

When I speak, what do my words say?



“The richness of our internationality with its missionary, apostolic and cultural characteristic challenges each of us to be and to live the Good News as women of the Gospel. Thus we commit ourselves to live an ethical lifestyle, opposed to consumerism and anything that hurts human beings and the integrity of creation, aware that every choice we has an impact on society and the planet.”
(General Chapter 2009)

Song: Choose an appropriate song or reflective music

Scripture: James 2:1-9

My sisters and brothers, show no partiality as you adhere to the faith in your glorious Lord Jesus Christ. For if a person with gold rings and fine clothes comes into your assembly, and a poor person with shabby clothes also comes in, and you pay more attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say, “Sit here, please,” while you say to the poor one, “Stand there,” or “Sit at my feet,” have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges?

Reflection:

A well-circulated Hasidic tale tells the story of a rabbi quizzing his students. He asked, "How can we determine the hour of dawn, when the night ends and the day begins?" One of the students suggested, "Day begins when, from a distance, you can distinguish between a dog and a sheep." "No," answered the rabbi. Another student asked, "Is it when you can distinguish between a fig tree and a grapevine?" Again the answer was, "No." "Please tell us the answer then," said the students. "It is," said the rabbi, "when you can look into the face of other human beings and you have enough light in you to recognize them as your sisters and brothers. Up until then, it is night, and darkness is still with us."

[National Catholic Reporter – “Luminosity” by Patricia Datchuck Sánchez - (adapted)]

For Personal Reflection and Sharing:

- Respect is a fundamental ethical value, but its moral implications are not always obvious. ... It is our own humanity, not others, that we affirm when we treat people with respect. (adapted - M. Josephson)
- What do my words say about me?
 - When I engage in conversation, is it positive and encouraging or negative and critical?
 - Am I aware when I make judgmental statements about others?
 - Do I use the terms such as “those people” or “that group” when referring to people different from myself?
 - Do I believe that all people have the same rights I have or do I join in conversations that suggest it would be acceptable to limit others rights?
 - Do I speak well or ill of others, including those in my own religious community, whom I perceived to have “advantages” that I do not have? Or who I may perceive as different?
 - Do my words welcome the diversity that surrounds me?
 - Can I think of situations where I could have raised the level of conversation, but instead I remained silent? Why did I not speak?

Prayer: Creator God, you made us in your image and likeness. Keep us mindful of the goodness within each of us. May we come to know and reverence the divine being within each person we encounter.