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First Reading: Isaiah 43:16-21
Response: “*What marvels the Lord worked for us! Indeed we were glad*” (Ps.125:3)
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 125:
Second Reading: Philippians 3:8-14
Gospel: John 8:1-11

The Risen Lord journeys with us through Lent. He wants us to leave behind our sinful past and step into the future with him, a step from pain and sorrow into Godliness and glory. To walk with him is to walk into the loving arms of our Father.

Israel was led out of slavery from Egypt to be God’s people in the Promised Land. Isaiah prophesies another Exodus when God will lead his people out of Babylonian captivity, put aside the past and forge a new future. “*See, I am doing a new deed*” (Is.43:19).

God says, “*I am putting water in the wilderness*” (Is.43:20). What he is saying is “I will put my grace in you” and “*the people I form for myself will sing my praises*” (Is.43:21).

“*What marvels the Lord worked for us! Indeed we were glad*” (Ps.125:3), is the response. The greatest marvel is the Risen Lord saving us and beckoning us to come to him. He takes away our past, changing us from sinners into saints.

Indeed, it seemed like a dream, “*when God delivered Zion from bondage*” (Ps.125:1). What a fantastic promise from God to “*those who sowing in tears will sing when they reap*” (Ps.125:6). From the valleys of darkness, God will lead us to mountains of joy.

Paul shows the way forward as a Christian. “*Forget the past and strain ahead for what is still to come*” (Phil.3:13). He saw everything as garbage compared to Christ. “*Accept the loss of everything for Christ*” (Phil.3:8).

The ultimate goal is the resurrection *i.e.* death destroyed and life restored, in Christ the Lord. This is “*the prize to which God calls us upwards to receive in Christ Jesus*” (Phil.3:14).

We see a woman with a sinful past, dragged before Christ. At first Jesus appears not to hear the condemnation of the self-righteous accusers. Jesus bent down “*and started writing on the ground with his finger*” (Jn.8:6), the finger of God. Is this the finger that wrote the Law, the Ten Commandments, writing on the ground before their eyes?

The written Law must be seen in the spirit of the Law-Giver, the God of tremendous love and compassion. God is forgiving, not just a sinner of the past but a saint for the future. “*Go and sin no more*” (Jn:8:11).

Read again and ponder on the **Gospel** for today. *What is Jesus saying to you?*

Consider your encounter with the Lord in the **Liturgy**. *Where is the point of forgiveness?*

Church’s **Teaching**: *What is God’s truth and justice, mercy and forgiveness?*

Give **Witness** to forgiveness this Lenten season. Forgive others and ask for forgiveness.

FOR THE CHILDREN

Let the children listen to the reading of the Gospel and discuss the message it gives.

Discuss the Penitential Rite of the Eucharistic Liturgy and the Sacrament of Penance.

Continue to give Teaching on what is Lent and how it fits into our journey of life.

How are we doing (Witness) on our journey of Lent and preparing for Easter?

FOR TEENAGERS (Shared Christian Praxis)

Name the Present Action: Share your understanding of forgiveness and its value.

Your Story and Vision: Share your experiences of forgiveness and what it should be.

Church's Story and Vision: Give the Church's teaching on forgiveness and Penance.

Yours and Church's Vision: *How can we become a people, loving, forgiving and accepting of one another?*

RCIA

After the homily is the Third Scrutiny of the Candidates for Baptism. They bow or kneel, in the spirit of repentance, with their sponsors placing their hands on their shoulders. The solemn prayers consist of a moment of silence, intercessions and invocations. Finally is the exorcism as the celebrant who stretches his hands over them, after which an appropriate hymn may be sung, concluding with the dismissal.

N.B: Holy Week and Easter is the climax of the RCIA process, and Lent is the time for the final preparation of the Sacraments of Initiation, viz. Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

LIFE EXPERIENCE

When reading different translations of today's Gospel, such as the Jerusalem Bible (*JB*) and the King James (*KJ*) version, I was struck by the addition of certain words in John 8:6. The (*JB*) simply reads "**Jesus bent down and started writing on the ground with his finger,**" while (*KJ*) also mentions "**as though he heard them not.**" Consulting other biblical translations, I found most of them in accord with the (*JB*). The additional words in Greek are "**μη προσποιουμενος**" (*me prospoioumenos*), meaning "not appearing" to hear, to "act as though" or "pretend." If these words are authentic, then it gives a deeper meaning to the text. I share this insight in **IMPORTANT WORDS** below.

LITTLE ANGELINA

It was one of those days when it was raining while the sun was shining. "Another monkey's wedding," shouted Angelina. I remember being told that when I was a child. I was surprised to see the idea was still being passed down to children. Children are impressionable, with imagination and relish mystery. Little Angelina enjoys learning the truths of life and the truths of faith. St. Clement of Rome tells us to make sure that our children also "have their share of Christian instruction" (*Clement. 21*).

IMPORTANT WORDS: "**μη προσποιουμενος**" (Continued from **LIFE EXPERIENCE** above)

The addition of "**μη προσποιουμενος,**" *me prospoioumenos* (*Jn.8:6*) means the whole verse reads as "**Jesus bent down and started writing on the ground with his finger as though he heard them not**" (*Jn.8:6*), or appearing or seeming not to be listening to the accusers. An explanation for this is that Jesus was in a sort of séance, holy trance. Why? One opines that the moment of silence before he gives an answer is a moment of divine communication in a human situation. Then the additional words make sense. The other mystery is what did Jesus write on the ground? It reveals another moment of a divine hand seen writing, this time on the walls of King Belshazzar of Babylon, when he was abusing the sacred vessels from the Temple (*Dn.5:1-5*). There was a silence, then the reading of it, then an interpretation and judgement given. Was this what Jesus was doing when a sacred vessel of clay, an image of God is dis-grace-fully dragged before him. Is the Messiah making a point that his judgement is not simply human but like God, shows that Babylon's time has ended, and now the new Kingdom of God must reign? Was it that Jesus wrote **MENE, TEKEL, PERES** (*Dn.5:25*), which means: "Your kingdom is at an end. You are judged and found wanting. Persians and Medes (other people) will take your place."?

Sorry, I have no authorities for this interpretation, just a personal point of view, maybe an inspiration. I will appreciate other opinions.

Watchwords: “**Go away, and don’t sin any more**” (Jn.8:11).

Hebrew: לְכִי לְדַרְכְּךָ וְאַל-תַּחטְּאֵי עוֹד *Lekhi ledarkekh ve'al-tehet'i 'od.*

Greek: Πορευου και απο του νυν μηκετι αμαρτανε.
Poreuou, kai apo tou nun meketi hamartane.

Latin: **Vade et jam amplius noli peccare.**

Spanish: **Vete, y no peques mas.**

Portuguese: **Vai-te, e não peques mais.**

French: **Tu peux t'en aller, mais ne peche plus.**

German: **Geh hin und sündige hinfort nicht mehr.**

Afrikaans: **Gaan maar en moet van nou af nie meer sonde doen nie.**

Zulu: **Hamba-ke ungabe usona futhi.**

Xhosa: **Hamba, ungabuye wone.**

Sotho: **Eya, mme ho tloha jwale o se ke wa hlola o etsa sebe.**

Irish: