

FAITH @Home

Diocese of Waterford & Lismore

Celebrating and supporting faith, hope and love in the heart of the family!



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FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT: LAETARE SUNDAY

Year C

Sunday Mass Readings

First Reading:

Isaiah 43:16-21

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 125(126)

Second Reading:

Philippians 3:8-14

Gospel:

John 8:1-11

"...neither do I condemn you... go away, and do not sin any more."



The Woman Taken In Adultery: Guercino, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Hear

Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading. Don't have one? No worries, you can find this week's readings online [here](#).

Check out [this video](#) of the Gospel for children.

Pray

In the Gospel today we hear the story of the woman caught in adultery. There are a lot of heightened emotions in this story, but notice the gentle calmness of Jesus throughout.

- What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this piece of Scripture? How do these words resonate with you personally?
- Can you imagine how desperate and ashamed the woman must have felt dragged before the crowd, and how the tender words and gaze of Jesus must have filled her heart with overflowing gratitude? Have you ever felt truly grateful for Jesus' love and mercy?
- Have you ever felt like condemning others rather than lifting them up in prayer and refraining from critical words? Ask for the grace to be like Jesus to all you meet this week.

Talk

In this week's Gospel, we hear about woman caught in adultery and Jesus' loving response to her,

- How good are we in our family at recognising each other's strengths? Do we praise each other, affirm each other, thank each other for the good things we do?
- Or are we more tempted to focus on each other's weaknesses and flaws and make a big deal out of things like that instead?
- Let everyone make a list of five good things about each member of the family - then compare what you have on each list!
- Jesus also tells the woman in the Gospel to "sin no more". Are there things we need to say sorry for to each other, and to God? Have we been too quick to judge others?

Family Challenge!

This is the fifth Sunday of Lent and Palm Sunday is fast approaching. Make the most of Lent by getting to Confession this week (for those who have made their first Confession!) Make it a family event, and why not stop for a treat on the way home to celebrate God's mercy!

Check out page 3 for a picture to colour from this week's readings!

MISSION:

Jesus knows that none of us are perfect, but He asks us to do our best every day to love and serve God and others. Be on the lookout this week for extra ways you can show your family that you love them! Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how!

Song of the Week!
RUNNING THE RACE WITH JESUS



"If you judge people, you have no time to love them."
St Teresa of Calcutta

AM I A PHARISEE?

Can you imagine what it must have been like for the woman caught in adultery to be dragged in front of the crowd like that, and used in a ploy to try to destroy Jesus? The Pharisees did not care about her brokenness, or her need for forgiveness; all they wanted was to use the Law to trap Jesus. We don't know what words Jesus wrote in the dust that day - the only known written words of Jesus. But His message for the Pharisees is one for us too: Am I quick to judge others, to condemn them, even when I cannot know their hearts? Am I blind to my own faults? Only God knows our hearts. Jesus knew the woman's heart and her need for mercy and forgiveness. He did not condemn her but offered her life and grace, and the way to stay in that grace: "Go and sin no more!" He knew the hearts of the Pharisees too, and He would not play their game: using the Law to condemn and trap, rather than the Law being used to draw others closer to God, as it had been originally intended. Let's make sure we focus on our interior lives, and not just the exterior: "man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)

This week is a good opportunity to hold a mirror up to ourselves rather than a magnifying glass to everyone else! The first thing we should hopefully see is a son/daughter of God, created in His image and likeness, and loved eternally. Are there flaws there that need changing? Not exterior ones, but the really important ones: how do I treat others? How is my relationship with God?

VIDEO: Cast The First Stone - The Woman Caught In Adultery | Story Vault

TUNE: How Can It Be - Lauren Daigle

RESOURCE: Cast The First Stone?



Family Prayer

Jesus, you know that we are weak and that we stumble and fall through our sin. Help us to rise again with you and strive onwards for holiness. Amen

EVENTS

Medjugorje Night at Glencomeragh House: Thursday April 7th beginning with Rosary at 8pm, followed by Mass and Adoration.

One-Day Healing and Renewal Retreat for Married Couples of All Ages: Sun 10th April, 10am - 4pm, Holy Family Mission, Glencomeragh House. €75 per couple including three course dinner, teas and coffees. Booking essential. For more info: (052) 6133181 or info@holymission.ie

Silent Retreat preached by: Fr. Kilian Byrne, Foyer of Charity at Glencomeragh House, April 18-24, Cost €380 full board. Contact Helen 086 1678027/ hellywilliams@gmail.com

Arise Family Conference: A Catholic family conference will be held in Tramore from 17th to 22nd April. Booking essential. More details at www.arisefamilyconference.ie

GO AND SIN NO MORE

The Gospel for the fifth Sunday of Lent continues to offer lessons about God's mercy and forgiveness. Today we hear not a parable, but the report from John's Gospel of an encounter among Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees, and a woman caught in adultery.

The scribes and the Pharisees approach Jesus, bringing a woman who has been caught in the act of adultery. They put to Jesus the question of what ought to be done in this case.

The Pharisees state clearly that according to the Law of Moses, those caught in the act of adultery were to be stoned to death. Under Roman occupation, however, the Jewish people did not have the authority to execute people; this is cited in John's passion narrative. To answer the Pharisees' question, Jesus must propose an action that will be either contrary to the Law of Moses or contrary to Roman law. Either answer, yes or no, will support the Pharisees' case against Jesus.

Jesus avoids the trap, however, by offering an answer that was not anticipated by those who posed the question. Jesus, after writing on the ground with his finger, addresses those who stand before him and suggests that the one without sin cast the first stone. Jesus then returns to his writing.

We can easily imagine the scene as the Pharisees and the elders disperse, one by one. Jesus has eluded the trap they had prepared. We might also give credit to the elders and the Pharisees who do not, in the end, claim to be sinless and worthy of passing judgment.

Left alone with the woman, Jesus asks where the accusers have gone. With no one remaining to condemn the woman, Jesus (the one who truly is without sin) sends the woman on her way, refusing to pass judgment on her and exhorting her to avoid future sin.

Jesus' response to those who accuse the woman is more than a caution to us about making judgment of others. It is a profound lesson in divine mercy and forgiveness. As sinners, we are all unworthy to judge the sins of others and we would stand convicted by God for our transgressions. Yet Jesus, the one without sin and thus our judge, offers us who are sinners his mercy and forgiveness. Redeemed by Jesus' compassion, we are sent to sin no more and to live in God's love and peace.

Read the full explanation on Loyola.Press - Sunday Connection



Please email us at faithathome@waterfordlismore.ie [or click the **subscribe** button] if you would like to receive Faith@Home direct to your inbox each week!

"To the Heights" Post-Primary / Youth Version also available: click **SUBSCRIBE** / email youthministry@waterfordlismore.ie

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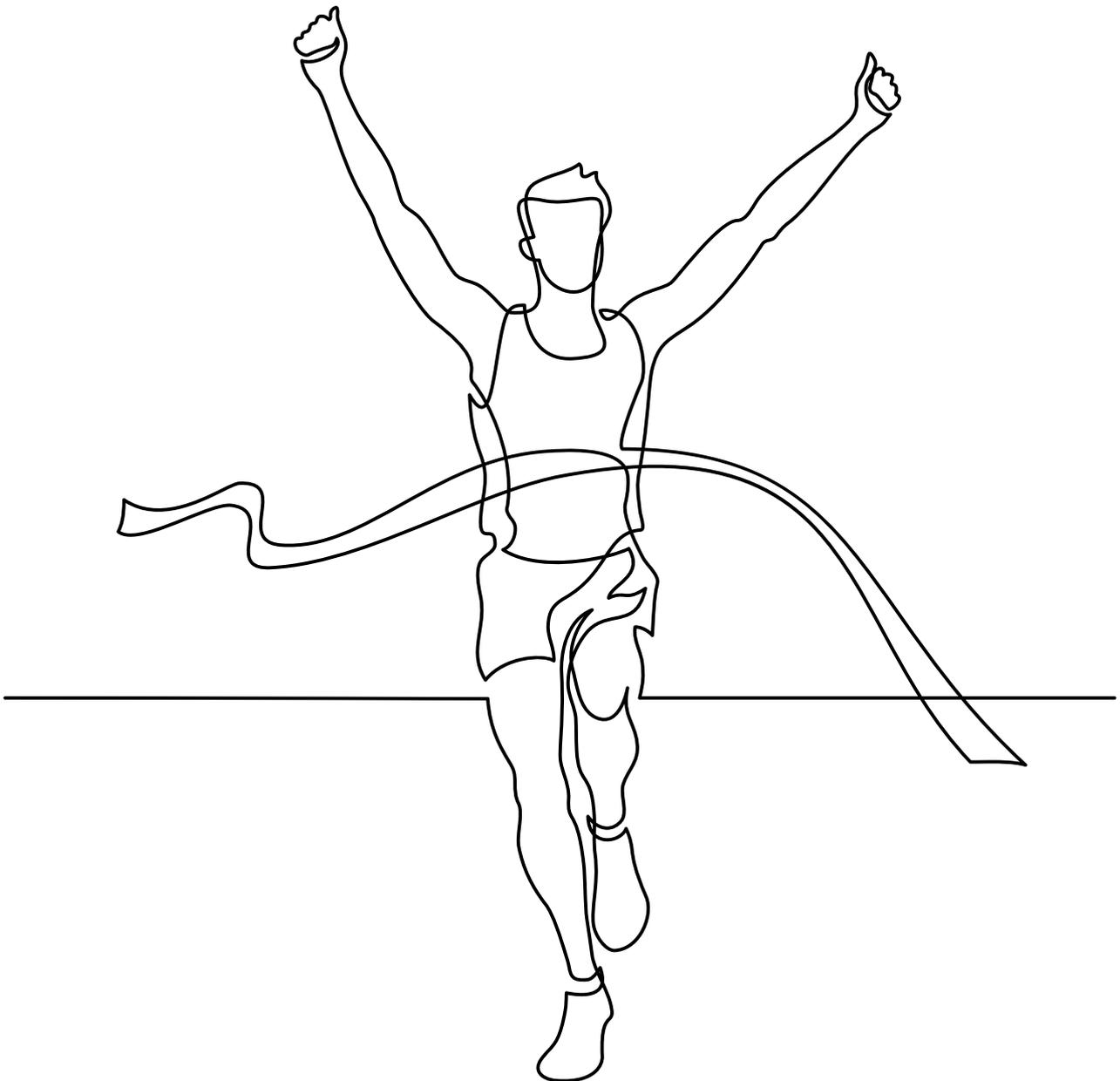
CHECK IT OUT: LOUGH DERG



St. Patrick's Purgatory, more commonly referred to as Lough Derg because of its location in the lake of the same name in Co Donegal, is a pilgrimage site which dates back to the Fifth Century. Since then, uninterrupted for over 1500 years, it has been a place of Christian pilgrimage and prayer. Three day pilgrimages and one day retreats now available to book: <https://www.loughderg.org/>

*When we run the race with Jesus and strive for Heaven,
all the angels and saints cheer us on! Draw your
favourite saints in the background, cheering you on!*

Philippians 3:8-14





CHECK OUT WHAT CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH SAYS ABOUT JESUS AND THE LAW CCC 574 - 591



JOHN 8:1-11

Cast the first Stone?

Help me, O Lord, that my eyes may be merciful, so that I may never suspect or judge from appearances, but look for what is beautiful in my neighbours' souls and come to their rescue.
St Faustina

THINK ABOUT IT!

What's the difference between using a magnifying glass and a mirror?



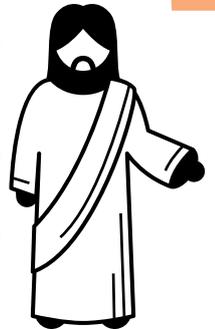
Where is the danger in using a magnifying glass when looking at the faults of others?



A LITTLE BIBLICAL CONTEXT: JESUS AND THE PHARISEES



Jesus' actions and teaching has already angered the Pharisees on numerous occasions before this point; He even called them "whitewashed tombs"! At this point, the Pharisees are making plans for Jesus' arrest and seeking his death. In John 7:37-38, Jesus was teaching in the Temple area, saying: "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." The scribes and Pharisees are plotting to arrest Jesus and they return in John Chapter 8 to gather more evidence against Jesus by posing a question intended to trap Jesus.



NOW WATCH: "CAST THE FIRST STONE - THE WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY | STORY VAULT (IBELIEVEBIBLE)"

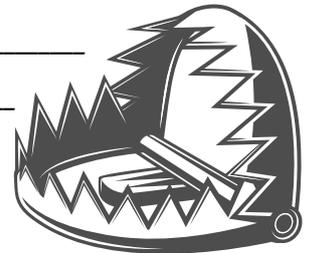


- **What was the devious plan of the Pharisees that day?**

If Jesus condemned the woman, he would look _____

If Jesus excused the woman's sins, he would violate _____

- One of the reasons this story is remembered is how Jesus finds a way to _____ their ploy and show _____ to the accused woman.



- The Pharisees quoted the Law of Moses, saying she should be stoned to death for being caught in the act of adultery. Why were they only partially right? What does Deuteronomy 22:23-29 actually state?

- If Jesus condemned the woman, why would He also get into trouble with the Romans?

- What was Jesus' initial response?

- How does Jeremiah 17:13 relate to these events? "Lord, you are the hope of Israel; all who forsake you will be put to shame. Those who turn away from you will be written in the dust because they have forsaken the Lord, the spring of living water."

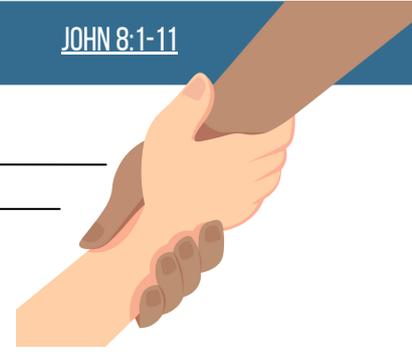


CAST THE FIRST STONE?

JOHN 8:1-11

- What did Jesus ask the Pharisees to do, and how did they respond?

- What did Jesus say to the woman caught in adultery?



Now Read John 8:1-11



Can you imagine what it must have been like for the woman caught in adultery to be dragged in front of the crowd like that, and used in a ploy to try to destroy Jesus? The Pharisees did not care about her brokenness, or her need for forgiveness; all they wanted was to use the Law to trap Jesus. We don't know what words Jesus wrote in the dust that day - the only known written words of Jesus. But His message for the Pharisees is one for us too: Am I quick to judge others, to condemn them, even when I cannot know their hearts? Am I blind to my own faults? Only God knows our hearts. Jesus knew the woman's heart and her need for mercy and forgiveness. He did not condemn her but offered her life and grace, and the way to stay in that grace: "Go and sin no more!" He knew the hearts of the Pharisees too, and He would not play their game: using the Law to condemn and trap, rather than the Law being used to draw others closer to God, as it had been originally intended. Let's make sure we focus on our interior lives, and not just the exterior: "man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)



MISSION!

THIS WEEK IS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO HOLD A MIRROR UP TO OURSELVES RATHER THAN A MAGNIFYING GLASS TO EVERYONE ELSE! THE FIRST THING WE SHOULD HOPEFULLY SEE IS A SON/DAUGHTER OF GOD, CREATED IN HIS IMAGE AND LIKENESS, AND LOVED ETERNALLY. ARE THERE FLAWS THERE THAT NEED CHANGING? NOT EXTERIOR ONES, BUT THE REALLY IMPORTANT ONES: HOW DO I TREAT OTHERS? HOW IS MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?



PRAYER TIME!

Help me, O Lord, that my eyes may be merciful, so that I may never suspect or judge from appearances, but look for what is beautiful in my neighbours' souls and come to their rescue. Help me, that my ears may be merciful, so that I may give heed to my neighbours' needs and not be indifferent to their pains and moanings. Help me, O Lord, that my tongue may be merciful, so that I should never speak negatively of my neighbour, but have a word of comfort and forgiveness for all. Help me, O Lord, that my hands may be merciful and filled with good deeds, so that I may do only good to my neighbours and take upon myself the more difficult and toilsome tasks. Help me, O Lord, that my feet may be merciful, so that I may hurry to assist my neighbour, overcoming my own fatigue and weariness. My true rest is in the service of my neighbour. Help me, O Lord, that my heart may be merciful so that I myself may feel all the sufferings of my neighbour. (...) May Your mercy, O Lord, rest upon me" (Diary of St Faustina #163)



CREATE A PLAYLIST TO LISTEN TO AS YOU REFLECT ON MERCY THIS WEEK

- How Can It Be - Lauren Daigle
- Go and Sin No More - Rebecca St James
- Make Me Over - Natalie Grant
- From the Inside Out - Hillsong Worship
- What Love Really Means - JJ Heller
- Mercy - Bethel
- I Belong - Kathryn Scott
- Mercy - Matt Redman



Click the links for the YouTube videos to listen to some suggestions!



Watch this powerful scene from *The Passion of the Christ (Mary Magdalene)*



Are you a Pharisee? *Ascension Presents*



A Prayer to be Merciful

SPEND TIME SLOWLY PRAYING AND REFLECTING ON THE WORDS OF ST FAUSTINA

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May Your mercy, O Lord, rest upon me"

(Diary of St Faustina #163)

DOOR TO CHURCH

PARTITION WALL

TEA SERVING TABLES

REFRESHMENTS
TABLES

REFRESHMENTS
TABLES

ENTRANCE / EXIT

KITCHEN

