

5th Sunday of Lent (Year C)

Overview:

This Sunday's Gospel features the powerful moment when Jesus responds to those ready to stone a woman caught in adultery by saying, *"Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."* This moment reveals not only the wisdom and mercy of Jesus but also the invitation He extends to each of us: to turn away from condemnation and toward redemption. We are now in the final stretch of Lent, and today's readings call us to reflect on the mercy God offers us and how we are to extend that mercy to others.

Main Points:

1. **A New Thing:** In the first reading from Isaiah, God proclaims, *"I am about to do a new thing."* This finds its fulfillment in Jesus, who replaces condemnation with mercy.
 2. **Jesus' Response:** The scribes and Pharisees try to trap Jesus, but His answer both disarms them and upholds the dignity of the woman. He neither denies her sin nor condemns her—He forgives and invites her to conversion.
 3. **Mercy and Responsibility:** Jesus shows mercy, but also commands, *"Go, and from now on do not sin again."* His mercy is not license, but a call to transformation.
 4. **Self-Reflection:** The accusers walk away one by one, starting with the elders. Lent is a time to examine our hearts, especially in these final two weeks.
 5. **No Stones, Only Grace:** Like the woman and like St. Paul, we are all recipients of God's mercy. We are called to extend that same mercy to others and not to judge or condemn.
 6. **Lenten Practices:** The veiling of images and scrutinies for those preparing for baptism remind us of our own call to deeper purification and renewal.
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Key Scripture Passages:

- **John 8:1–11** – *"Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone."*
 - **Isaiah 43:16–21** – *"Do not remember the former things... I am about to do a new thing."*
 - **Psalms 126** – *"The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy."*
 - **Philippians 3:8–14** – *"I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord."*
 - **John 3:17** – *"God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him."*
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Key CCC Quotes:

- **CCC 1846** – *"The Gospel is the revelation in Jesus Christ of God's mercy to sinners."*
 - **CCC 1443** – *"During his public life Jesus not only forgave sins, but also made plain the effect of this forgiveness: he reintegrated forgiven sinners into the community of the People of God."*
 - **CCC 1864** – *"There are no limits to the mercy of God, but anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy by repenting rejects the forgiveness of his sins."*
 - **CCC 1465** – *"When he celebrates the sacrament of Penance, the priest is fulfilling the ministry of the Good Shepherd who seeks the lost sheep."*
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Reflection Questions:

1. Have I thrown stones at others through judgment or harsh words, forgetting my own need for mercy?
2. Do I genuinely see Jesus as the one who offers *me* mercy and calls me to conversion?
3. Like St. Paul, do I let God's mercy motivate me to follow Jesus more faithfully and wholeheartedly?
4. Am I participating in the life of the Church as a fruit of my relationship with Christ?
5. As we veil images and approach Holy Week, how can I let go of distractions and enter more deeply into Lent's call to repentance and renewal?

Rhyme Summary

Christ is doing something new. He won't condemn or turn from you. His mercy's great, His love abounds.
He didn't stone, wrote on the ground. Do we repent, and let go of sin, or take an honest look within?
Do I forgive, and heal the rifts? Am I involved, do I share my gifts? Christ Jesus, help me love you still more.
Let me not always keep that score, but love with more love every day, and follow you along life's way.

Reasons to come to Mass each weekend

Hebrews 10:24-25 - "And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Exodus 20:8 - "Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy."

Luke 22:19 - "Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'"

Acts 2:42 - "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

John 6:53-54 - "So Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day.'"

Psalms 122:1 - "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'"

Matthew 18:20 - "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

Colossians 3:16 - "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God."

Additional resources to learn more about God and the Catholic faith

- Check out the resource list available on www.frmerkley.com
- Catholic Answers: <https://www.catholic.com/>
- Word on Fire: <https://www.wordonfire.org/>
- Formed: <https://formed.org/>
- The Coming Home Network: <https://chnetwork.org/>
- Catholic Exchange: <https://catholicexchange.com/>
- Dynamic Catholic: <https://dynamiccatholic.com/>
- The Augustine Institute: <https://augustineinstitute.org/>
- Ascension Press: <https://ascensionpress.com/>
- EWTN: <https://www.ewtn.com/>
- The Catholic Company: <https://www.catholiccompany.com/>
- Busted Halo: <https://bustedhalo.com/>
- CatholicCulture.org: <https://www.catholicculture.org/>
- The Thomistic Institute: <https://thomisticinstitute.org/>
- Ignatius Press: <https://www.ignatius.com/>
- Catholic Education Resource Center (CERC): <https://www.catholiceducation.org/>