

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT
April 6, 2025

Gospel: (John 8:1-11)

The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. They said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" 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.*" In response, they went away one by one...So he was left alone with the woman before him. Jesus 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 any more.*"

Reflection:

A story that begins with deathly accusation ends with divine mercy. Where the community's condemnation would have led the adulterous woman to death, Jesus' mercy leads her to new life. A story that begins with exposing the sin of an individual ends with exposing the sinfulness of all. Where the community begins with awareness of the woman's sinfulness, they are transformed through encountering Jesus into awareness of their own sinfulness. A story that begins with human testing of the divine ends with divine invitation to repent. Jesus reveals a new order in which all are called to repentance and the experience of divine mercy. Jesus' desire for us is not death but new life. (Living Liturgy, p.90)

Vincentian Meditation:

God's loving presence is cleansing, as baptism and penance remind us. God's love labors to break down the resistance that it finds within us. It is a creative love that works toward change, transformation, new beginnings. God wants to make a home within us. The recurring Lenten season nudges us each year toward self-denial. The real point of ascetical practices is not merely to "give up" objects, but to reconstruct one's deepest self so that God might take fuller possession of our home. Jesus asks that the same energy we might have used in accumulating riches, consolidating power, or pursuing personal pleasure be channeled toward the building up of a "new person" as a dwelling place for God. (Maloney, Go! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul, p. 99-100)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts after a moment of silence)

Do you hold unjust prejudices and judgments of the poor?

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, model of compassion and kindness,

-free our hearts from unkind judgment of others.

Jesus, model of meekness and mildness,

-make us meek and humble of heart.

Jesus, model of forgiveness and mercy,

-open our hearts to all people. Amen

