

This Week's Readings

First Reading: Isaiah 43: 16-21.

As God rescued the people from Egypt, he will rescue them from exile.

Second Reading: Philippians 3: 8-14.

Paul accepts the loss of everything, if he can only know Christ and be known by him.

Gospel: John 8: 1-11.

Jesus refuses to condemn a woman whom men had already judged.



Points for Reflection

In today's **Gospel** story, some of the Scribes and the Pharisees hoped to make Jesus look bad in the eyes of the people. They presented him with the case of a woman they said they had caught in the act of adultery. Their perversity was obvious in the question they proposed to Jesus. It was meant to be a dilemma so that, whatever Jesus answered, they hoped to use his statement against him. If Jesus were to indicate that the woman should be released, he would be made to appear in defiance of the Law of Moses. If Jesus were to consent to the stoning, he would be made to look like a dissembler who preached forgiveness but did not practice it.

What Jesus wrote with his finger on the ground, we do not know. But we do know his answer: *"Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."* The challenge was such a shock that even the Scribes and the Pharisees did not have sufficient hypocrisy to pretend innocence. In a flash they realized that Jesus not only saw through their little plot, but had also somehow penetrated their consciences.

Our Lord's answer must not be interpreted as indifference to sin. His point was simply that those who wanted to test him had no right to judge and condemn a fellow human being, both because of their own sinfulness and because they could not possibly see into the

heart of the woman. And our Lord's refusal to condemn the woman himself does not mean that he approved of her sin. He did know what was in her heart and he saw there the spark of repentance. He put into words for the woman what her repentance should be: *"From now on do not sin anymore."* Jesus was understanding and forgiving, while the Scribes and Pharisees were self-righteous in their condemnation of the woman.

One thing we should learn from today's Gospel is that we must not judge others. While condemning the sin, we should never sit in harsh judgment of the sinners.

More importantly, we should learn to be overjoyed that it is God who will judge us and not one of our fellow human beings. Jesus reveals to us today that God is infinitely more understanding and forgiving than human beings could ever possibly be. He sees the temptations to which we are subject. He understands the weakness of our human condition. And he knows the secret workings of the human heart. We should cry out with great confidence: *"Lord, have mercy."*

This confidence, however, should never induce us to be indifferent or careless about sin in our lives. Rather it should make us realize that the repentance to which we are called during Lent is really worthwhile. *"From now on do not sin*

any more" Jesus tells us. And the sincere honest effort to avoid sin with God's grace is the spark of repentance that will win from God

the response: "Neither do I condemn you."

Sacred Heart Church Sai Kung (E-mail: sacredheart@netvigator.com)		
Phone:	Office hours: 27922967 (with answering machine) After office hours: 27920181 Fax: 27922967	Eucharistic Celebrations: Sundays: 9 am (English) 7.45 am (Chinese) 10.30 am (Chinese)
Parish Priest:	Fr Carlo Tei (<i>E-mail: carlotei@gmail.com</i>) Fr Sergio Ticozzi, Fr Augustine Zaw, Sr Mary Leung (helping on Sundays)	Anticipated Sunday Mass Saturdays: 6.00 pm (English) 7.30 pm (Chinese) Public holidays: 8 00 am (Chinese) Weekdays: 7.00 am (Chinese)
Secretary:	Miss Tse Choi Ping Office hours: Mon-Fridays: 9.00am – 1.00pm; 2.00pm – 6.00pm Saturdays: 10.00am – 12 noon Sundays: 8.45am – 12 noon	Confessions: Sundays before Mass; Weekdays on call
Parish Council	Chairlady: Miss Candy Chan Tel: 23265322	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Thursdays: 2.30 pm 1 st Thursday of the month 8.00 pm

Announcement

**There will be no English Anticipated Sunday Mass on Saturday 3rd April.
(Easter Vigil)**

Schedule of English Masses during Holy Week and Easter		
27 March (Sat)	6:00pm	Anticipated Palm Sunday Mass
28 March (Sun)	9:00am	Palm Sunday Mass
1 April (Thur)	8:00pm	Holy Thursday–The Lord's Supper (<i>Bilingual</i>)
2 April (Fri)	5:00pm	Good Friday–The Lord's Passion
4 April (Sun)	9:00am	Easter Sunday