

Who is first to throw a stone

Weekly Reflections
6th April 2025
5th Sunday of Lent
Year C



From the Gospel of John (8:1-11)

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.'

Prayer for the Week

Heavenly Father,

Give us the ability to make impartial and fair decisions, wisdom to discern the right way forward, strength to forgive others and help to accept your forgiveness and allow me to always start anew in you

Through Jesus Christ our Lord

Amen

Reflection on the Gospel from Sunday:

The Scribes and Pharisees wanted to see if Jesus would disobey the law and show the woman mercy. Jesus understands that we are often weak and do things that are wrong. He was always willing to give people another chance to be better and to change. Sometimes it is easy for us to see what other people are doing wrong, and hard to see our own faults. Jesus wants us to learn to be more forgiving of other people just as he is.

The goodness and mercy of God, and our need for repentance, continues to be illustrated all through the Lenten readings. The account of the woman caught in adultery is in reality a story of the conflict of Jesus and the religious authorities who were intent on putting him to the test. The dilemma for Jesus is whether he advocates the appropriate Mosaic sentence - death by stoning - or clings to his own teachings on mercy and compassion. Despite her guilt, the woman herself is of minor significance to these authorities (her equally guilty partner has not been dragged forward), and Jesus does not even look at her or address her until they have all left in shame. With compassionate respect, Jesus neither condones nor condemns this stranger, as he invites her to a new life. Acceptance and love allow repentance and change to occur in others far more readily than harsh judgments and unacceptance.

As we approach the most important few weeks in the Church, how can you before Easter look to repent for times you have sinned? Equally important, how can you look to forgive others that have sinned against you?