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3 March 2019 - 8th Sunday "C" - Si 27:4-7; 1 Cor 15:54-58; Lk 6:39-45
- Abbey of O.L. of the Mississippi, Iowa, USA

Homily

At first reading, this gospel seems to us to be a somewhat messy collection of Jesus' words that are not very related to each other. But this is really not the kind of Luke, who is a good writer, and who knows above all how to structure a story. So let's take a look at the context.

This piece is part of Jesus' talk to the crowd, which corresponds to Matthew's "Sermon on the Mount". (In Luke Jesus is not on the mountain, but in a "flat place"). Two Sundays ago, we had the Beatitudes; then, last Sunday, the call to be merciful as our heavenly Father. And the text ended with: "Do not judge and you will not be judged. Forgive and you will be forgiven..."

This "Sermon to the crowd" of Luke ends with a parable that the text we have read does not give us. Indeed, our text begins well with the words: "Jesus spoke to the crowd a parable. Now, this parable will come in the last verses of this chapter, and are not included in the text that we have just read. It is the parable of the disciple who, having listened to the words of Jesus, builds his house on solid rock or on shifting sand. This parable is introduced by three questions, the first two of which we have in our text of today, the third being: "Why do you call me "Lord, Lord" and do not you do what I say?"

So let us take up the text we have just read, which began with the question: "Can one blind person guide another blind person? This question is followed by the statement: "The disciple is not above the master." What Jesus reminds us here of is that we have only one master, just as we have only one father. He is our guide. And if we strive to guide ourselves, and even more so if we strive to lead others according to our own lights, we are blind leading others blind to their downfall. We build on sand. Moreover, Jesus adds: "He who is well formed - he who has allowed himself to be formed by the master - will be like his master". The training, the doctrine received, must be put into practice and transmitted to others. This teaching is repeated in the final parable: "He who hears my words and puts them into practice is comparable to a man who built his house on the rock".

Then comes the second question: "Why do you look at the straw in your brother's eye, when you don't notice the beam in your own eye?" The temptation - to which we often succumb - is to interpret these words as if Jesus invites us never to correct our brother, since we are as sinners and even more sinners than he is. Jesus is much more demanding. He does invite us to remove the straw from our brother's eye. This is a duty of charity. Fraternal correction is a duty from which a Christian cannot escape. But Jesus also tells us that we must correct ourselves, and do so first and foremost, by removing the beam that is in our eye. Both must be done and not neglected. The fact that Jesus speaks here of "your brother" and not "your neighbor" shows that these recommendations are addressed first and foremost to his disciples, and that they therefore apply in a particular way to every Christian community.

If we practice these recommendations, we will be like good trees whose fruits will be love, fraternity, joy, harmony, peace. If we neglect them, we will be like a bad tree whose fruits will be lukewarmness, hatred, tensions.

In addition, as always, Jesus brings us back to the essential which is the purity of the heart. If the heart does not allow itself to be purified by the teacher's teaching, the words that come out of it will be false and will lead others to their loss as a blind man leading other blind men into the precipice. But if the heart is pure it will be open to the teacher's teaching, and will be able to transmit this teaching by the word of example. "He who is well trained will be like his master."

Armand Veilleux