



Unjust Judges

Daily Gospel and Meditation / Liturgical Cycle A

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Matthew 7:1-5

Jesus said to his disciples: "Stop judging, that you may not be judged. For as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove that splinter from your eye,' while the wooden beam is in your eye? You hypocrite, remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother's eye."

Introductory Prayer: I believe in the power of prayer, Lord. This time spent with you is the most important time of my day. Let me be confident of your presence and your love, in order to take full advantage of these privileged moments.

Petition: Lord, help me to rid myself of judgmental attitudes.

1. Judge Not: Judging others is sometimes our favorite pastime. It is so easy to pick out the faults of others -- to see their defects. It can make us feel superior. Yet, focusing on the faults of others can often distract us from our own failings. We tend to see in others the very faults of which we ourselves are guilty. That is why a husband who spends endless hours on Internet might complain about the amount of time his wife spends at the shopping mall. What do I complain about the most? Could I be guilty of the same fault?

2. Silence Out of Human Respect: Our Lord doesn't dissuade us from trying to help others to improve. In fact, fraternal correction can be a form of charity if -- big if -- done charitably (see Matthew 18:15). Indeed, instructing the uninformed is a spiritual work of mercy. Unfortunately, for the sake of being "cool," we often keep quiet as others wallow in sin. Christ isn't inviting us to be indifferent in the face of a loved one's faults. The opposite of love is not hatred, but indifference. Am I afraid to guide those whom the Lord has entrusted to my care? Do I remain quiet in order to "keep the peace"? On Judgment Day we will have to answer for our sins of omission (see Luke 19:20-24).

3. Eliminating Our Mediocrity: We are all called to holiness. Life is but a brief opportunity to grow in holiness before we step into eternity. What we do here dictates the state of our eternal reward or punishment. That is why we have to be on guard against growing accustomed to our faults. God doesn't want us to be mediocre. He wants us to struggle against our weaknesses. Am I actively trying to get rid of a vice? The best way to drive out a bad habit is to form a good habit. Am I eating too much? Then form the habit of smaller desserts. Am I short-tempered with my spouse? Then do a special act of charity for him or her each day.

Conversation with Christ: Life is short, Lord, and I need to grasp the importance of each day as an opportunity to grow in holiness. Let me put more effort into criticizing myself rather than others. Help me to see truthfully where my worst faults lie.

Resolution: I will say something nice to the last person I criticized or spoke badly about.