

Lenten Reflections for EOHSJ

Fifth Sunday of Lent 2019

Reflection by Rev. Stephen Porter, KCHS



Gospel Reading: John 8:1-11 The Woman Caught in Adultery

We are all very good – I hope – at the Corporal Works of Mercy. You remember, of course, feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and those in prison, giving alms, and burying the dead. A little sacrifice on our part and we can do all these quite easily. Good for us! But the Spiritual Works of Mercy? A bit harder, remember them? Counseling the doubtful, instructing the ignorant, admonishing sinners, comforting the sorrowful, forgiving injuries, bearing wrongs, and praying for the living and the dead. The first and the last four are perhaps easier, although forgiving is sometimes a challenge. But the real challenges are with the ignorant and sinners – they just don’t want to be instructed and admonished, especially when they are having fun in their ignorance and their sin. Yet we must!

Jesus shows us in today’s Gospel how He deals with a great sinner – the woman caught in adultery! Still today a great sin, actually a double sin – since it is both licentiousness, and the breaking of the marriage bond. And yet society seems not to worry. But the Church does worry as the adulterer has committed him- (or her-) self to perdition. Jesus seems to take a nonchalant attitude at first, maybe He was waiting for the scribes and Pharisees to bring the man forward as well? (It does take two to tango, after all!) And only as they continue nagging Him does He respond with a statement – in essence condemning the accusers – which no one can face up to, and only when alone with the woman does He “not” condemn her, but “admonish” her with “sin no more”!

As Knight and Ladies of our most venerable Order, one of the cherished opportunities we have is complete faithfulness to our spouse, the spouse God has given us, and blessed us with in the Sacrament of Matrimony. Being utterly faithful we are strengthened by the grace of the Sacrament to share the value of such fidelity with those around us we know to be in the grave sin of adultery – sometimes our very own children are swept into the world’s attitude of “no big deal”. Our honour must be above reproach. The truly chivalrous man and woman know that their strength comes only from God; their character is formed fully by God, and their actions are completely in accord with God’s ways, all as taught us by our loving Catholic Church.

Blessings.

Rev. Stephen Porter, KCHS, was invested in the Order in 2003 and has led pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Fr. Steve is a priest of the Diocese of San Bernardino, and serves at Saint Kateri Tekakwitha Catholic Community in Beaumont, California.