



Homily for
FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT
12/13 March, 2016

Fr. Dwayne's homily follows....

I. Every single one of us has stood where that woman caught in adultery stood.

- not only have we had to look at our sin straight in the face...admit our sins...perhaps even felt the accusations of others....we've been there... we've stood where she stood.
- but more than that...waaaay more than that...we've looked into the face of mercy...into the face of Jesus who has looked at us with love – and we've felt his forgiveness

Think of that woman...publically accused of adultery...alone (the man was not there, although Jewish law said both should be stoned)...trembling...shamed not only before the crowd, but before this holy man named Jesus...facing certain death.

THEN FORGIVEN.

Everyone left...Jesus says I do not condemn you...

What must have that felt like?

And then Jesus says, Go, and sin no more.

II. Did she?

Did she give up sin?

Was this the beginning of a new life?

From now on...from this moment forward, she was charged with refashioning her life...living her faith in a new life. What do you think happened in her life?

III. St. Paul gives testimony to what living that new life is like: he sees his past life as so much rubbish, now that he knows Christ Jesus his Lord.

Paul says he knows Christ Jesus.

This is not an intellectual knowledge – knowledge *about* something.

Knowing, biblically, means experiences, knowing, feeling personally.

Knowing Jesus, Paul says everything in the past is now rubbish. Not that his past was bad. Paul lived as a faithful, passionate Jew, having learned under a well known rabbi, he knew Hebrew and Greek, he had a good upbringing...but he lived out of the Law – and in the Law he did not have righteousness.

But now all of that is in the past – rubbish! – because he has come to know

Christ Jesus!

IV. But it's not over!

Since Paul now knows Jesus, that doesn't mean this new insight in faith gets put on the shelf...his new insight about Jesus isn't stuck into a closet somewhere and forgotten...it isn't just one more thing checked off on his bucket list.

No! "...not that I have already taken hold of it or have already attained perfect maturity, but I *continue* my pursuit in hope that I may possess it, since

I have indeed been taken possession of by Christ Jesus.” I press on to what lies ahead.

Paul is midway in his faith journey.

V. And so it is with us: we are midway in our journey.

We have our past...our checkered past, like the woman caught in adultery.

We have our past of facing the compassion of Jesus.

But, like the woman, we are challenged to go and sin no more. Like Paul, our journey continues – having come to know Jesus – *personally* know Jesus – we look forward to what lies ahead.

VI. Our journey in faith should always be an adventure in discovering, in discovery of something new.

In his book “Rediscover Jesus,” Matthew Kelly says he *loves* Mondays – because they are a new beginning! Just like birthdays, New Year’s, marriage, they are an opportunity for something new.

Truly knowing Jesus should always be a new adventure in living faith.

Ask yourself: what is new today?

What will Jesus show me today? To whom will he lead me? How does his teaching illuminate this problem I’m having? How can my friendship with Jesus be a sign of hope for me today? What is God doing new in my life?

VII. One way to let this happen more freely is to forget the past – forget how God has worked in the past. Isaiah tells the people to forget the past: forget about the

marvelous ways God has worked in the past – which was a huge challenge because the Hebrews revered the past and how God had worked in their history. The past can certainly inform the present, but too heavy reliance upon the past limits our ability to see now – and how God is acting *now*, in my life today.

Paul gave up the past – as good as it was – and forged ahead with renewed energy...growing in his *knowledge* of Jesus.

VII. We have our past – and we have our future – and we have this present moment.

This CEW is a step in the journey – we have come to *know* Jesus in a new way, but there is so much more to know.

This is not the finish line.

Paul rejoices in the righteousness he has found in Christ. And his goal is to know him and the power of his resurrection so that he will attain the resurrection from the dead.

May Paul's words be our own...

“It is not that I have already taken hold of it or have already attained perfect maturity, but I continue my pursuit in hope that I may possess it, since I have indeed been taken possession of by Christ Jesus. Brothers and sisters, I for my part do not consider myself to have taken possession. Just one thing: forgetting what lies behind but straining forward to what lies ahead, I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God's upward calling, in Christ Jesus.

Fr. Kyle's homily follows....

Today's gospel speaks for the woman caught in adultery. She finds herself in a miserable situation. She is caught in sin, she is scorned by those around her, and she is facing being stoned for her sins. Indeed she is experiencing the misery of this situation, but only until Jesus comes and releases her of that misery by his mercy. This story exemplifies the true meaning of "mercy" and can help us to find what this Year of Mercy is all about.

The Latin root of our word for mercy is *misericordia*. We can understand this better by breaking this down into its two parts. The first part is *miseri* which is the root of our word for misery. The second part is *cordia* which is the root for our word for heart. *Cor* or *cordia* is where we get our word cardiology which is the branch of medicine that deals with the heart. So if we put these two together, *miseri* or misery with *cordia* or heart, we get misery or miserable heart. So when we ask for God's mercy or *misericordia* we are asking him to relieve the misery of our heart.

The woman in the gospel today was experiencing misery in her heart for her sins. What are ways that you experience misery in your heart? Sin, a broken relationship, problems in the family, the pain of a physical or mental illness, losing a job, being betrayed or abandoned, from spiritual or physical poverty?

Just like he did with the woman in today's gospel, God wants to relieve our heart of the misery by His *misericordia*, His mercy. Even though we are broken, sinful, and hurting, God is always there beside us offering his mercy so that we can be freed of the misery in our heart. In this way, we can truly come to know our God as a God of mercy, *misericordia*; a God that relieves the misery of our heart.

But we are also called to show this *misericordia*, this mercy to others. This is what the works of mercy are all about. Perhaps we know someone who experiences misery in their heart because they are alone, or someone who is imprisoned by an addiction, or someone who is thirsty for someone to talk to. Virtually everyone is going through some kind of misery in their heart, and we can relieve that misery by offering our *misericordia*, our mercy.

As we continue this season of Lent and this Year of Mercy, God is calling us to experience mercy in a couple differing ways. First, to be freed from the misery of our heart by receiving His *Misericordia*. Second, He is calling us to be ministers of this *misericordia*, helping to relieve the misery found in the hearts of those around us. As Archbishop Jackels is so apt to say, “May it be so”.