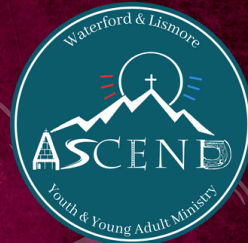




# To the Heights



FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Subscribe to receive by email!



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

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



[www.waterfordlismore.ie/youth-ministry](http://www.waterfordlismore.ie/youth-ministry)



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AscendWaterfordLismoreYM



Ascend Youth Ministry



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

## Game Changers

The Catholic Church's Liturgical Calendar is crammed full of inspirational saints and heroes, or as we like to call them, **Game Changers!** Check them out on our web page!



April 4th

St Isidore, Bishop

April 5th

St Vincent Ferrer, Priest

April 7th

St John Baptist de la Salle, Priest

Happy Feastday to all the De La Salle Brothers and Schools!

## Reflect



1. Why did the Pharisees say they brought the woman to Jesus?
2. Why were they really bringing her to Him?
3. The Jews were not allowed to put a man to death - where do we hear this again, later in the Gospel?
4. How did Jesus answer them initially?
5. What solution did He put before them if they wanted her to be stoned?
6. Why did the Pharisees all leave?
7. What did Jesus say to the woman caught in adultery?
8. What do you think He might have written in the dust?



## 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/>



"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)



## Gospel Reflection: 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 full extract on [Loyola Press - Sunday Connection](#)

## TUNE OF THE WEEK

How Can it Be?



Lauren Daigle

## WEEKLY CHALLENGE:



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?

Check out our weekly resource pack on pg 3-6!

WATCH



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

## Young Person's Prayer



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)

TESTIMONY TIME



## WHAT'S ON

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

**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](mailto:hellywilliams@gmail.com)

**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](mailto:info@holymission.ie)

**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](http://www.arisefamilyconference.ie)



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?



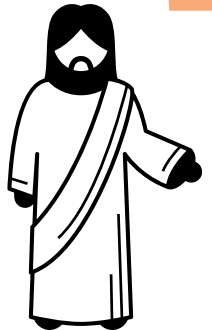
Where is the danger in using a magnifying glass when looking at the faults of others?



## 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)"

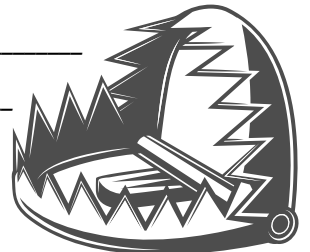


### • What was the devious plan of the Pharisees that day?

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?

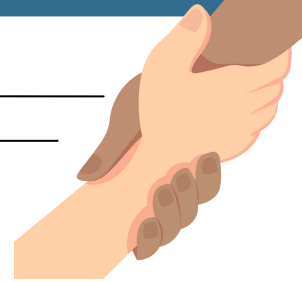
JOHN 8:1-11

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

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

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## 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*





RETELL THIS STORY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY

[illegible]



# A Prayer to be Merciful

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

*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.*

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*May Your mercy, O Lord, rest upon me"*

*(Diary of St Faustina #163)*