

Daily Reading & Meditation

Sunday: (April 7): "Go, and do not sin again"

Gospel Reading: *John 8:1-11* (alternate reading for Year A: [John 11:1-45](#))

1 but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2 Early in the morning he came again to the temple; all the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. 3 The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst 4 they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. 5 Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such. What do you say about her?" 6 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. 7 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." 8 And once more he bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. 9 But when they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the eldest, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. 10 Jesus looked up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again."

Meditation: Are you ready to be changed and transformed in Christ-like holiness? God never withholds his grace from us. His steadfast love and mercy is new every day (Lamentations 3:22-23). Through the gift and grace of the Holy Spirit we can be changed and made new in Christ. He can set us free from our unruly desires and passions.

Unjust accusations against Jesus

When a moral dilemma or difficult legal question arose, it was typical for the Jews to take the matter to a rabbi for a decision. The scribes and the Pharisees brought to Jesus a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery. John writes that they wanted to "test" Jesus on the issue of retribution so "they might have some charge to bring against him" (John 8:6).

Jewish law treated adultery as a serious crime since it violated God's ordinance and wreaked havoc on the stability of marriage and family life. It was one of the three gravest sins punishable by death. If Jesus said the woman must be pardoned, he would be accused of breaking the law of Moses. If he said the woman must be stoned, he would lose his reputation for being the merciful friend of sinners.

Jesus then does something quite unexpected - he begins to write in the sand. The word for "writing" which is used here in the Gospel text has a literal meaning "to write down a record against someone" (for another example see Job 13:26). Perhaps Jesus was writing down a list of the sins of the accusers standing before him. Jesus now turns the challenge towards his accusers. In effect he says: *Go ahead and stone her! But let the man who is without sin be the first to cast a stone.* The Lord leaves the matter to their own consciences.

Pardon, restoration, and new life

When the adulterous woman is left alone with Jesus, he both expresses mercy and he strongly exhorts her to not sin again. The scribes wished to condemn, Jesus wished to forgive and to restore the sinner to health. His challenge involved a choice - either to go back to her former way of sin and death or to reach out to God's offer of forgiveness, restoration, and new life in his kingdom of peace and righteousness. Jesus gave her pardon and a new start on life. God's grace

enables us to confront our sin for what it is - unfaithfulness to God, and to turn back to God with a repentant heart and a thankful spirit for God's mercy and forgiveness. Do you know the joy of repentance and a clean conscience?

Daily Quote from the early church fathers: *A humble examination*, by Bede the Venerable, 672-735 A.D.

"In line with our usual human way of doing things, we can understand that the reason why the Lord might wish to bend before his unprincipled tempters and to write on the ground was that by directing his look elsewhere he might give them the freedom to go away. He foresaw that as they had been astounded by his answer, they would be more inclined to depart quickly than to ask him more questions...

Figuratively speaking, the fact that both before and after he gave his opinion he bent and wrote on the ground admonishes us that both before we rebuke a sinning neighbour and after we have rendered to him the ministry of due correction, we should subject ourselves to a suitably humble examination, lest perhaps we be entangled in the same things that we censure in [our neighbours] or in any other sort of misdeeds. For it often comes about, for example, that people who publicly judge a murderer to be a sinner may not perceive the worse evil of the hatred with which they themselves despoil someone in secret. People who bring an accusation against a fornicator may ignore the plague of the pride with which they congratulate themselves for their own chastity. People who condemn a drunkard may not see the venom of envy with which they themselves are eaten away.

In dangers of this sort, what saving remedy is left for us except that, when we look at some other sinner, we immediately bend down - that is, we humbly observe how we would be cast down by our frail condition if divine benevolence did not keep us from falling? Let us write with a finger on the ground - that is, let us meticulously ponder with discrimination whether we can say with blessed Job, 'For our heart does not censure us in all our life' (Job 27:6), and let us painstakingly remember that if our heart censures us, God is greater than our heart and he knows all things." (excerpt from HOMILIES ON THE GOSPELS 1.25)

author [Don Schwage](#)

OPENING PRAYER:-" God our Father, we find it difficult to come to you, because our knowledge of you is imperfect. In our ignorance we have imagined you to be our enemy; But since Jesus came among us, he has shown that you are loving, and that our resentment against you was groundless. So we come to you, asking you to forgive our past ignorance, and wanting to know more and more of you and your forgiving love, through Jesus Christ our Lord." **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER:- "Love of Peace"

Almighty God, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed, kindle in the hearts of all men the true love of peace, and guide with Your pure and peaceable wisdom those who make decisions for the nations of the earth; that in tranquillity Your kingdom may go forward, till the earth be filled with the knowledge of Your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. **Amen.**