

Monday of the Fifth Week of Lent (A and B)

Gospel text (Jn 8:1-11): While Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. But early in the morning he arrived again in the temple area, and all the people started coming to him, and he sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. They said to him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?” They said this to test him, so that they could have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger.

But when they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” Again he bent down and wrote on the ground. And in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. So he was left alone with the woman before him. Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She replied, “No one, sir.” Then Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin anymore.”

“Go, and from now on do not sin any more.”

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Today, we are given to see in the Gospel the merciful face of Jesus. God is love, and Love that forgives, Love that takes pity on our failings, Love that saves. The

teachers of the law and the Pharisees said: “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery.” (Jn 8:4) and they asked the Lord: “So what do you say?” (Jn 8:5). They were not as much interested in following Jesus' teachings as they were in accusing Him of going against the Mosaic Law. But the Master takes advantage of this occasion to manifest that He has come to seek the sinners, to straighten out the fallen, to call them to conversion and to penance. And this is for us the message for Lent, inasmuch as we are all sinners and we all need God's saving grace.

Today, it is said that the sense of sin has been stifled. There are many who do not know what is good or bad, nor why. It is like saying—in a positive way—that the sense of Love for God has been quenched: of God's Love for us, and the reciprocity this Love exacts from us. He who loves does not offend. He, who recognizes being loved and forgiven renders love for Love: “They asked the Friend which was the source of love. He answered, the one where the Beloved has cleansed our fault” (Ramon Llull).

This is why, the sense of conversion and penance during Lent is to confront us face-to-face with God, to look straight into the eyes of God in the Cross, to personally go and confess our sins to Him by way of the sacrament of Penance. And, Jesus will tell us, as He did with the woman in the Gospel: “Neither do I condemn you. “Go, from now on do not sin any more.” (Jn 8:11). God forgives, and, on our side, this entails a demand, a commitment: Do not sin again!

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“It is important to be aware that we would never thus transport ourselves when looking at divine mercy that we would not remember justice; nor would we look at justice in such a way that we would not remember mercy; thus, neither hope will lack fear, nor fear will lack hope.” (Ven. Louis of Granada)

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““Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her”. These words are full of the disarming power of truth that pulls down the wall of hypocrisy and opens consciences to a greater justice, that of love.” (Benedict XVI)

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“God shows forth his almighty power by converting us from our sins and restoring us to his friendship by grace. ‘God, you show your almighty power above all in your mercy and forgiveness...’ (Roman Missal, 26th Sunday, Opening Prayer).” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, N° 277)