

THE ADULTERESS WOMAN WAS TOLD NOT TO SIN AGAIN

In today's Gospel (Jn 8:1-11), Jesus gives us a glimpse and a warning what to expect on our Day of Judgement, when no sin will be hidden from Him. The angry mob made themselves self-righteous, in their challenging Jesus, as they attempted to stone the adulterous woman, who we believe was Mary Magdalene. They were united in the sin of anger at the expense of someone else. They gathered as a disordered and dysfunctional community with the hidden agenda to catch Jesus out in their desire to rid themselves of His Truth. If Jesus agrees with the stoning, then the mercy that He preaches is a facade. If He says the opposite, then He is going against the Law of Moses. So He curiously begins to write on the ground with His finger.

Unknown to them, Truth would heal them and bring calm and peace into their hearts. Jesus deals with them, one by one, by making them aware of their private sins, when He stooped down and began writing them in the dirt on the ground. This was the same finger that wrote the Ten Commandments, on tablets of stone, given to Moses. This finger does not condemn but points us in the right direction of salvation. After seeing their own sins, they were moved to repentance and all the accusers left in shame, beginning with the eldest. Those who sought to shame the woman, were themselves shamed. Jesus was left alone with the woman 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 do not sin anymore.' Jesus defends the sinner but not the sin. The sin of adultery can also be committed in the bedroom chamber of our hearts by thinking impure thoughts and viewing pornography.

HARDENED HEARTS LIKE STONE

When we throw-about uncharitable accusations and stories about each other, we can cause untold damage. It is as if we are throwing stones at our neighbours. We can 'stone' and 'murder' a person's character with our uncharitable tongues. When Jesus wrote out each person's sins, they recognised and acknowledged them within themselves. One then imagines, that those holding any stones in their hands, dropped them immediately, symbolising a kind of repentance, a letting go, by dropping their sins from their lives. There was no more shouting and anger displayed but a reconciliation with Jesus and the woman, because none of them continued in their challenge. Jesus is talking directly to us today when He said; *Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to cast a stone.* As with the mob, Jesus is instructing us to turn our accusing judgemental glance inwardly, instead of projecting it outwardly towards someone else. We are to replace the magnifying glass that we use, to see each other's faults, with a mirror and have a good look at ourselves before judging others. Jesus is asking us to honestly name and confront the sins within ourselves and to sin no more. To acknowledge our own faults and not those of others. This drama foreshadows the story of Jesus, who will be put to death by an angry mob. They were totally blind to the virtues of truth, charity, love, gratitude and mercy, because of their hardened hearts of stone, cemented in a satanic state. When we sin, we act like the same unruly angry mob. We are still responsible for the death of Jesus, through our continued sinning. To acknowledge and confess our sins in confession, is to drop the heavy burden of sin (the heart of stone) and the guilt that sin brings and reconcile ourselves with God, through Jesus Christ, in order to rise from the dead to eternal life. God bless, Fr. Brendan.