

Monday of the 5th Week of Lent – Condemnation

In our fairy tales and fables, we don't get caught up in the minutiae - why a red hood? Have we got it in for wolves? Why gold and not brunette hair? Why porridge and not Ready Brek? No, we get the message. When it comes to the stories in Jesus life, we become much more picky. Today's episode is an example. The common theme in both readings is condemnation. The two men who condemned Susannah because she would let them have their way with her ended up condemned themselves. Susannah was innocent. In the second story, those who wanted to condemn the woman caught in the act of adultery turn away because they are made to realise that their lives were not squeaky clean either. Ultimately, Jesus helps us see that we are in no position to condemn anybody and should be very slow in passing judgement on others. What is interesting about the Jesus story is that no one walks away condemned neither the woman's accusers nor the woman herself. She goes away forgiven and her accusers were also forgiven if they could only believe that Jesus could forgive sin. Jesus also makes it clear that he gives mercy to help us break free from all that is sinful. The more we are concerned about the well-being of others, whatever their situation, the less time – if any – we will have for finding fault in them. At the moment it is easy to find fault with those in position of leadership. But, would we have done better in their place; would we have had the courage to make any decision at all knowing that whatever decision we make will not please everybody? Listen to Jesus who said very clearly *"Do what they tell you but do not follow their example!"* In other words, learn from mistakes made and do not repeat them.

"Mistakes have the power to turn you into something better than you were before."

Anon

"Remember that life's greatest lessons are usually learned at the worst times and from the worst mistakes." Anon

"When someone does something wrong, don't forget all the things they did right."

Anon

"You cannot correct your mistakes by pointing out the mistakes of others." Anon

"It is true that going out on to the street implies the risk of accidents happening, as they would to any ordinary man or woman. But if the church stays wrapped up in itself, it will age. And if I had to choose between a wounded church that goes out on to the streets and a sick, withdrawn church, I would definitely choose the first one."

Pope Francis