

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Jesus forgives a woman

INTRODUCTION

Jewish laws were very strict and everyone was expected to obey them; those who did not could expect to be punished. Today we hear how Jesus shows mercy to a woman without disobeying the law.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Sing the Candle Song.

SORRY

Jesus said, 'Do not point out the mistakes of others before doing something about your own.' (cf Luke 6:41-42).

It is not easy to admit when we have made mistakes and done something wrong. Let us spend a few moments in silence, asking Jesus to forgive our faults, and to help us to forgive the faults we find in others.

Say together: Our Father . . .

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 6: *Jesus here we are.*

GOSPEL (cf John 8:1-11)

Jesus was teaching in the Temple when the Pharisees brought a woman to stand before him. 'This woman has been caught doing something wrong, and the law says that she should be stoned,' they said. 'What do you think?' they asked, because they wanted to trick Jesus.

After a few moments Jesus stood up and said, 'Let the person who has never done anything wrong throw the first stone at her.'

The crowd that had gathered began to leave one by one, until Jesus and the woman stood alone. Jesus said to her, 'Has anyone thrown a stone at you?' 'No sir,' she answered. 'Then I have forgiven you,' he said. 'Now go and make a fresh start.'

DISCUSSION

Why did the Pharisees want to stone the woman? – According to their law, stoning was the punishment required for her wrong-doing.

How did they mean to trick Jesus? – The Pharisees wanted to see whether Jesus would disobey the law and show the woman mercy.

What did Jesus say to them?

He told the people that anyone who was

completely pure and good, and who had never done anything wrong, should throw the first stone. The crowd had been ready to punish this woman, but Jesus made them realise that no one is perfect and we all make mistakes.

There was *one* perfectly good person there that day. Who was it? – Jesus.

Was Jesus ready to punish the woman? – Jesus understood that people are often weak and do things wrong. He was always ready to give them another chance to change their hearts and their lives. He showed the woman mercy and sent her away to try again.

What can we learn from this story?

1. That Jesus is merciful and forgiving. He is ready to forgive our mistakes and give us another chance.

Can you remember the name of a tax-collector, who was given the chance to change his heart and make a fresh start? – Zacchaeus (see the 31st Sunday Year C).

2. Often we see the mistakes and faults of other people before we notice our own. We should be ready to forgive others, just as others forgive our own faults.

Can you think of a story Jesus told about an unforgiving servant? – (See the 31st Sunday Year A.) Help the children to recall these stories, or re-tell them briefly in your own words.

ACTIVITY

Photocopy the activity sheet and help the children to fill in the blanks.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Merciful Jesus,
help us to be understanding and forgiving,
and to remember
that we all make mistakes sometimes.