

March 18, 2024

Daily Reflections

Journeying through Lent



Center for Spiritual Development

ALL IN NEED OF MERCY!

By Sr. Jane DeLisle, CSJ

An Excerpt from Today's Gospel

*"Let the one among you who is without sin
be the first to throw a stone at her."
Again he bent down and wrote on the ground.
And in response, they went away one by one,
beginning with the elders.
So he was left alone with the woman before him.
Then Jesus straightened up and said to her,
"Woman, where are they?
Has no one condemned you?"
She replied, "No one, sir."
Then Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you.
Go, and from now on do not sin anymore."*

JOHN 8:7b-11

Reflection

It seems that the lesson to the people Jesus challenged could easily be the same conversation for us today. It is too easy for form quick judgments about someone's behavior and to point fingers in harsh judgment. The adjective "judgmental" describes "*someone who forms lots of opinions — usually harsh or critical ones*" (Standard Dictionary) — about lots of people who do not seem to be living up to our expectations or standards.

Perhaps the adage "*There for the grace of God go I*" is worth keeping in the forefront of our minds. We are all sinners to a greater or lesser degree and very much in need of God's mercy and forgiveness. We may sin differently, but sin mars my being nonetheless. It is far easier to judge another than to hold a mirror up to myself.

Recently I was reminded of the difference between grace and mercy. It is a helpful understanding and I realize that I need both. *Grace* is when God gives something we do not deserve. *Mercy* is when God does **not** give us what we **do** deserve.

Let us pray for the grace to see the good in others and to separate the sin from the sinner as Jesus did, as God does for us. You and I do not know what another bears within them that motivates their behavior. Often, we are unconscious of our motivations. Let us pray for one another in our vulnerability and weakness that leads to sin. Let us pray for the mercy we need and have a merciful attitude toward others, rather than condemn one another.

May our Lenten journey instill in us gratitude for God's grace so to arrive at Easter immensely thankful for God's mercy.



Cast the First Stone - Capernaum, Israel
Photo by Sr. Jane DeLisle, CSJ

For Pondering

- What are the observed behaviors that I find most annoying or about which I form the most judgment?
- With what sinful behavior or attitude do I most struggle in my own life?

- For what grace do I pray?
 - When and why do I plead for God's mercy?
-

For Prayer

*May the Word of God guide my mind and heart
toward true encounter with Jesus Christ.*

*Loving God, in your mercy bless me with the grace needed
to keep me from judging or condemning others.*

*In your compassionate presence
help me acknowledge my sinfulness and seek your forgiveness.
Amen.*

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