



# TO THE Heights

EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

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Carl Bloch, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Year C

## Sunday Mass Readings

### First Reading:

Ecclesiasticus 27:5-8

### Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 91(92): 2-3, 13-16

### Second Reading:

1 Corinthians 15:54-58

### Gospel:

Luke 6:39-45

*"There is no sound tree that produces rotten fruit, not again a rotten tree that produces sound fruit..."*

## Game Changers

The Catholic Church's Liturgical Calendar is crammed full of inspirational saints, or as we like to call them, Game Changers!

You can check out our GameChanger Series resources, free to download [by clicking here!](#)

**1 March** [St David, Bishop](#)

**2 March** [Ash Wednesday](#)

**4 March** [St Casimir](#)

**5 March** [St Kieran](#) [CHECK OUT OUR LENTEN RESOURCES ON WWW.WATERFORDLISMORE.IE/YOUTH-MINISTRY](#)



## Hear

Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading. Don't have a Bible? No worries, click the bible image for this week's readings!



1. What do you understand by the expression "the blind leading the blind"?
2. Explain the parable of the splinter and the plank in your own words - how is this a good description of hypocrisy?
3. What do you think the parable of the sound tree and the rotten tree means?
4. Where do a man's words flow from?
5. What does this teach us about the kind of words someone will utter or the life they will live?
6. Have you ever experienced a situation like Jesus is describing in any of these parables?



## Gospel Reflection: WHAT FRUIT AM I PRODUCING?



Jesus' Sermon on the Plain is definitely challenging - there really is no let-up with it! Each week His message continues to push deeper and deeper, to challenge us more and more, to shake us out of any complacency or a spiritual acedia we might find ourselves in.

Again Jesus shows us how important it is to set God alone as our standard: to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect. Anything lower than this is less than we are called to be. We don't have to figure out the path ourselves. We have the greatest teacher imaginable in Jesus Christ., One who lived and walked among us; One who showed us by His life and His death how to love others.

This week the focus is on judging others and ourselves. Judging actions is something we need to do: we know that some actions or thoughts or words are sinful, hurtful, damaging to our relationship with God and others. Judging people and their hearts, however, is *not* our job. God alone knows human hearts, struggles and motivations, even better than we know ourselves. We are called to love others: "If you judge people, you have no time to love them." (St Teresa of Calcutta) We are also called to reflect on what is really going on in our own hearts: a good tree cannot produce rotten fruit. If we are not producing the fruit, the behaviour, the relationships we should be, then we are called to examine our hearts in light of God's standard. The image of the splinter and the plank is so visual, it's almost comical, and yet how often do we point a finger at another, only to find three fingers pointing back at ourselves! It's easy to fall into a "they should do this... or that..." mode, but Jesus calls us to look deep within our own hearts and examine our motivations and our desire to follow Him with true humility. St Francis de Sales once said, "A spoonful of honey will catch more flies than a barrelful of vinegar." How do we treat others? How do we witness to Christ? When others see us, is it Christ they see? Do we try to see Christ in others too?

We're only human, and loving others, especially those who are unlovable is difficult; in fact, it's beyond us. However, it is not beyond the God who will live and love in and through us if we allow Him. "Never give in then, my dear brothers, never admit defeat; keep on working at the Lord's work always, knowing that, in the Lord, you cannot be labouring in vain."

Unasked for and unsolicited advice is just criticism

## DOES YOUR OPINION COUNT?

Being a follower of Christ is not for the apathetic - He constantly calls us to greater things and closer union with Him. More often than not, that call involves searching deep in our own hearts and considering how well we are treating others. He doesn't tell us we cannot judge actions. He Himself talks in this passage about good and rotten fruit. Good and evil actions are a reality of life; but judging another's heart and their motives is not our job, it's His. It can be really hard to bite our tongues, especially when we feel we're so clearly right and they're just not getting it?! Reflecting on the why, what, who and how of our opinions can be just the speed bump we need, stopping us from jumping in feet first into needless criticism that can just burn bridges and harden hearts.

What kind of witness to Christ do I show daily? Is this how Jesus would speak? Am I correcting out of love, or out of a need to justify myself? Do I even know enough about the topic or this person to have an informed opinion? When it comes to someone else's heart, we need to tread carefully and lovingly. Above all, let's check for any glaringly obvious planks in our own eyes and work on those first!



## TEACHER'S CORNER

**The Chosen:** Zoom Series, **Wednesday** nights, 8.00 - 9.15pm, see [www.waterfordlismore.ie](http://www.waterfordlismore.ie)

**Encounter:** gathering for **young adults aged 18-35** in St John's Church, Waterford, Fri 11th March, 8pm, Talk - Music - Prayer - Refreshments. Free Admission. More info: [www.waterfordlismore.ie](http://www.waterfordlismore.ie)

**"Show us the Father" - Lenten Retreat** at Glencomeragh House, March 25 - 27. Full board €225. (052) 6133181 / [info@holymission.ie](mailto:info@holymission.ie)

**Silent Retreat** preached by: Fr. Kilian Byrne, Foyer of Charity at Glencomeragh House, April 18-24, Cost €380 full board. Contact Helen 086 1678027 / [hellywilliams@gmail.com](mailto:hellywilliams@gmail.com)

**Family Day:** Holy Family Mission, Glencomeragh House, Sun 13th March. More info on [www.holyfamilymission.ie](http://www.holyfamilymission.ie)

**Lent is coming!** Check out our Lenten resources for young people at [www.waterfordlismore.ie/youth-ministry](http://www.waterfordlismore.ie/youth-ministry)

## TESTIMONY TIME

### Holy Family Mission Testimony

When Covid broke out, it ended up being an opportunity for me to review the direction of my life, and God's place in it...

WITH ANNIE



## Young Person's Prayer



Memorise and repeat every morning:

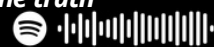
Set a guard over my mouth, Lord;  
keep watch over the door of my lips.

Psalms 141:3-4

## TUNE OF THE WEEK

Love you with the truth

Casting Crowns



## WEEKLY CHALLENGE:

Put Fr Mike's Four Question Rule into practice this week when faced with an opportunity to offer your opinion and weigh up if this something you actually deserve to have an opinion on? Why are you speaking about this? Do you have the kind of relationship with this person that allows you to speak your mind? what is the best way for the receiver to hear your opinion?

**WATCH:** VIDEO: Expressing your opinion (Fr Mike Schmitz)



## CHECK IT OUT: HALLOW APP



Hallow is a Catholic prayer app that offers audio guided meditation sessions to help us grow in our faith & spiritual lives and find peace in God. Explore over 500 different sessions on contemplative prayer, meditation, Catholic Bible readings, music, and more e.g Daily prayers, Christian Meditation, Bible Sleep Stories, Rosary, Ignatian Examen, Lectio Divina, Taizé & Gregorian Chant, Community, Homilies & Guests, Praylists, Challenges, Litanies & Novenas and Minute Meditations. There really is something there for everyone!



LUKE 6:39-45

CHECK OUT WHAT  
CATECHISM OF THE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
SAYS ABOUT RASH  
JUDGMENT  
CCC 2477



*In my opinion...*

UNASKED FOR AND UNSOLICITED ADVICE IS JUST CRITICISM...

Set a guard over  
my mouth, Lord;  
keep watch over the  
door of my lips.  
Psalm 141:3-4

ARE YOU SOMEONE WHO HAS STRONG OPINIONS? DO YOU FEEL YOU HAVE TO SHARE THEM WITH OTHERS?

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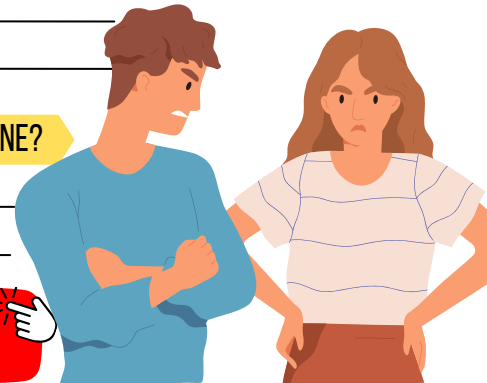
HOW WELL DO YOU TAKE CRITICISM? WHEN IS IT EASIER TO TAKE CRITICISM FROM SOMEONE?

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WATCH THIS VIDEO FROM FR MIKE SCHMITZ "EXPRESSING YOUR OPINION" AND REFLECT ON THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW



Why did Fr Mike feel he could not offer his opinion on the OJ Simpson trial?

What does he mean when he says "I don't deserve to have an opinion on this topic"?

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## FOUR QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE EXPRESSING YOUR OPINION

**WHY?**

- What are my motives for speaking:
- Do I want to be right? To fix someone? Is it because I'm angry?
- Why am I speaking? Is it out of vengeance or justice?

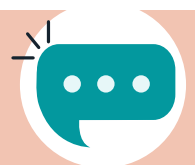
• **Vengeance** as my motive means: \_\_\_\_\_

• **Justice** as my motive means: \_\_\_\_\_



**WHAT?**

- What am I speaking about? Is it a real thing? Is it a truth?
- Is it a principle or just a p\_\_\_\_\_?



**WHO?**

- Who am I? What is my r\_\_\_\_\_ with this person?
- Do I have their permission to offer my opinion or correction?
- Remember! Unsolicited (unasked for) advice is actually just c\_\_\_\_\_!



**HOW?**

There are two sides to communication:

- What is said Vs What is \_\_\_\_\_
- What is offered Vs What is \_\_\_\_\_

- A truth that needs to be spoken needs to take into account the person I want to receive it. I need to say it in a way they'll hear it more clearly.
- Am I saying it for myself or for \_\_\_\_\_?



## IN MY OPINION...

LUKE 6:39-45

Jesus taught us how to offer correction when necessary for *personal stuff*.

READ MATTHEW 18:15-18



Step 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 3: \_\_\_\_\_



What not to do! \_\_\_\_\_



### Now Read Luke 6:39-45



Being a follower of Christ is not for the apathetic - He constantly calls us to greater things and closer union with Him. More often than not, that call involves searching deep in our own hearts and considering how well we are treating others. He doesn't tell us we cannot judge actions. He Himself talks in this passage about good and rotten fruit. Good and evil actions are a reality of life; but judging another's heart and their motives is not our job, it's His. It can be really hard to bite our tongues, especially when we feel we're so clearly right and they're just not getting it!?! Reflecting on the why, what, who and how of our opinions can be just the speed bump we need, stopping us from jumping in feet first into needless criticism that can just burn bridges and harden hearts. What kind of witness to Christ do I show daily? Is this how Jesus would speak? Am I correcting out of love, or out of a need to justify myself? Do I even know enough about the topic or this person to have an informed opinion? When it comes to someone else's heart, we need to tread carefully and lovingly. Above all, let's check for any glaringly obvious planks in our own eyes and work on those first!



**MISSION!**

PUT FR MIKE'S FOUR QUESTION RULE INTO PRACTICE THIS WEEK WHEN FACED WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO OFFER YOUR OPINION AND WEIGH UP IF THIS SOMETHING YOU ACTUALLY DESERVE TO HAVE AN OPINION ON? WHY ARE YOU SPEAKING ABOUT THIS? DO YOU HAVE THE KIND OF RELATIONSHIP WITH THIS PERSON THAT ALLOWS YOU TO SPEAK YOUR MIND? WHAT IS THE BEST WAY FOR THE RECEIVER TO HEAR YOUR OPINION?



**PRAYER TIME!**

**Memorise and repeat every morning:**

*Set a guard over my mouth, Lord;  
Keep watch over the door of my lips.*



**Psalms 141:3-4**

### CREATE A PLAYLIST TO LISTEN TO AS YOU REFLECT ON YOUR HEART'S MOTIVES



- [Love you with the truth - Casting Crowns](#)
- [Psalm 141 Song - Jason Silver](#)
- [I shall not want - Audrey Assad](#)
- [Mean Girls \(Leanna Crawford\)](#)
- [May the words of my mouth - Tim Hughes](#)
- [Slow Fade \(Casting Crowns\)](#)
- [From the Inside Out - Hillsong](#)
- [Lifesong \(Casting Crowns\)](#)

Click the links for the YouTube videos to listen to some suggestions!



**Fr Patrick Cahill: "The Spirit of God"**



**Annie from Holy Family Mission shares how lockdown prompted her to search her own heart**