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April 3, 2022 | Fifth Sunday of Lent

Is 43:16-21 | Phil 3:8-14 | Jn 8:1-11

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

During Lent, we hear familiar stories: the event of Jesus' transfiguration, the prodigal son, and today the woman caught in adultery. Each reveals an aspect of God's perfect love for us and a glimpse of how we can reflect that love toward others. In today's Gospel, the Pharisees once again are testing Jesus, saying the law demands that the woman caught in adultery be stoned. Jesus responds, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." What a perfect response to the Pharisees, and to each one of us when we focus on the faults of another. Jesus' words teach and challenge us to look more closely at the ways we judge others – by appearance, a social media post, political party, for example – and ask ourselves whether we are truly doing so out of love. Closer to home, we may be quick to point out our spouse or children's perceived faults, without acknowledging our own. Jesus invites us to look at others – and ourselves – with the eyes of mercy.

ACT Take advantage of the additional opportunities many churches offer for the sacrament of reconciliation during Lent. Rusty? Check out this excellent guide for adults and children: thelightison.org/guide-to-confession.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Every time we go out to dinner, my son makes fun of me for agonizing over the menu: "You always regret what you pick!" Indeed, regret can be a powerful emotion. Fortunately, the dinner dilemma requires only that I mooch off of my son's entrée. However, deeper regrets can bog us down and prevent us from moving forward in faith. Today's readings challenge us not to wallow in past mistakes, preconceptions, or bad habits. As we hear in Isaiah, "The things of long ago consider not; see, I am doing something new!" We hear this idea again from St. Paul, who writes of "forgetting what lies behind" and straining forward toward "the prize of God's upward calling, in Christ Jesus." In the Gospel, Jesus doesn't dwell on the past sins of the adulterous woman other than to say, "Go, and from now on do not sin any more." Fortunately, our Church offers an antidote to regret and sin in the sacrament of reconciliation. Whether it's been a month or a decade, what better time than Lent to return to this sacrament and experience God's mercy and forgiveness?