

Homily – Luke 6: 39-45
Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C
27th February, 2022

A number of years ago, a young and very successful executive named Josh was traveling down a suburban street in his brand-new black Jaguar. He was going a bit too fast, but was watching for kids darting out from between parked cars and slowed down when he thought he saw something. As his car passed, no child darted out, but a brick sailed out and – WHUMP! – it smashed into the Jag’s shiny black side door!

Brakes slammed! Gears ground into reverse, and tires madly spun the Jaguar back to the spot from where the brick had been thrown. Josh jumped out of the car, grabbed the kid and pushed him up against a parked car. He shouted at the kid, “What was that all about, and who are you? Just what the heck are you doing?!” Building up a head of steam, he went on. “That’s my new Jag, that brick you threw is gonna cost you a lot of money. Why did you throw it?”

“Please, mister, please. . . I’m sorry! I didn’t know what else to do!” pleaded the youngster. “I threw the brick because no one else would stop!” Tears were dripping down the boy’s chin as he pointed around the parked car. “It’s my brother, mister,” he said. “He rolled off the curb

and fell out of his wheelchair and I can't lift him up.” Sobbing, the boy asked the executive, “Would you please help me get him back into his wheelchair? He's hurt and he's too heavy for me.”

Moved beyond words, the young executive tried desperately to swallow the rapidly swelling lump in his throat. Straining, he lifted the young man back into the wheelchair and took out his handkerchief and wiped the scrapes and cuts, checking to see that everything was going to be OK. He then watched the younger brother push him down the sidewalk toward their home.

Well, Josh never fixed the side door of his Jaguar. He kept the dent to remind him not to go through life so fast that someone has to throw a brick at him to get his attention.

Now, in today's Gospel passage, taken from the *Sermon on the Plain* given in Luke's Gospel, Jesus condemns our careless, malicious and rash judgments about the behaviour, feelings, motives or actions of others by using the funny examples of one blind man leading another blind man, and one man with a log stuck in his eye trying to remove a tiny speck from another's eye.

According to Jesus, those who notice a tiny splinter in another's eye but are blind to the plank in their own are hypocrites. They are unaware of their own shortcomings

while they freely decry or denounce the faults of others. These people are often negative and hostile. They have the habit of focusing on the bad side of everything especially the bad side of people. They are prone to criticize and find fault. May be, they are looking for a person without blemish. But we are sorry, “He who would find a friend without fault will never find him”. The reason is simple: there is no one without fault and there is no ideal man, only a real person.

A member of a monastic order once committed a fault. A council was called to determine the punishment, but when the monks assembled it was noticed that Father Joseph was not among them. The superior sent someone to say to him, “Come, for everyone is waiting for you.” So, Father Joseph got up and went. He took a leaking jug, filled it with water, and carried it with him. When the rest of them saw this, they asked him, “What is this, Father Joseph?” The old man said to them, “My sins run out behind me, and I do not see them, and today I am coming to judge the error of another?”

Well, no one except God is good enough to judge others because only God sees the whole truth, and only He can read the human heart. Hence, only He has the ability, right, and authority to judge us.

Hence, we should leave all judgment to God, practice mercy and forgiveness, and pray for God's grace to get rid of all forms of hypocrisy in our lives. I think we need to remember the warning of saints: "When you point one finger of accusation at another, three of your fingers point at you."

In the late 1800s a boy was working in a London store. He had to rise at five o'clock each morning, sweep the store, and then work fourteen hours. He stood it for two years and then told his mother that he would kill himself if he had to continue. Following his talk with his mother, the boy wrote a pathetic letter to a teacher he had in his earlier years. He explained how he was heartbroken and no longer wanted to live. The teacher praised him as a person and assured him that he was greatly gifted. To make a long story short, that letter of encouragement changed that boy's entire life. He went on to become one of England's most successful writers, authoring nearly eighty books. His name is H. G. Wells.

Well, instead of criticizing or finding fault with everyone and everything around us, why don't we care for people a little more? If we care for them, we will listen not only to what they are saying, but also to what they are trying to say with or without words. If we care for others, we won't impose our views, our plans, ideas, discipline,

advice, correction, guidance and our judgement. If we care for people, we won't jump at every opportunity to point out their blunders to make them feel foolish. Instead, we will show them how talented, capable, industrious, genuine, original, creative, skilled, friendly, trustworthy, resourceful, good and lovable they are.

St. Philip Neri once commented, watching the misbehaviour of a drunkard: "There goes Philip but for the grace of God." Pope Francis in his homily before opening the Holy Door of Mercy in St. Peter's Basilica while inaugurating the Jubilee Year of Mercy in 2015 said: "We have to put mercy before judgment,". There is another beautiful quote by Pope Francis which I love so much: "A little bit of mercy makes the world less cold and more just". Well, dear friends, let's be merciful and not judgemental. God bless you all, **Amen.**