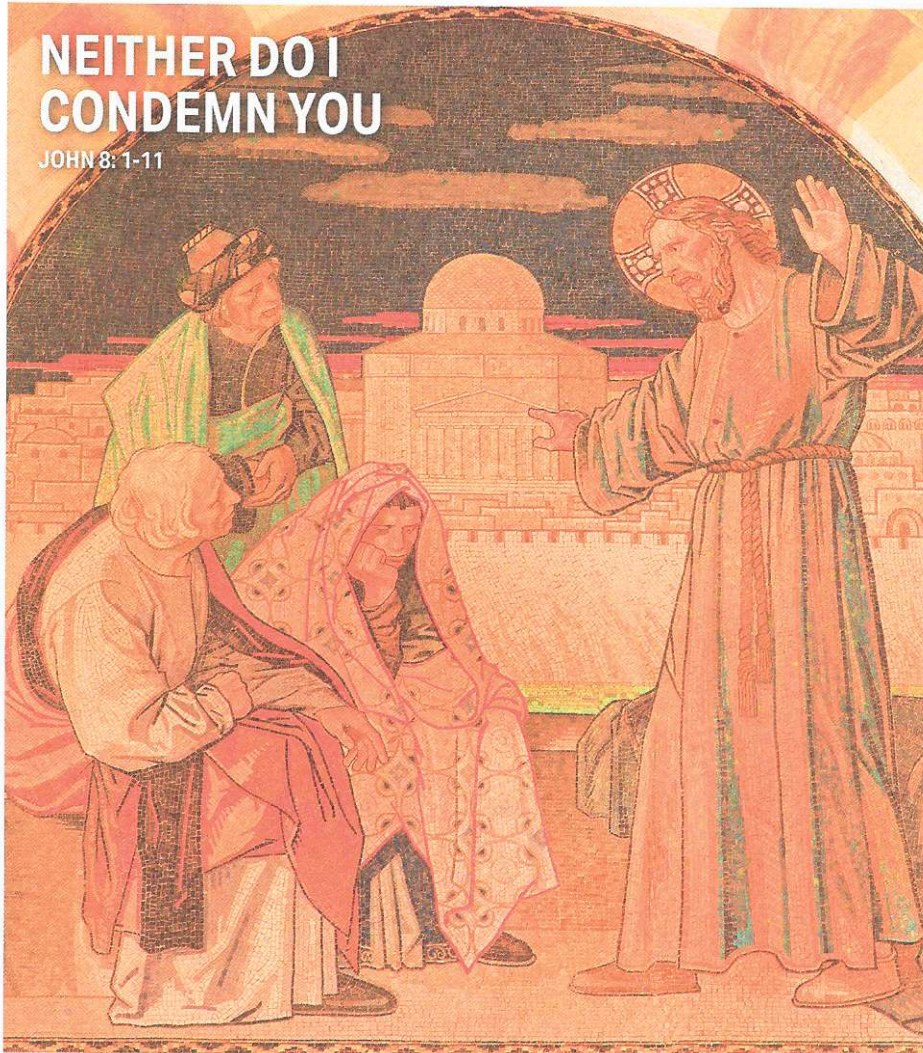


Sunday Message

5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

THE WORD

Year C • 6th April 2025 • Psalter Week 1



NEITHER DO I
CONDEMN YOU

JOHN 8: 1-11



REFLECT

The village community has done nothing to apprehend the man with whom this woman has committed adultery (it takes two...). Only the woman is apprehended. There is discrimination, gender bias, here. She stands for those who are easily blamed because they are socially unacceptable, especially – in ancient societies – women.

Society wants to blame them and get rid of them. Put them in prison, isolate them, kill them if necessary. And make the community 'clean'.

The woman is one of the most disadvantaged, pushed to the margins of the community in the same way as immigrants or foreigners. She is made to stand in public shame in the midst of men. There is no mention of any other women present. They are all men. She is guilty of violating marital trust and is a marginalized woman, making her doubly vulnerable. More still, she is being used to trap Jesus. As the commentator Denis McBride says, we can imagine ourselves in the place of the woman caught in adultery and probably have no problem filling in the faces of our accusers who are ready to heave a stone or two in our direction. The challenge of the Gospel however is whether we can see ourselves as the man who is caught up in forgiveness? Can we forgive as readily as Jesus forgives? ■

Adultery during the time of Jesus and throughout the New Testament was so widespread, that punishment was hardly ever invoked by the local leadership.

However, this doesn't deter the scribes and Pharisees from trying to entrap Jesus and asking him his opinion of the Law on the matter. The Law said that the punishment was death, but the manner of execution was unclear. The rabbis were often said to prefer the method of strangulation rather than stoning. Jesus is placed in a rather awkward position, and they are all keen to listen to his answer. If his answer is against the death penalty, he would be going against the Law and would be seen to be openly condoning adultery. If he decides for the death penalty, he might be denounced to the Romans, because the Jews didn't have the power to carry out the death penalty on their own.

He challenges the crowd. 'Let anyone who is without sin throw the first stone.' This turns the whole scene on its head, and Jesus becomes the one holding all the power. With tenderness and compassion for the woman, he informs everyone that God extends mercy to repentant sinners in order that they may turn from their sins. Unlike the Pharisees who wanted to condemn, Jesus wanted to forgive. ■

DO

Make an attempt in the coming week to articulate what the Eucharist means to you. What happens during your short time at Mass that brings you back again?

LEARN

'It is time to act and during Lent, to act also means to pause.' (Pope Francis)

SAY

Lord Jesus Christ, nourish me with your body and blood so that I may become what I receive in showing your loving presence to the world.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*Give me justice, O God,
and plead my cause against a nation that is faithless.
From the deceitful and cunning rescue me,
for you, O God, are my strength.*

COLLECT

By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God,
may we walk eagerly in that same charity
with which, out of love for the world,
your Son handed himself over to death.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING Isaiah 43:16-21

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

Thus says the LORD,
who makes a way in the sea,
a path in the mighty waters,
who brings forth chariot and horse,
army and warrior;
they lie down, they cannot rise,
they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:
'Remember not the former things,
nor consider the things of old.
Behold, I am doing a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.
The wild beasts will honour me,
the jackals and the ostriches,
for I give water in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert,
to give drink to my chosen people,
the people whom I formed for myself
that they might declare my praise.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 126(125):1-2b. 2c-3. 4-5. 6. R. 3

R: *What great deeds the LORD worked for us!
Indeed, we were glad.*

1. When the LORD brought back the exiles of Sion,
we thought we were dreaming.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter;
on our tongues, songs of joy. **R.**
2. Then they said among the nations,
'What great deeds the LORD worked for them!'
What great deeds the LORD worked for us!
Indeed, we were glad. **R.**
3. Bring back our exiles, O LORD,
as streams in the Negeb.
Those who are sowing in tears
will sing when they reap. **R.**
4. They go out, they go out, full of tears,
bearing seed for the sowing;
they come back, they come back with a song,
bearing their sheaves. **R.**

SECOND READING Philippians 3:8-14

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians.

Brothers and sisters: I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith – that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL Joel 2:12-13

R: *Glory to you, O Christ, Son of the living God.*

Even now, says the LORD,
return to me with all your heart,
for I am gracious and merciful.

R: *Glory to you, O Christ, Son of the living God.*

GOSPEL John 8:1-11

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

At that time: Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?' This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, 'Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.' And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus stood up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, Lord.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Hear us, almighty God,
and, having instilled in your servants
the teachings of the Christian faith,
graciously purify them
by the working of this sacrifice.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*Has no one condemned you, woman? No one, Lord.
Neither shall I condemn you. From now on, sin no more.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We pray, almighty God,
that we may always be counted among the members of Christ,
in whose Body and Blood we have communion.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen.