

Dear Brothers and Sisters



A woman is caught in the act of adultery, accused by the scribes and Pharisees.

How did they know she was an adulterer? Maybe one of them knew all too very well! Perhaps to cover his own sin he accuses her.

The Law of Moses prescribed the penalty of stoning to death. Jesus is asked what he has to say.

Jesus would have been very familiar with this Law, and it's intended consequences. He no doubt grew up hearing the story of his birth. His mother Mary was also suspected of adultery, when she was found to be pregnant before marriage. However, Joseph did not expose her to shame or punishment, deciding rather to break off the betrothal, before the truth was revealed to him by the Angel.

The poor woman in today's Gospel does not have a St. Joseph in her corner. She has someone better – the only one who can forgive sin – Jesus Christ.

Jesus bends down – God bends down to our lowliness – and writes on the ground with his finger.

The finger of God – which pointed to Adam, and created him from the dust of the ground – now writes in the dust. This is the only time in the Gospels that Jesus writes. What did he write? We do not know, but the Fathers of the Church say He May have written the Commandments...you shall love the Lord your God...you shall love your neighbor.... you shall not commit adultery...

Seeing these words, the woman's accusers persist all the more in their accusation against her. Until they hear Jesus say:

“Let the one among you who is without sin cast the first stone.”

Then Jesus bends down a second time and continues to write on the ground. This time, the Fathers of the Church say, he may have written down the very sins of the woman's accusers. Faced with the truth about themselves – that they too are sinners - they drop their stones and go home, beginning with the elders.

On Tuesday of Holy Week, April 12th, the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be offered in our church from 7-9pm.

The words Jesus spoke to the adulterous woman will be spoken to us:

“Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin anymore.”

We will be confronted with our sins. We will experience the Mercy of God. As a consequence, we will be able to also drop our stones, and return home being merciful to others.

Fr. Sean