



LENT 2022

5TH SUNDAY



Photo 1. Woman taken in adultery. Photo: R Guillen

Pope Francis in his Encyclical reminds us that:

"...we are a global community, all in the same boat, where one person's problems are the problems of all. Once more, we realized that no one is saved alone; we can only be saved together."

(Fratelli Tutti #32)

God the Father always reveals himself in love: *"God is Love, love is our mission"*.

Love is expressed in mercy. Christ, in revealing merciful love to the woman taken in adultery, invites us to love as He did without any discrimination.

As RSCJ, we are therefore called to be women of communion, compassion, and reconciliation in this deeply wounded and divided world.

"Wherever we are, the Gospel invites us to seek paths that create communion with compassion and hope."

(General Chapter 1994 P. 18)

Gospel: Jn 8, 1-11

This Gospel text, offered to us on this fifth Sunday of Lent, reveals the merciful face of Christ. Mercy is characterised by compassion, the ability to enter into the situation of another person who is suffering, who is caught up in evil. This compassion helps us to understand the other person, to see reality with their eyes, to feel with their heart and to be present with them.

Mercy is not limited to the emotions, but rather it moves us into action, takes a stand, creates, and helps the other person out of his or her situation. The cry for mercy is present throughout human history. It is the cry for pity, for love, that comes from so many men, women and children who are oppressed, displaced, abandoned, and suffering.

"We suffer the pain of our peoples. With them, and from this depth, we enter into the Open Heart of Christ, the wellspring that satisfies our thirst. From our contemplation of the Pierced Heart of Jesus in the heart of wounded humanity flows the desire to commit ourselves with greater passion and compassion to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation." *(General Chapter 2008, p.26)*

We can light a candle and let our prayer intentions flow from a heart that reaches "to the ends of the earth": to the most vulnerable part of myself, to those around me and to the far corners of our own countries...

Let us listen to Jesus who says: "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." In God's eyes, we are all sinners, and we need to be forgiven: "Be merciful, as your Father is merciful". The prophet Hosea had compared the people of Israel to a bride whom God loves, and who is "adulterous" (*Hosea 2:4*).

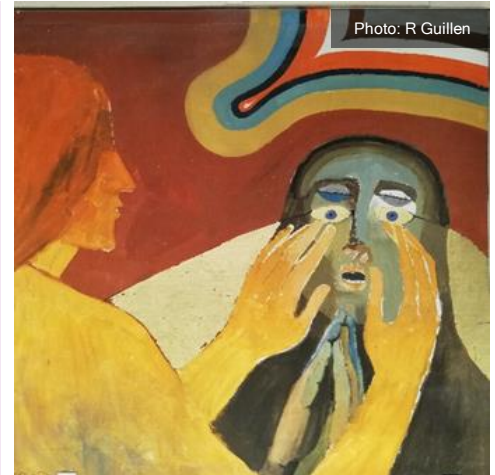
God in his infinite love continues to love and forgive his unfaithful bride, sinful humanity. Jesus read the woman's heart and saw her desire to be understood, forgiven, and set free.

In Jesus there is no judgment without pity and compassion. To those who wanted to judge her and condemn her to death, Jesus responded with a long silence. He wanted the voice of God to be heard in the consciences of the woman and her accusers.

In silence, we can present various pebbles that represent the very things that I have come to judge and acknowledge the harshness of my gaze.

Let us now contemplate Jesus' silence and his attitude towards the woman taken in adultery: "Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground."

- This silence heralds the great silence of Jesus during his own trial.
- He draws pictures as if he were unaware of the situation; he writes in the sand.
- Let us first contemplate this poor woman, then the accusers, and then the crowd.
- Does this woman's past explain Jesus' attitude?
- How long did Jesus remain silent?
- Let us imagine how Jesus looks at everyone.



Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, sir." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."

At the end of Lent, we will receive the tangible and effective sign that is the sacrament of your merciful love. We will hear from your representative, as if it were from your own mouth, these same words: "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again..."

With a gesture of putting water on our eyes, for example, we will welcome and receive the new-found look of Jesus, "Go ..."

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*How good and wonderfully fair you are, Jesus our teacher and brother.
You are infinitely understanding and kind to us sinners.
You are the one who never binds us to our past.
You, Lord, have mercy and forgiveness.
Grant us your merciful heart, which is full of love and tenderness.
Give us the grace of a heart that listens to the cries of our brothers and sisters who are suffering.
Who are You that You love us so much?
So helpless, so great, so vulnerable?
You are love without limits. You are Love.*

Closing Song: "[La Herida](#)" (*International Version*)

Novitiate of RDC/Chad

