



5th SUNDAY of LENT ***YEAR C – April 7, 2019***

In the Scripture readings, we are reminded again that Lent is a penitential season - a time to call to mind our sins - resolve to let them go - do penance - make a firm purpose of amendment – and resolve to change our lives.

Remember when Jesus said you don't put new wine into old wine skins - his teaching was the new wine and it was not accepted by the Scribes and Pharisees. Jesus pointed out their hypocrisy. He said that God's laws are more important than the rituals they imposed on the people of that time. The Scribes and the Pharisees were the old wine skins and their man-made rules were the old wine.

Sometimes we too get all caught up in our own little rituals and personal devotions and when people do not worship God exactly the way we do - some of us tend to put them down as less catholic or less holy. Jesus says, "That's wrong."

By all means. Hold on to your personal devotions but allow other people to hold on to theirs too. If the Stations of the Cross are your way of doing something extra during Lent, that is a wonderful thing, but it is not the only way to please God during Lent.

Remember when God said, "I do not want holocausts and sin offerings, what I want is a humble and contrite spirit. Our rituals have their place in religion, but what God wants is in the human heart - not in the words that come out of our mouths. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, endeared himself to all of us when he set aside some of the man-made rituals for announcing a new Pope and simply said, "Bona sera - good evening".

In the Gospel today, Jesus addresses a public sin that was a real scandal in his day - the sin of adultery. Isn't it interesting - if the woman in question was caught in the act of adultery, we would have to conclude that the crowd knew who the man was too. And yet the only one they wanted to put to death was the woman...

Sounds like a double standard to me...a standard that has nothing to do with our "Lord's Way". We still have a long way to go with double standards in our time too.

We are not responsible for other people's sins and it's not our job to compare ourselves to people who are worse off than us when it comes to sinning. We are not responsible for the speck in their eyes, we are responsible for the beam in our own. Jesus said so.

For a few moments, in silence, reflect on this question: Do I build myself up by putting other people down? If the answer is no, spend some time talking to our Lord in prayer. If the answer is yes, spend the time talking to our Lord in prayer.

DO YOU WEAR A MASK?

