

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

April 3, 2022

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Isaiah 43:16–21 † Philippians 3:8–14 † John 8:1–11



Reflection by: Sister Jeanne Goyette, OP

Neither do I condemn you.

In today's gospel we read how Jesus confronts the Scribes and Pharisees when they bring a woman caught in adultery and stand her in their midst ready to stone her. Jesus invites the one who is without sin to throw the first stone. They respond by walking away one by one. Jesus then says to the woman, "Has no one condemned you? Then neither do I condemn you. Go and do not sin anymore."

Who of us would not like to hear the words, "Neither do I condemn you?" We all sin, yet we do not want to be condemned. We know God understands our weaknesses and is always ready to forgive. But humans many times are not as merciful. Have we not been tempted to condemn? Perhaps throwing stones of judgment, of unjust criticism, stones of harsh words or bitter silence? And have we not been ready to condemn those with whom we disagree or are guilty of wrongdoing?

So how do we deal with those who are killing innocent people? Instigating war? Trafficking? Abusing children? Unsympathetic towards refugees? Spreading falsehoods about people of other races/cultures or the climate crisis? Today's readings remind us that there is a difference between condemning the person and condemning their actions. Jesus does not condemn the adulterous woman but offers her the promise of new life.

Isaiah proclaims in the first reading, "Remember not the events of the past . . . see, I am doing something new!" Isn't there always the possibility of new life springing forth where there is sinfulness and suffering? And it often happens in ways we cannot predict or imagine. History gives us many examples of this.

Therefore, may we all live immersed in the mercy of God,
with steadfast belief and hope in the promise of new life.