

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Mar 18th 2024

Forgive before you seek forgiveness

The stories of both Susanna and the adulterous woman are powerful expressions of justice and divine mercy. The prophetic insight of the young Daniel overturns the false accusations made against Susanna. Her accusers are found guilty of slander, and she is completely exonerated.

The story of the sinful woman of the Gospel leaves no doubt about her guilt or the malice of her accusers. The question posed to Jesus was an attempt to trap Jesus and even the Pharisees may not have expected Jesus to give a death sentence to the adulterous woman. Jews in Roman times had no authority to render a death sentence. Jesus avoids the question of whether she is guilty or innocent. The question Jesus raises is, whether there is any guiltless person in his audience who was in a position to move against the woman.

One by one, they take their leave. Left alone with the woman, Jesus sends her away in peace and exhorts her to sin no more. Forgiveness lies at the very centre of Christ's mission. For this, he came into the world to lift the sentence that lay upon us. This sense of forgiveness permeates the whole of his mission, and he clearly indicates that his followers are to be like-minded. Forgive not seven times but seventy times seven.

As Holy Week approaches, we are again reminded of the price of our exoneration. Regardless of the sin, forgiveness is ours for the asking. We are now called to extend that same spirit to others.

Today, let us find time to meditate on our task to forgive our brethren. Are there people at home, in the neighbourhood, in the workplace or in our community with whom we need to reconcile and make peace? Can I do that before moving to the Feast of Easter?

These days of close preparation for the Holy Week and Easter call us for reconciliation with God and God's people. Can I find time to approach the sacrament of reconciliation?

bibleclaret