

# 8<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

## St. Luke 6:39-45

St. Theresa of Avila wrote, “God alone satisfies,” which Pope Benedict XVI echoed in his encyclical, “Spe Salvi,” when he wrote, “a world without God is a world without hope” (n. 44). It couldn’t be any other way. He who made us, who died for us, who lives for us now, in whom we have our movement and being, by whom exist because He chose for us to exist, must know what is best and right for us. In the same way that a clock-maker knows how the clock works best, or a painter knows what the painting means, so God knows us better than we know ourselves. But to believe that is one thing, to live it is another, because we get our orientation wrong.

Why do we suffer? We suffer because of the fall of Adam and Eve, whose sin brought evil into the world and evil causes suffering. We suffer because the desires of our heart are not always good for us but, nonetheless, we try to satisfy them even though we know that they are bad for us. We do these things because we give way to our inclination to sin, what is called concupiscence, rather than standing firm in faith. It is so much easier, so much of the time, to do what is wrong and pretend that it is right rather than to do what is right. We can become ruled by our appetites by our emotions by our passions rather than ruling them. By the grace of Almighty God, we must orient ourselves away from ourselves and towards God, away from our obsession with this world to our love of the world to come. We sin and we suffer because our orientation and the orientation of others is wrong. We love things and use people when we should be doing it the other way around.

In Pope Benedict’s encyclical “Spe Salvi,” he wrote of St. Josephine Bakhita. A native of Africa in the nineteenth-century, at nine years old St. Josephine was kidnapped by slave-traders, beaten until she bled, and sold five

times in the slave-markets of the Sudan. Eventually she was enslaved to a military general's family, where she was whipped every day until she bled. These beatings left her with one hundred and forty-four scars. Then, in A.D. 1882, St. Josephine was bought by an Italian ambassador, who took her to Venice. Until then she had known only masters who despised and maltreated her. Where then, was God? God who said, "So do not worry and say, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to wear?' All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all' (Mt. 6:31-32). Where was the love that God promised? In Venice, St. Josephine learned of Christ. She learnt that Christ had himself borne the beatings of others but that he bore them because He looked beyond the pains of this world to the glory that is to come in the Kingdom of Heaven. St. Josephine found hope. She could look beyond the earthly masters that lived to beat her to death to the heavenly master who bore the beatings and died for her so that she might live. She said, "I am definitively loved... and, whatever happens to me, I am awaited by this love. And so my life is good."

So remember, as said the prophet Isaiah, "He who keeps his mind stayed on the Lord, He will keep him in perfect peace" (Is. 26:3).