

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Jun 27th 2018

A Matter of the Heart: Prayer as Relationship

Today's Gospel reading gives us a very wise, tangible and practical guideline for discernment of false prophets. Discernment should be rooted in the fruits of the prophet not just the words. Yet in the information overload of our complex world we are subject to all kinds of words of prophesy—but perhaps not in the traditional way of how we think as prophesy. While we acknowledge that God can inspire people to speak his message (and this would apply to gifts like teaching as well as prophecy), how do we discern his genuine representatives? We are subjected to “wisdom” and “guidance” on many aspects of our lives; lifestyle choices, priorities of the world etc. In this world of information overload, where and how can we see the “fruits” of the sources of the massive amount of information (prophesies of a sort) that we absorb. One insight of this discernment is rooted in the principle of love. Are the words, the prophesy, the inputs we receive, rooted in and delivered with the tone and spirit of love? The gift of love and the projection of a loving attitude is truly a fruit born of the Holy Spirit.

There is another message in this Gospel meant specifically for our personal role in building God's kingdom. The image of the tree and the fruit reminds us that our behavior flows from character, and in Jesus' teaching character comes through being one with Him and the Holy Spirit and not merely through our own disciplined efforts. If we act on our own to limit our human nature, we are doomed to failure. As believers, if we are transformed by and consistently dependent on the power of God's Spirit, we will live according to the traits of God's character and, just as a tree does, we will bear fruit according to our own kind.

Who will we engage today with words and deeds that manifest the fruits of the Holy Spirit?

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