

# 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent

Homily: Fr. Shijo George

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*“Stone her! Stone her to death! She doesn't deserve to live!  
She broke the Law of Moses! Kill her! Stone her to death!”*

This was the breaking scene of a beautiful quiet morning in Jesus' life. A woman caught in adultery was dragged into Jesus' presence as if she did not deserve to live.

If we dig to the bottom of the whole story, what is clear is that an injustice is being enacted on this woman. While the woman was caught in adultery, she is the only one being held accountable and charged. Now the question is: where is the collaborator or accomplice of this sin? Where is the man?

This episode clearly illustrates that Jews who prided themselves as being complete and faithful observers of Mosaic Law may in their fervour and zeal perpetrate injustices for their own ends. An in depth reading and reflection of this passage also reveals something shocking that mirrors the journey of Jesus to His passion and death. The woman here may represent Jesus, who will likewise face being mistreated, suffering injustice, loneliness, and betrayal. The innocent and blameless Jesus was going to be branded the guiltiest sinner, who led an inappropriate and unacceptable life; who breached the laws and rules of society. Just like the woman, Jesus will not receive mercy from anyone. The pharisaic attitude to enforce unjust treatment for their own ends will eventually instigate merciless acts and mounting resentment against Jesus. As if as a foretaste, this mistreated woman stands as a symbol of Jesus' impending trial and condemnation in front of Pilate. Like an echo reverberating from the future, we hear the Jews yelling at Jesus, raising their voices and calling out to crucify and kill Jesus. Similarly, the woman caught in adultery is standing there amid the unruly crowd; mute, abandoned and isolated.

Reading the story from a different perspective also reveals the true nature of the people who condemned the woman. They were all grave sinners. What is amusing is the nonchalant response from Jesus as He wrote on the ground: a response that was like a heavy stone pelting their hearts: “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” Their deceitful act to trap Jesus in a legal conundrum had boomeranged; back firing their outrage into silence.

Unfolding further into the story, an irony in the life of that woman caught in sin is the possibility that the person who committed the sin with her might have pledged that they would never leave her side or put her in any danger. However, when



caught, there was no one by her side at that time. In the same way, Jesus' disciples had pledged many times that: "We will never leave you, we will never forsake you." Peter declared: "Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you." and Thomas said: "Let us go and die with him." Even James and John said: "We will drink the cup that you give us." Although having pledged from the bottom of their hearts, none of them stayed with Him through the utter darkness of His life.

Yes, this story may serve as glimpse into Jesus' final moments. The righteous man, Jesus, condemned and ascribed all the evils of life on His shoulders, amidst the yelling of the people around Him at the moment of His suffering, crying: "Crucify him! Crucify him!"