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20 MONDAY

Monday, 12th WEEK of the YEAR

Genesis 12: 1 - 9  
Ps 32: 12-13, 18-20, 22  
Matt 7: 1 - 5

Teaching people not to judge others, Jesus used a striking image of contrasts ---- a log of wood as compared to a splinter (other translations use 'speck' or 'beam' or 'plank'). This image and what He said about making judgements on others have become part of ordinary English usage and the language of argument and criticism. How easily do we use the label of hypocrisy, for others but not for ourselves! None of us is perfect, and mostly we don't like being told things about ourselves that we don't want to hear. We're choosy about whose advice or comments we'll accept. It's so easy to reject criticism, refuse even to listen to a critic, if we can find a fault and label the critic as a hypocrite. Both in public life and in our private lives, how much good advice, brilliant ideas even, are not listened to because we judge the speaker to be a hypocrite. He/she/they may well be such, but that does not make their comments or ideas less valid or useful. There are two parts to Jesus' advice and instruction: don't judge others, and make sure you can see properly yourself before trying to correct the vision of others. Both parts hang together, but we can jump so quickly to judging people by pointing the "hypocrite" finger. Thus we excuse ourselves from listening, seeing, being healed perhaps, or made a little bit better.

Father, you alone are perfect and the just judge, heal the eyes of my heart and help me to see your reflection in people around me, and keep me from judging their faults and failings while my own vision is blurred by specks or splinters or planks of imperfection.

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