

## WSC REFLECTION GUIDE

**Readings:** Isaiah 43:16-21  
Psalm 126:1-6  
Philippians 3:8-14  
John 8:1-11

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent  
March 21, 2010

**Word:** **Holiness in Christ, our Spiritual Rock, calls for repentance.**

**Theme:** **Christ's call for repentance exhorts us not to condemn others.**  
[Compassion, Readiness to Forgive]

**Promise:** ***"Neither do I condemn you."*** (Jn 8:11)

### Reflection:

The Theme for this week is: **Christ's call for repentance exhorts us not to condemn others.** In the Gospel, the scribes and the Pharisees bring a woman caught in adultery to Jesus, asking for His opinion. The Law of Moses prescribes that a woman caught in adultery be stoned to death. They actually wanted to trap Jesus so they can discredit Him. They confronted Jesus with a dilemma – if Jesus says that the woman should be stoned, then all he had done would be discredited, as He was preaching the compassion, mercy, forgiveness, and love of God. To do so would also place Him on collision course with the Roman law that decrees that no Jew has the power to carry out the death sentence.

Instead of stating His opinion, Jesus bends down and starts writing on the ground with His finger. Some commentators say that Jesus was actually writing the sins of those who were condemning the woman. And when they insisted, Jesus said, "Let the man among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." ... they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. Jesus then asked the woman, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir", she replied. Jesus said, "Nor do I condemn you. You may go, but from now on avoid this sin," (Jn 8:6-11).

The scribes' and Pharisees' concept of authority was to watch for every mistake and deviation from the law. And punishment is meted out without mercy or forgiveness for any violation. But Jesus preached mercy and forgiveness.

In his *The Daily Study Bible, The Gospel of John*, p. 5, William Barclay says of authority, "The first duty of authority is to understand the force of the temptations which drove the sinner to sin and the seductiveness of the circumstances in which sin became so attractive. No man can pass judgment on another unless he, at least tries to understand what the other has come through. The second duty of authority is to seek to reclaim the wrongdoer. Any authority which is solely concerned with punishment is wrong; any authority, which, in its exercise, drives a wrongdoer either

to despair or to resentment, is a failure. The function of authority is not to banish the sinner from all decent society, still less to wipe him out; it is to make him a good man. The man set in authority must be like a wise physician; his one desire must be to heal.

The Gospel speaks so much of the mercy of Jesus. Jesus did not condone the sin of the woman but He said, Go now and sin no more. He was willing to give the woman another chance to live a holy life. The woman had gone through so much humiliation. She received the mercy, compassion, forgiveness and love of Jesus, and she was ready to live a new life with and for Jesus.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we too have sinned and have been forgiven by Jesus. We must forgo of our old sinful ways and focus on living the new life with and for Jesus. The first reading exhorts us: "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold I am doing a new thing... I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert... to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise, (Isaiah 43: 16-21). Like St. Paul, we must consider all things rubbish so that Christ maybe our only wealth.

Jesus has forgiven us. He did not condemn us but has given us a chance to mend our ways and follow Him. So we too must forgive, not judge and condemn others. Instead, we should continue to do the works of Jesus. During this Lenten season, let us continue to cleanse our hearts of any transgression by repenting and going to confession. Let us also reflect on how we have judged and condemned others, and in prayer ask for their forgiveness. For as we do, we will receive the **Promise of the Week: "Neither do I condemn you. ( Jn 8:11)**

**Suggested Personal Reflection Guide:**

1. How do I react to those who are still in bondage to sinful ways?
2. How can I have the compassion, mercy, forgiveness and love of Jesus? How I can share and witness these to others without seeming to be self-righteous?

**Next Week's Daily Mass Reading Guide:**

March 22, 2010 (Mon):	Dn 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62 or 13:41-62; Ps 23:1-6; Jn 8:12-20
March 23, 2010 (Tue):	Nm 21:4-9; Ps 102:2-3, 16-21; Jn 8:21-30
March 24, 2010 (Wed):	Dn 3:14-20, 91-92, 95; Dn 3:52-56; Jn 8:31-42
March 25, 2010 (Thur):	Is 7:10-14, 8:10; Ps 40:7-11; Heb 10:4-10; Lk 1:26-38
March 26, 2010 (Fri):	Jer 20:10-13; Ps 18:2-7; Jn 10:31-42
March 27, 2010 (Sat):	Ez 37:21-28; Jer 31:10-13; Jn 11:45-57

***"Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Read your Bible daily!"***