

Do Not Judge Twenty-second Week in Ordinary Time Friday, September 7, 2018 **1**
Cor 4:1-5; Lk 5:33-39 (We need to be merciful and compassionate toward ourselves and toward others.)

“I do not even pass judgment on myself; I am not conscious of anything against me, but I do not thereby stand acquitted; the one who judges me is the Lord.”

Now this is a very important point that St. Paul is making. He is acknowledging a clear conscience, but he makes a **distinction between a clear conscience and actually being innocent.** He says just because my conscience is clear doesn't mean I am actually innocent. So we have to keep in mind **there are two levels of reality.** There's **our personal level,** and then there's real reality that is **God's judgment.** He makes it clear that God's judgment comes later. **“Therefore, do not make any judgment before the appointed time, until the Lord comes, for he will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will manifest the motives of our hearts.”** This is a very important point. First of all, we are all works in progress. And as long as we are works in progress, **progress is possible; movement, change is all possible and desirable.** Now the gospel talks about how people don't really like change: old wine is better than new, and so on. But it's possible, and that's what we are called to.

But this whole idea of judgment. It's a very, very difficult thing because we are capable of judging, but Paul is saying don't exercise that. Rationality is all about having the ability to tell right from wrong, true from false, good from bad. If we didn't have that, we would be no different from monkeys or baboons or chimpanzees. But we are different; we have that. However **the scope of our sound judgment is very limited.** And that's what he is saying here. He is saying it's beyond your scope. Yes, you have the power to judge, but judging yourself or others is beyond your scope because **you don't know what is hidden in darkness.** You don't know the real motives of others,

and he is implying you don't even know the motive of yourself because I feel perfectly clear in conscience, but that doesn't mean that I am innocent.

So there are two orders of reality, at least: **our own personal, little world, and then there's the world as God sees it.** And of course that first one is multiplied several billion times, depending upon how many people on earth. So we have to realize how we are all looking at life through different eyes. We do have the power to judge, and we have to use it at certain times, but not at others. **Judging ourselves and others, that's not what we are called to do because we are all much bigger than we imagine.** We have a much larger role to play in the world than we actually can see. **We are always moving or should be or can be always moving toward greater godliness, greater holiness; and judging would actually obstruct that growth.** It might even—it might even—throw that growth off-kilter. So we have to be careful about judging ourselves and judging others. **We need to be merciful and compassionate toward ourselves and toward others,** while keeping in mind that God does instruct us and inform us, and we need to follow his guidance.