

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Jun 26th 2017

“For as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured to you.” - Matthew

In junior high when a very pretty girl joined our class, the leader of the “popular” clique ordered all who feared her not to befriend our new classmate. Sadly I fell into line.

After a week or two of ostracism, the new girl asked me why I was acting like the others since I didn't seem like them. Even today I am ashamed of having been cowardly and untrue to my values. Immediately I apologized and Mary and I became lifelong friends.

I remain profoundly grateful to her for judging me and confronting me with the truth. I HOPE it was the last time I was ever mean to someone just because it was easier not to buck the crowd.

I thought of this episode as I meditated on today's passage from Matthew in which Jesus teaches us a critical life lesson -- how to judge others and how to accept judgment from them.

“For as you judge, so will you be judged and the measure with which you measure will be measured to you.”

Jesus isn't telling us not to judge others but to do so lovingly for the good of the other, not to flaunt our own righteousness, superiority and supposed virtue.

Throughout the New Testament, Jesus happily forgives sinners all the time, obviously judging that they needed forgiving. However, he scorns sanctimonious hypocrites who find fault only in others, never themselves. This, I think, is what Jesus means when he says that “the measure with which you measure will be measured to you.”

People can accept judgment from loving people motivated by trying to help them. Young people implicitly seek such guidance, even tough love, from their parents and teachers. Employees depend on constructive feedback from bosses to keep their jobs.

I think people who best model what Jesus teaches us today never forget that they too are subject to judgment and recognize that they can be wrong. They empathize with those who struggle because they happily admit that they still struggle. They offer guidance but never condemnation. At the end of the day, they, like my hero Pope Francis, have the courage and humility to ask : “Who am I to judge?”

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