

March 2, 2025



FRUIT OF MY HEART

By Sister Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Excerpts from Today's Readings

As the test of what the potter molds is the furnace, so in tribulation is the rest of the just.

SIRACH 27:5

Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:58

Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own? ... A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. ... A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil; for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks.

Reflection

The scripture readings from today give us plenty food for thought! With Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent just days away, pondering these messages is a wonderful way to prepare ourselves to enter fully into this sacred season.

The Book of Sirach, which is full of wisdom, gives us bite-sized kernels to ponder. I chose Sirach 27:5 because it is part and parcel of our lives. Who among us doesn't encounter hard times along life's journey? Using the image of the potter, I like to think of God's hands constantly shaping and molding me throughout life. Each piece created from the potter's hand is unique and important; we may be tested through trials and tribulations, though the furnace of life cannot harm us if we remain in right relationship with the Beloved.

The quote from 1 Corinthians is reaffirming and empowering to help us remain steadfast as we walk in faith with the Lord and one another. It is a gentle reminder that sometimes we may not see the result of our labors, though through trust in the Lord, our work is not in vain. In this era of instant gratification, it is important to be comfortable in God's timing and not our own!

The images in Luke's gospel couldn't be clearer and the message is front and center for us. If we look to see the imperfections in others, the plank in our own eye seems to grow more prominent. As soon as I read this passage, my mind's eye creates the image of a huge plank coming from my eye and my reaction is one of recoil! It is such a glaring reminder to take care of my own "house" and not be focused on the errors or "houses" of others. It's a wonderful reflection as Lent is almost upon us.

Being able to break open scripture and tend to the inconsistencies, sin, and errors within ourselves enables us to seek repentance and forgiveness as Lent unfolds. It is a time of walking in the scriptures, in Jesus' life as he moved from his public ministries into his death and resurrection. What scripture does for me is to quiet the external and internal commotion of the busyness of life so I can slow down and take stock of my own faith journey. I hope this is your experience, too.

Fruit of my Heart

May my life be joined with that of my Beloved. Let my heart seek what is good in life and in others, as well as myself. May I pray for the grace I need to see

clearly the errors of my ways.

May my heart resound with the Glory of God, and may my words and actions flow from the One who created me. Let my focus remain on the life I'm called to live, no matter the peaks, valleys, and plateaus I encounter along the way.

Sing out, O heart full of love and desire for life. May I walk the path of peace, love, hope, and joy this day. I pray that the fruit of my life be plentiful and ripe with the love of the Lord.



Giralda Tower in Seville with Orange Trees
Photo by Marcelo Gonzalez

For Pondering

- Which passage from today's readings resonates with you (Sirach, 1 Corinthians or Luke)? What words or phrases capture your attention? Why?
 - As you assess the “fruit of your heart,” what do you find?
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For Prayer

*Creator God,
you mold and shape our lives each day.
May we be open to the direction your hands are guiding us
as we seek to bear fruit that flourishes and nourishes others and ourselves.
May we keep our focus on you
and all that is being asked of us during these weeks of Lent.
Amen.*

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