

Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time 2019

My beloved brothers and sisters, I remember so well, when I first entered the Seminary after working in the Aviation Industry, that one of the first Scriptures I meditated on was reading from Sirach: “My son, if you want to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for a test...” The same idea is present in the Our Father: “And Lead us not into temptation...”; the better translation is: and lead us not into the test. It is not that God is testing us in order to see us fail; rather, in the course of life, God allows us to be tested so that our faith can grow!

Sirach reminds us that the wheat is sifted, to sieve out the chaff that is useless, from the good kernel that makes our flour and our bread. He reminds us that the true test of the potter’s work, is when it is fired in the pottery kiln. {I have a Minor in Fine Art, and loved working on the Potter’s wheel, and then firing my contributions. I had many of them explode, but it was from those mistakes that I gradually learned how to shape and mold the clay to get all of the air out of the clay!}

The gospel reminds us, that if we are going to lead others into the Kingdom of God, then we must allow God to heal our own blindness, lest we both fall into the pit! I know, I have fallen into the pits, many times, and slipped on many different banana peels! Jesus also reminds us that we can tell the goodness of the fruit, from the fruit that it bears! We had a number of fruit trees when I was growing up. Sometimes, a tree would grow from the root graft, and would either not bear fruit, or the fruit was very poor. Jesus calls us to examine the fruit of our lives and judge whether or not the main trunk and roots are good and solid!

St. Paul reminds us that it is thanks to the Lord that this process of telling good from evil is constantly at work within our lives, unless we turn off the switch; because our corruptibility and our mortality due to Original Sin would lead to eternal spiritual and physical death if left to ourselves. Original sin has disfigured us but also disfigured our vision of good and evil; and we need help to correct it. Paul reminds us that Jesus will cloth with incorruptibility what is corruptible and with immortality that which is dead by sin; and although in this life, we struggle with weakness and temptation, in eternity, we will be purified of it! I we

persevere with Jesus, we will reign with Jesus, regardless of how difficult the struggle may be, He is always holding us in His Divine Heart, and has given our Lady as our Refuge and our Strength!