



Allocutio



PRAESENTAT CURIA

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23rd March 2017

No soul is a lost cause

You work and meet with so many people. I know that you have the capacity to see people with new eyes that lift their dignity. Like Jesus with the woman at the well.

Jesus already knows this woman's history and understands what has happened to her. So many hearts and minds would just rubbish her but Jesus has no condemnation nor criticism nor blame nor rejection for her. That is not the way God works.

The woman we are told comes to the well at the sixth hour. That is the time of the day when the sun burns down hardest and women did not go normally to the well at that hour to collect water. They did that early in the day or later at evening so as to avoid the heat of the warmer hours. She comes at the sixth hour because she knows that that will be safe for her. If she goes at the time the other women collect the water she will hear, "Oh here comes the slut" or "Lock your husbands up girls!" and other such jibes. Her society has rejected her and condemned her. She has been punished severely. She keeps to herself. She is ashamed.

So she is surprised that someone would actually say he needs her help. She expresses her surprise. But the man instead of looking on her with shame and disgust offers her something deep down she knows she needs, something to put life back into her. She begins to feel something of her true self coming back. May all who meet us have something of that same sense of their worth returning.

Then Jesus leads her to accept her truth without any sense of diminishment of her dignity, to accept herself, her reality which he already knows. He does not do it by harshness. It is only in God's presence we can most easily accept ourselves because he has already accepted us. Accept people first and be at peace with them. Then they can find a space to see themselves as they are.

She knows this guy is different from the norm, she knows that he is somehow lifting her spirits that are way down. But now as he helps her accept and own her truth she gets another sense about him, "I see sir that you are a prophet!" Her answer reveals a lot. Those words tell us that she has acknowledged her truth but not with a sense of being chastised but in some form of liberation. Her hope is growing, hope that she can begin to make sense of the jigsaw pieces of her life that have floundered her. She wants to know where God is in all this and where she stands with him.



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Worship God in truth. These are very deep words from Jesus that help us commune with God. We must avoid any road of untruth but keep to what is true. The problem with Adam when he blamed the woman, a pattern repeated across history, is that he avoided his truth and put the blame elsewhere.

But Jesus comes with a different way. When another public sinner came to wash his feet in her tears and wipe them with her hair they thought, “Just look at this. He lets this loose woman touch him”. But Jesus who is God does not see things from that angle. He does not condemn, he does not reject. He is always seeing the deep inner core of everyone as made by God, full of potential. There is no kinder heart than that of God.

Or take the woman caught in adultery. Note again the sin of Adam coming out, “Blame the woman!”. It has been fairly asked, “Where was the man!” In the end Jesus says to her, “Woman, who has condemned you?” No one sir. “Neither do I condemn you!” In fact he had never condemned her no more than he had the woman at the well.

The world of condemning, blaming, criticising and rejecting is not the world of God at all. I ask you to be wary of that world, it is not God’s. Like the woman of today’s Gospel God already knows all our sins. He knows the human mess well. As King David once wrote, “Oh see in guilt I was born, a sinner was I conceived!” Jesus job is not to make us more lost but he sees with the sharpest of insight that there is so much good in us that can be released and brought out. The approach of condemning and judging is not healthy. It does no good. The approach of condemning and judging is not healthy. It does no good. Nor should we whip ourselves. Own our own truth, yes, but always in its totality.

Notice what happens with the woman in the end. This woman now goes back to her community, actually meets the people she was avoiding, tells them about Jesus and they now come to him and learn the truth for themselves.

We have to stand before a God who actually delights in us, loves us, has no interest in whipping us, and accepting the dignity with which he sees us we go forward with him to become the people he made us to be. That is what redemption is about.

Have you ever heard a hard word come from Our Lady. Her only concern is the conversion of sinners.