

Homily Helps and Petitions for the s
Eighth Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle C (February 27, 2022)

Homily Helps

† **Scripture Passages to Note:**

Sirach 27:6: The fruit of a tree shows the care it has had; so too does one's speech disclose the bent of one's mind.

Psalms 92:14: They that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.

1 Corinthians 15:58: Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Luke 6:42, 45: You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam from your own eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother's eye.... A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil.

† **Comments for the Day:**

Several years ago the movie actor Robert Redford was walking through a hotel lobby. A woman spotted him as he headed for the elevator. She ran after him and asked, "Are you the real Robert Redford?" As the elevator doors were closing he replied, "Only when I'm alone."

Today's first and third readings give us a profound reflection on authenticity. Both the Book of Sirach and the Gospel of Luke use vivid images to teach us about what is really important in human life. Two centuries before Christ, Ben Sira wrote about true wisdom, which begins in our hearts. The early church revered his book as a guide to living a good life. Luke's Jesus offers a powerful sermon on hypocrisy and on those whose good lives reflect what is truly in their hearts.

In the Bible, "heart" is the word that stands for the person we really are, our true selves. It is the part of us that determines whether or not we can be faithful to our principles and values when the going gets rough. Jesus has hard words for the religious leaders who claim to be morally superior and then use that claim to oppress ordinary people. They thought that their superiority gave them the right to tell others how they should live and to shame them when they did not comply. Jesus accuses them of having hearts that contradict the image they present to the world.

Jesus insists that there must be a connection between what our hearts and our actions. In order to bring forth good fruits, we need to be aware of what is in our hearts. Therefore, it is important to develop a life that has some room for the kind of self-knowledge that Robert Redford exemplified. Setting aside time for quiet prayer can help us to know what is in our hearts and how it connects to our daily lives.

St. Paul assured the Corinthians that a life of steadfast devotion to God's work was not labor in vain, and that God's love for us does not end with death. Pope Francis tells us that care for the earth, our common home, is a crucial part of God's work through us. He stresses the urgency of the challenge before us and writes that, "All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents." Can we find it in our hearts to respond to Pope Francis' challenge, knowing as Paul says, "that in the Lord your labor is not in vain"?

† **Passages from *Laudato Si'* to Note:**

I would like from the outset to show how faith convictions can offer Christians, and some other believers as well, ample motivation to care for nature and for the most vulnerable of their brothers and sisters. If the simple fact of being human moves people to care for the environment of which they are a part, Christians in their turn "realize that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith". It is good for humanity and the world at large when we believers better recognize the ecological commitments which stem from our convictions. (#64)

We are speaking of an attitude of the heart, one which approaches life with serene attentiveness, which is capable of being fully present to someone without thinking of what comes next, which accepts each moment as a gift of God to be lived to the full. ... [Jesus] was completely present to everyone and to everything, and in this way he showed us the way to overcome that unhealthy anxiety which makes us superficial, aggressive and compulsive consumers. (#226)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That we might live with integrity, taking care that our speech and actions are in accord with that which is in our hearts, we pray to the Lord...

Option 2: That we might hear the call of Pope Francis to care for the earth, and respond to it with meaningful action, we pray to the Lord...

Further Resources

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