

5th SUNDAY OF LENT YEAR C 2022.
NEITHER DO I CONDEMN YOU!?

The theme of letting go of the past and focusing on the future runs through today's readings.

In the first reading the Israelites had been in exile for many years and they looked back on their past life through the **Deliverance** from bondage in Egypt, the **Exodus, Manna** and **water in the desert**, and then **the land flowing with milk and honey!** All of these were past memories (They could pass through rivers and fire, without drowning or being burned) and now they were in exile.

Isaiah encourages them and gives **hope**. ***But do not dwell on the past or remember the things of the old. Look, I am doing a new thing, it springs forth, I am opening up a new way and rivers in the desert (Isaiah 43:18-19).** What great encouragement for these people, and don't we all need these words when we are desperate and when we feel we have hit a wall! Let the past be the past, and let the future be the future.

In the second reading, St. Paul echoes the same emphasis, this time about himself. He knows very well his past life as a persecutor of the Gospel (killing Christians), but now he has been **touched** by the Lord Jesus through his **conversion**. He is looking forward to the future and refuses to be mastered by the past ***I forget what is behind me, I race forward and run towards the goal (Philip: 3:13).**

All of us are to look towards the future. We would be correct to say the past has brought us this far to the present, and it will lead us on the path in the way forward. But we need to let the past be past, and to look towards the future with confidence like St. Paul. We all have a past life, with both good and bad memories, yet we shouldn't be tied to the past.

Finally, the Gospel also reflects the same theme. The poor woman ***lets her past life be past, and finds consolation and hope in the person of Jesus Christ.*** Imagine the force the elders and Pharisees used to drag this poor lady to Jesus, torn clothes, perhaps even with one shoe and no headscarf. There was not an ounce of respect and concern for this Woman as a human being or even her feelings as a Lady. Despite the embarrassment, **and shaking with fear**, she knew the consequences for her action was to be stoned to death according to the laws of Moses. The final verdict was to come from this person, Jesus... and it came loud and clear... ***let anyone among you who has no sin be the first to throw a stone on her (Jn.8:7). He turned the table on them by this suggestion!*** At these words they left one by one starting with the elders, until Jesus was left with the woman alone, and what would the verdict be? She must have been extremely confused with what happened next. Jesus displayed profound **compassion and kindness towards** this poor lady while at the same time upholding the law. He didn't **condone** the woman's behavior and told her to ***sin no more.*** ****Woman, where are they, has no one condemned you?!*** No one sir... **NEITHER DO I**

CONDEMN YOU GO AND FROM NOW ON DO NOT SIN ANYMORE (Jn.8:11).

Jesus distinguishes the **sin and the sinner**. He condemns sin, but forgives the sinner. He wanted her to **repent and come back to the fold**. She needed mercy, she was guilty, ashamed and repentant, and she knew her past life. Her dignity was restored and made whole again. Don't we all need such mercy and restoration in our broken lives?

Jesus didn't condemn or judge the accusers either, rather he led them to judge themselves and their sinfulness.

Jesus doesn't need the death of a sinner, He wants them to be converted... He understands our past too but doesn't want us to live in the past forgetting the future.

In our world today there is someone interested in us... Each one of us needs repentance and we should not fix our eyes on the past, but rather in **today's forgiveness and tomorrow's hope**. We all make mistakes, but God's Grace is enough to forgive and give us strength to face the future with determination and confidence. His plan is **The new flesh and water for us**.

-There is someone interested in **restoring our broken lives...**

-Interested in **healing us...**

-Interested in our future as opposed to our past...

-Someone of **second chances...**

*HIS NAME IS JESUS LET'S GO TO HIM THIS LENT **Neither will He judge us!!!***

