

IV Trinity 2025

Sermon - Saint Joseph Parish

Father Craig Looney

Romans 8.18-23 St. Luke 6.36-42



Jesus tells us we are to show the same kind of mercy toward others our Father shows toward us. We are not to judge others and God will not judge us. We are not to condemn others and God will not condemn us. We are to forgive others and God will forgive us. We are to give to others, and God will give to us.

In this morning's Gospel, Jesus has given us a concise formula on how we are to treat others. The "full measure, generous helping, poured into our hands—more than we can hold", is God's abundant love, compassion and mercy we receive, when we apply the same standard of giving to others.

That standard that summarizes how we are to treat others is heard at the beginning of every Mass: Love God with all our heart, soul and mind; and love our neighbors (that would be everyone) as we love ourselves. God's love is an action that reaches out to us; our love is an action that must reach out to others; and it is a love that emanates from our hearts.

We fall short of God's standard when we are over harshly and critical in judging another person's behavior. In his commentary on the Gospel, Father Massey Shepherd writes, "Among religious people generally there is often a tendency to ignore in themselves the very faults and failings they are ready to find in others."

Jesus then tells a short story about a blind man. If Jesus was standing here now...the story might go something like this: A blind man would not lead a group of other blind people along a narrow ledge overlooking a 1000 drop in the Grand Canyon and risk his life or the lives of his group. He would know better than to even try such a dangerous walk. He would know his limitations.

In the story about students and teachers, anyone who aspires to be a teacher, priest, lawyer, doctor, peace officer or airline pilot must first take classes and learn their chosen profession, before they are in a position to teach others. The student must also learn to practice humility while he is learning.

Let's imagine I don't know how to drive a car. I give the keys to my nice brand new car...which I don't know how to drive...to my friend...who also doesn't know how to drive. It would be foolish...even criminal...for me to have him drive at 80 miles per hour on the freeway. I would have no business criticizing him if we were pulled over and given a ticket. I must first learn how to drive and follow the rules of the road before trying to teach some else to drive.

This brings us back to the point of the Gospel and Father Massey's commentary. We are often judgmental about another person's bad behavior (the speck in the other person's eye) because we see the same or worse behavior (the log in our own eyes) in ourselves and don't want to do anything about it. Before we can presume to help someone get his spiritual life in order, we need to get our own spiritual lives in order.

We have a responsibility to try to get others to correct their bad behavior as long as we do so in the same way God does...with humility, love, compassion, and mercy. God sees us the way we really are. We need to try to see ourselves...including our faults...the way we really are. That means admitting we have faults and asking God to forgive us. Only then are we in a position to help others.

Saint Paul tells us that we can expect obstacles to get in our way during this lifetime...what he calls the things that we suffer at this present time. He had many obstacles get in his way during his lifetime...he knew what he was talking about. Those obstacles can be physical...things that make us literally fall down...or they can be spiritual...things that cause us to lose our sight of God.

We are supposed to help other people who have lost their way and find themselves in spiritual crises. We can only do that with God's grace and ask him to help us show the same kind of love, mercy and compassion he has shown us.

God has given us a "full measure, generous helping, poured into our hands—more than we can hold". We can't keep that measure to ourselves. We must share it with others.

