JMJ

EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – C – 2022

[In-pew phase of the Faith & Works campaign]

From the time I was a little child, one of the sayings of Jesus has been very vivid to me. It’s His saying about the speck in my neighbor’s eye. I remember going to my mother and asking her to remove something from my eye, probably a little eyelash or a small grain of sand. She removed it very carefully, with the corner of a Kleenex, and it felt so good when it was gone. So, I must have been very receptive, even at a young age, to the image Jesus uses in today’s Gospel: “If you want to remove the splinter from your neighbor’s eye, first remove the beam from your own.” (That saying is depicted, by the way, in one of our church’s beautiful windows, and I’ll give a little prize to the first person who tells where it is.)

The meaning of that short saying, of course, is, first take care of your own faults before trying to take care of other people’s faults; your own faults are probably worse than you think.

It’s a common problem, isn’t it, criticizing other people. Saint Augustine said, “It’s when we’re not paying attention to our own faults that we’re most apt to pay attention to the faults of others.”

A part of the problem is something called judgmentalism, too quickly making negative judgments about other people. And I think I’ve found a cure for it. I don’t want to be braggadocios – because I learned it from somebody else, and it helps to cure me!

It works like this: *Deliberately substitute love for judgmentalism.* For example, say you’re in a conversation with someone you’d rather not be talking to because you’ve got something else you need to be doing, and so you find yourself getting impatient with that person – judging them. Well, when you become aware of it, deliberately substitute love for judgmentalism. Look at that person with love. Look at that person the way his mother would look at him; look at him with genuine, unaffected love. And you know something? The impatience will go away, immediately. I know it will, because I’ve tried it. And it works.

I should probably put a patent on it. But, as I say, I learned it from somebody else. And she learned it from somebody else, and probably all the way back to Jesus, people have learned it from somebody else.

You know what performers will sometimes say when they’re doing something dangerous, “Don’t try this at home”? What I would say is, “*Do* try *this* at home.” It’s probably the first place you should try it, and the easiest.

God bless you!