

Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
March 3, 2019  
Fr. Rick Lorenz

## Reflection

In today's Gospel, Jesus asks a few questions. The first is, "Can a blind person guide a blind person?" We had our pastoral day last week, and the priests got together with the archbishop. I spoke with Fr. Tim Devine before lunch, and then we went together into the cafeteria. You might have heard of him. He's with the Companions of the Cross, serves as pastor at St. Maurice Parish, and has been legally blind since birth. It does set him apart, but it's not the only thing that does. He's also known for his infectious joy. It made guiding him to the cafeteria into a privilege.

My vision isn't that great either. Without my glasses, things are in focus right here (*illustrate with homily*). Any further, and the letters are a gray blur. Any closer, and I get cross-eyed. Jesus says, "Why do you see the speck in your neighbour's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?" Well I need my specs to see anything at all!

Of course, Jesus isn't speaking about eyesight in a literal way. He's talking about conscience. The catechism defines the conscience as follows: "Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed (1778)." It's the voice within our heart that we must obey. It calls us to do good, to love, and to avoid evil.

Sir 24:4-7  
Ps 92  
1 Cor 15:54-58  
Lk 6:39-45

It's at the place of decision, the hidden center of truth, where we encounter the voice of God (1776, 2563).

We do have to follow our conscience, but our conscience has to be formed. It's necessary because, by default, our conscience becomes deformed: "out of evil treasure, the evil person produces evil." We're shaped from within by our tendency to sin, and from without by evil influence. There are many of sources of error: ignorance or rejection of Christ and his Church, a bad example, enslavement to passion (1792). "Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush."

Against this tendency to sin and the evil influences that are all around us, we're given a life-long task (1784). We're called to form our conscience according to the truth revealed by God (1783); to learn the difference between right and wrong. Why? "Out of the good treasure of the heart, the good person produces good." We learn the good, so that we can do the good, for our own salvation and to help his garden grow. The psalm tells us that "The righteous flourish like the palm tree...they are planted in the house of the Lord." This tells us that we're not just here by random chance, but because God wants us and cares for us. He helps us to form our conscience, even while respecting the freedom that can allow us to choose what is wrong. He gives us Scripture that guides our way, words fulfilled by the eternal Word who gives us light.

Jesus sends his Spirit so that we can examine our conscience: giving thanks for graces received, expressing contrition for where we fall short, asking for strength to do his will, seeking wisdom when we're not sure. The Holy Spirit works through the Church as well, with authoritative teaching from our bishops, and advice from the faithful (1785). I gave a homily on Friday that mentioned the marital act, proposing some ideas to help married couples. After the Mass, people shared their advice based on decades of experience (1788).

The blind cannot lead the blind, or both will fall into a pit. But the Holy Spirit gives us freedom and light. With these, we can stumble along our earthly pilgrimage towards the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ.