

I DO NOT CONDEMN YOU! 4/7/19

There is pithy saying, that says “every saint has a past and every sinner has a future”. It looks so profound to me. The past of every saint has been washed clean in the blood of the lamb. No more to be remembered; it is blotted out; he remembers them no more! The future of the sinner is in the mercy of God, unleashed upon us from the cross. This is what the oracle of the prophet Isaiah is saying to us, “remember not the events of the past, the things long ago consider not”. Humanity’s sinful past was taken care of on the cross by a man named Jesus who was crucified to atone for our sins.

In the second reading, St Paul tells us that he too had a past. A moment when he lived in darkness, a moment when he was spiritually blind. But thanks to Jesus who stretched out his hands to lift him from the miry clay of sin. Despite his conversion, Paul did not consider himself yet as someone who had arrived. No, he’d learned instead to put the past behind him and press forward towards the goal. He has been a beneficiary of God’s mercy.

In the gospel passage about the woman caught in adultery, we see how another person learned to put the past behind her. The accusers had come to Jesus with a verdict: ‘such women deserved to die’. But Jesus had a different response, first, ‘let the one without sin be the first to cast a stone’ and then ‘I do not condemn you, go and sin no more’. To both the accuser and the accused there is an offer of hope and redemption. The sad thing is that the accusers because they were only interested in accusing others are deprived of the humility to see any wrongdoing of their own. God’s word invites us today to move towards a better version of ourselves. Let’s make time to think about these words: ‘Let the one without sin be the first to cast a stone’, I do not condemn you, go and sin no more’. Do I have a past? Have I put it behind me or am I still holding tightly to it? Can I focus on what lies ahead of me and allow myself to experience something new from God, this coming Easter?

We pray: Lord Jesus, many times we are like the accusers in today’s gospel. Help us to see our own need of your forgiveness in order to lay down the stones of condemnation.

Praise be Jesus Christ....now and forever!

Fr. Francis Odoom