

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

YEAR C

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

God of mercy,
you always forgive those
who are truly sorry
for what they have done wrong.
Today we stand
in need of your help.
Show us how to avoid
all wrong-doing
and please you in everything.
We ask you this
through Christ our Lord,
who lives with you
and the Holy Spirit
forever and ever.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

Our readings focus on God's forgiveness. In the first reading, we are told that the people have, more or less, forgotten about God, have become "bored" with God. They have forgotten that it was God who brought them out of Egypt (the past). But God is going to work even new wonders for them, to bring them back from exile (something completely new, a path in the wilderness). And besides all this, God is even ready to forgive their sin of rejection, and even to forget about it!

The Gospel, of course, puts this into a concrete situation. It should be noted that Jesus does not ignore the woman's sin of adultery, but rather forgives it. And the manner in which Jesus deals with this situation teaches us that in the community, there is no room for self righteousness that condemns others.

I am the one who forgives your sins. Go, now, and do not sin again.

FIRST READING: *Isaiah 43: 18-19, 21, 24-25*

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Our God says,

"Forget about the things of the past.
Don't think about them anymore.
Look, I am doing something completely new.
Really, it is already here, don't you see it?
I am making a path in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert so my people can drink.

"My people, I have created you for myself
so that you would give me praise.
But you did not call upon me
because you got tired of me.
You went on sinning and doing evil things.

"But I am your God,
and so I forgive all you do wrong
and forget about your sins."

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSE: *Psalm 51*



In your kind-ness, O my God, have mer-cy on me, have mer-cy on me.



1. I know ___ that I have sinned and done what is wrong.
2. O God ___ for-give my sins and make my heart true.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



"Go now, do not sin." The Good News ___ of God is for you! ___

GOSPEL: John 8:1-5, 6b-11

Reading from the Gospel of John.

One day while Jesus was at the Temple,
some of the teachers of the law
and some of the Pharisees came,
bringing a woman with them.
They made her stand in front of everyone,
and they said to Jesus,

“Teacher,
this woman was caught committing the sin of adultery.
The law of Moses tells us to kill her
by throwing stones at her until she is dead.
What do you say we should do?”

But Jesus didn't say anything.
He knelt down
and started writing on the ground with his finger.

They kept on asking him
what they should do with the woman.
So Jesus stood up and said to them,

“Anyone here who has never sinned
can throw the first stone at her.”

Then Jesus knelt down and wrote on the ground again.
The people started leaving, one by one.
First the older ones, and then the others.
When everyone was gone,
Jesus was there alone
with the woman standing in front of him.

Jesus looked up at her and said,
“Where are all those people who were here?
Didn't any of them stay to punish you?”

She said,
“No, Lord, no one did.”

and Jesus said,
“I don't punish you either.
Go now—and don't sin anymore.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**REFLECTING ON THE READINGS
WITH CHILDREN:**

You will need to explain the meaning of adultery and the seriousness with which it was considered. That will not be easy, because of their age, but also because today it is considered the norm as evidenced on television and in films. But only in its proper context can the woman's fearful situation and the gratuitous forgiveness of Jesus be appreciated. Try to have the children enter into the mood and feelings of this Gospel.

- Read the story slowly to: “*they made her stand in front of everyone.*”
 - Help the children to visualize the woman standing in front of an angry crowd, eager to stone her. Help them to visualize the crowd.
- Read slowly to: “*What do you say we should do?*”
 - Ask the children how the crowd felt.
 - How did the woman feel?
 - What did she do? Did she look at Jesus? At the crowd?
- Read slowly to: “*Then Jesus knelt down and wrote on the ground again*” (the second time).
 - Ask the children how the crowd felt.
 - How did the woman feel? What did she do?
- Read slowly to: “*Jesus was there alone with the woman standing in front of him.*”
 - How did the woman feel?
- Read slowly to: “*I don't punish you either. Go now and don't sin anymore.*”
 - How did the woman feel at this moment?
 - How would you feel?
 - Do you think her life changed? How? Why?

This story, while seemingly very adult, can be well used to help children feel the loving, freeing forgiveness of Jesus.