

5th Sunday Lent Year C 2025

John (8:1-11)

And Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At daybreak he appeared in the Temple again; and as all the people came to him, he sat down and began to teach them.

The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman along who had been caught committing adultery; and making her stand there in full view of everybody, they said to Jesus, 'Master, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery, and Moses has ordered us in the Law to condemn women like this to death by stoning. What have you to say?' They asked him this as a test, looking for something to use against him.

But Jesus bent down and started writing on the ground with his finger. As they persisted with their question, he looked up and said, 'If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her'. Then he bent down and wrote on the ground again. When they heard this they went away one by one, beginning with the eldest until Jesus was left alone with the woman, who remained standing there. He looked up and said, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' 'No one, sir' she replied. 'Neither do I condemn you', said Jesus, 'go away, and don't sin anymore'.

Reflection

There is a lot of speculation about what Jesus wrote on the ground. What is more significant is Jesus' movement. Twice we are told 'he bent down'. What a striking moment! The Word bending down, coming down, lowering himself, making words in the dust, stirring the earth for meaning and finally looking up into the woman's face. Being bent down he had to look up at the woman. There is intimacy and compassion in this scene of Jesus alone with the woman. Did it really matter that the others had gone away? He only had eyes for her, forgiving and compassionate eyes.

God created us from the dust of the earth and in Jesus took on our human nature, accepting our humanity in its essence, touching it, becoming it, redeeming it. In the past the woman had hid her face from God but now Jesus bends down that he might look up into her face, not to banish or condemn, but to redeem.

May we all be ready to bend down for the sake of another, to recognise the loving presence of the Word in the scribbles of our life and may we too allow Jesus to look up lovingly into our face.



LORD JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD HAVE MERCY ON ME A SINNER.