

Fifth Sunday of Lent



During a religion class, a little child was once asked, “What is adultery?” After giving it some thought, the child finally spoke up and said: ‘I think adultery is the sin of the adults, three adults. That is why it is called adulthree!’

Anyway, when it comes to an adulterous relationship, three persons are involved here especially if the other party is a married one. That is why this little child called this relationship as ‘adult three.’ It is wrong for a man and a woman to think that this illicit relationship is just between the two of them. It is because sin is not just a personal but a social one. Every time we commit sin, others are also affected. There is no such thing as a private sin. When we commit sin God is hurt, other people is hurt too as well as the sinner.

When Jesus is alone with the woman, as St. Augustine puts it: “*Relicti sunt duo: Misera et misericordia* (Latin: ‘Left are two: the misery and the mercy), he asks her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” The woman answers: “No one, sir.” Then Jesus says: “Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin anymore,” (Jn 8:10-11). In effect, Christ is saying to her that she has given a chance. She has to prove this that she can do better the next time. In other words, while not approving of the sin, he very definitely refuses to condemn the sinner.

Imagine that someone you loved – your sister, your friend, your daughter – was in her place. Imagine that you were in her place. In the act of adultery, an angry mob of religious men storm into your bedroom to drag you from the bed, take you to the Temple, and make you stand before a Jesus Christ and a crowd of people there to have church. Ashamed, you look at the ground as the shocked crowd looks at you humiliated and without excuse.

From Jesus' reaction to this scenario, we learn nine things

1. Judge yourself before you judge anyone else. The hypocritical religious leaders who brought this woman to be judged did not judge themselves. They did not care about their likely setting her up for the trap, watching her in the act, or dragging her into a public mob for what should have been a private matter.
2. Put your rock down. The religious leaders wanted to have this woman stoned to death for her sin. But, Jesus made them put their rock down because He alone is without sin and qualified to throw any stones.
3. When all is said and done, it will just be you and Jesus. As the religious leaders walked away from the scandalous scene, all that was left was Jesus and the sinner. So it will be for every one of us sinners at the end of time.
4. Jesus does not punish you, but was punished for you. Jesus could have put the woman to death, but instead He forgave her and took her place on the cross to die for her sin.
5. Jesus forgives sin. While we tend to deny our sin, diminish our sin, or blame others for our sin Jesus simply forgives it.
6. Jesus lifts condemnation. Jesus tells this woman that He does not condemn her. Like her, you can live without condemnation for your past sin because as Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."
7. Jesus gives dignity. Not only does Jesus forgive her, but he calls the adulterous lady "woman" as he had referred to His mother Mary earlier in John 2:4.
8. Jesus calls us to an alternative lifestyle of holiness to "go, and from now on sin no more".
9. Jesus is returning to this place to do for all of God's people what He did for this woman. We read in Zechariah 14:4 "...his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two..."

What has Jesus forgiven you for? Have you walked away from it yet and stopped that sin?