

## EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, CYCLE C

**Opening prayer:** *Good and gracious God, thank you for gathering us together to share faith and fellowship. Mold us in the likeness of Christ as witnesses of the Gospel. Strengthen us in the service of others in a world hungering for peace and justice. We ask this through Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you in union with the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.*

**Sharing life:** How was your week?

**Facilitator reads focus statement:** The first reading and the Gospel state that our words and deeds are a window to our soul and character. In the second reading, Paul concludes his discourse on the resurrection.

Read the assigned Scripture readings, pausing briefly after each one. Consider going over the commentary after each reading, if you have not done so prior to your meeting.

### FIRST READING: Sirach 27:4-7

This reading has four proverbs. In different ways, each of the proverbs states that speech is a sure key to character. By using the image of a "sieve" and the "potter's furnace," the writer suggests that the words a person speaks help the listener to sift through the chaff of outward appearances and first impressions and to arrive at the speaker's true self. The third image of a fruit tree suggests that just as its knots, leaves, gnarled branches and quality of fruit are a sure indication of the care it receives, so also is a person's speech a true measure of his/her experiences in life.

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM 92

This psalm encourages the use of speech to give praise to God.

### SECOND READING: 1Cor 15:54-58

Paul concludes his teaching on the resurrection. In and through Jesus' Resurrection, death, sin and the law have been overcome. Death, like a preying viper, has its sting which is sin. It is this venom of sin which destroys life and leads to final death. Paul assures his readers that even though all of them must die, death for the believer will be swallowed up in the resurrection.

### GOSPEL: Luke 6:39-45

Today's Gospel is a continuation of Jesus' *Sermon on the Plain*. The passage has four short parables. A key to understanding all four parables lies in the message behind the parable about the plank in one's eye. The disciple who admits no personal faults is no better than a blind guide; his influence is useless to others. But if the disciple makes an effort to be like his teacher Jesus, his actions will be beneficial for himself and others.

The disciple whose eyes are focused on Jesus is like a healthy fig tree producing good fruit. His words and deeds have integrity which can influence others to be faithful followers of Jesus.

Today's first and third readings call us to examine our *speech* and *deeds* for they usually reflect what is in our heart.

### FAITH-SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What verse spoke to you most? Why?
2. We often say "words are cheap." Yet today's first reading tells us that speech can reveal a lot about a person's character. What do you think?

3. Psychologists often say that the attitudes and behaviors we dislike most in others are often present in our own lives, e.g., a very controlling person often criticizes others who are bossy and overbearing. What do you think of this?

4. Can you name one attitude or behavior that you dislike in others that is also present in your own life?

### **RESPONDING TO THE WORD**

Name one way you can act on this Sunday's readings. Suggestion: This week, pay particular attention to those attitudes and behaviors you criticize in others and see if those same traits may be present in your life. Observe the way you talk to others. What might your manner of speech tell others about you?

### **CONCLUDE WITH PRAYERS OF PETITION AND INTERCESSION**

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