

EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME  
Year C: Sir 27:4-7; Ps 92; 1Cor 15:54-58; Lk 6:39-45  
February 27, 2022  
Fr. David Pignato

In the opening prayer for Mass on this Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, we prayed asking God “that the course of our world may be directed by [His] peaceful rule and that [His] Church may rejoice, untroubled in her devotion.” This is certainly a timely and fitting prayer, given what is happening in the world right now.

This past week, the whole world watched as one country attacked and invaded another country without any provocation or just reason. In fact, false and irrational pretenses were given as a reason, after repeated denials of any plans to invade. For weeks, there were warnings and predictions that it might happen, but for many it still came as a shock. As one news commentator said, “It’s hard to imagine that this could happen in the year 2022.” Missiles and bombs suddenly started dropping on cities, and people had to run to shelters for safety or desperately try to flee their country. It was like scenes from World War II.

But, perhaps it is *not* so shocking that something like this could still happen, even in the year 2022. Our faith tells us that all human actions come ultimately from what is happening in the human heart. That means that actions of peace and justice, or actions of aggression and violence, whether of individuals or nations, stem ultimately from the intentions and desires of the heart. And, unfortunately, the actions of a whole nation can be directed and determined by the intentions and motives of just one national leader. And until Our Lord returns at the end of time, there is always the real possibility that a person’s heart, his intentions and desires, may not be focused on what is good and true and virtuous. This means a whole country can be brought to suffering, with ripple effects for even the whole world, because of the intentions and desires of just one person. In the Gospel passage for this Sunday, we heard Our Lord say, “*A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own 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,*” and perhaps we could add, “the person acts.”

The lesson for us is to guard our own actions, which are determined by our own intentions and motives. If we start to detect in our own heart desires of greed and power, for example, we need to be honest enough to be on guard against any

words or actions that would put such sinful desires into effect. We have to call out our own intentions for what they are. That's part of the process of true conversion. As Christ said in the Gospel for this Sunday, we have to "*remove the wooden beam from [our own] eye first; [before we] will see clearly to remove the splinter in [our] brother's eye.*"

It can be painful to watch world events of violence, injustice and suffering unfold, even at a great distance away, without the ability to do anything to stop them. But while we endure that reality and pray for the poor victims, we can at least make sure that we don't add any violence or injustice or suffering to the world by acting on our own selfish or sinful intentions and desires. Even if we cannot change the actions of world leaders and nations, we want to make sure that our own lives are good trees that bear good fruit. We want to make sure that our own actions come out of a store of goodness in our hearts. If others will be adding evil and injustice and suffering to the world, we want to make sure that our own contribution to the world in some way offsets that evil and suffering.

And the more we remove the wooden beam from our own eye, by sincere and honest conversion to Christ, the more we will be able to help remove the splinter from our brother's eye, so that "the course of our world may be directed by [God's] peaceful rule and [His] Church may rejoice, untroubled in her devotion."