

April 03, 2022
5th Sunday of Lent
Is 43:16-21
Ps 126:1-6
Phil 3:8-14
Jn 8:1-11

WHO IS WITHOUT SIN?

If you think you don't have any sin or you are not a sinner, you may leave the Church for a moment because right now I just want to talk to fellow sinners! (*Look around and see if there are people leaving the Church.*) Perhaps, you are wondering: **Are there people who really think they don't have sins committed or omitted? Are there people who really think they are not sinners?** To be honest with you, there are. I have encountered fellow Catholics who would tell me that they don't have sins by commission or omission. Come to think of it - **to say that we don't have sins is sin in itself!**

Now, let me address my fellow sinners!

My dear fellow sinners, we are very fortunate/blessed that the God we believe in is not a God who immediately imposes death penalty on us. We have sinned and yet he deals with us with so much mercy and love. He gives us more than we deserve. He gives us the chance to shape up. He extends forgiveness and encourages us to sin more. He is very consistent in offering us redemption, not condemnation. He keeps on reminding us that repentance will bring us out of darkness into his wonderful light.

All of these good things about our God, in the person of our Lord Jesus, are clearly stipulated in the gospel proclaimed to us today. This time God's mercy, forgiveness, and love are not presented in the form of a parable (*last week was the Parable of the Prodigal Son*) but a real encounter of the Lord Jesus with a woman caught in adultery.

In this gospel episode our Lord Jesus demonstrated to us how he deals with sinners in contrast with the scribes and the Pharisees. The former was slow in giving his verdict while the latter was quick to implement the death penalty to the adulterous woman. The former was focused on restoring her to health while the latter was fixed on putting her to death. The former showed mercy while the latter flaunted cruelty.

The gospel proclaimed says that our Lord Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger. **What did he write on the ground?** Some biblical scholars believed that our Lord Jesus wrote the sins of the accusers of the adulterous woman. He reminded them that they were sinners too. He reminded them that they were not flawless. He reminded them that they were in the same boat with the accused

woman. Thus, when our Lord Jesus told them, **“Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”** nobody among the accusers threw a single stone to the woman. If there was, then that’s another sin added to the list of their sins – the sin of pride!

The encounter of our Lord Jesus with the accused woman ended with these words: **“Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin any more.”** These words of our Lord Jesus are loaded. It is loaded with compassion and love. It is also loaded with warning for the woman not to sin any more. Obviously, our Lord Jesus’ words pointed out that her behavior was sinful. Nonetheless, he was now calling her to conversion.

This week here in our **Kauai Vicariate** we will start our **Lenten Penance Services**. Here in our parish, we will have it on **April 07, 2022, at 6PM**. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) our Lord Jesus tells us, penitents, **“Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin any more.”** Like the adulterous woman, he calls us to conversion. He calls us to acknowledge our sins and ask God’s forgiveness in the context of the sacrament. The question is – **do we have enough humility and courage to approach the sacrament?**

I would like to share with you what St. Teresa of Calcutta said about the Sacrament of Reconciliation. She said, **“One thing is necessary for us: Confession. Confession is nothing but humility in action. We call it Penance, but really it is a Sacrament of Love, a Sacrament of forgiveness. It is a place where I allow Jesus to take away from me everything that divides, that destroys. Confession is a beautiful act of great love. Only in confession can we go in as sinners with sin and come out as sinners without sin. ... There’s no need for us to despair, no need for us to commit suicide, no need for us to be discouraged, if we have understood the tenderness of God’s love. Confession is Jesus and I, and nobody else. Remember this for life.”**

Our Lord Jesus is not only calling us to approach the sacrament. He is also calling us to be forgiving, loving, and merciful to our fellow human beings. **Why?** It is simply because we ourselves are sinners in need of God’s forgiveness, love and mercy.

In this Mass, therefore, let us pray for each other that we may get rid of self-righteousness and start to be humble, beating our breast, saying: **Lord Jesus, be merciful to me, a sinner!**

God bless our Lenten journey!