness prevents us from seeing what is there. Conversely, we might be able to see but still be blind; blind to God's ways. If we only use our eyes to see we only look outward and fail to see ourselves but if we want to see the truth, the true colors, we need to look to God and trust in him.

Jesus reminds us what it takes to be his disciple, to become trained, and be like him. I wish spiritual training could be as simple as putting on the “enchroma” glasses, correcting my color blindness. But to become that disciple we must not only look out, but look within and be honest of our own faults and sin. It’s easy using only our eyes to look out and see fault in others. However, it is more difficult to recognize and correct our own faults that may be even greater than those we criticize. Jesus wants us to look within and ask for forgiveness of our faults. Removing these beams, impediments to the truth, allows us to see more clearly and show others mercy.

We all need to form our conscience and grow in virtue. We can do this by developing our interior life through; spiritual reading (especially the bible), studying our faith, prayer, listening to God in silence, and frequent reception of the Sacraments like reconciliation and the Eucharist. All these actions help us to grow closer to the teacher, forming our hearts, helping us to become rooted in Jesus. These actions form us slowly, like me putting on the “enchroma” glasses, there is no immediate change. It takes time to adjust; slowly, imperceptibly, reprogramming our brain, heart, actions, and speech.

Next Wednesday is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. It’s a time for us to see more clearly... and how might we do that? Turning to God and asking for his wisdom can lead to greater clarity. We have been given the time to reprogram, to remove the beam from our own eye, with 40 days of Lent. Choose one or more of the actions I just mentioned to undertake during Lent. Let’s resolve to recommit ourselves to following Jesus by increasing our clarity, by first looking at ourselves and growing in

Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time C (03.03.19)

Luke 6:39-45.

our faith, partaking in many of the opportunities St. Rita offers to reflect and recommit ourselves. So... perhaps with a refocus we can become “fully” trained and become like our teacher, Jesus. Throughout our journey in life we will never become perfect, or fully trained, but maybe we can get a little closer and speak like Jesus from the fullness of our heart.

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