

Pastoral Reflection
Fourth Sunday of Lent
April 3, 2022

In today's gospel, the scribes and Pharisees use a woman caught in adultery as a prop in their scheme to undermine Jesus. The whole scene is a set-up meant to take down Jesus. The "question" posed to Jesus is meant to put him in a no-win situation. If Jesus were to agree to the stoning of the woman, he would in fact be going against Roman law which forbid Jews from carrying out the death penalty, a sentence handed down only by the Roman authorities. If he answers no, he is tacitly recognizing the priority of Roman authority over Moses' authority. Either way, he loses face and can be cast by his opponents as either a dangerous anti-Roman zealot inciting insurrection or as someone who has no respect for Moses and the torah.

Jesus doesn't immediately respond, instead writing in the dirt. His response is that the one without sin should throw the first stone. Franciscan priest Fr. Joe Nangle writes that with his response, Jesus invites all those gathered to "view the sin of those accused through our own sinfulness," a stunning challenge when we think about it, because typically we view the sins of other's through our own comparative righteousness. Yes, we may be sinners too, but that person's sin is so much worse than ours! Such thinking would have been typical of Jesus' audience as well, including the Pharisees and scribes. It is doubtful that anyone present for this scene would have answered the question "Are you sinless?" in the positive. But what is operating here, and what Jesus undermines with his answer, is his opponents' belief in a hierarchy of sin, where certain sins are more horrific and therefore more deserving of punishment or greater punishment than others. It isn't that the woman is a sinner—it is that these MEN find her sin to be more repugnant, more repulsive, more everything than their own. Adultery—particularly a woman's adultery (it takes two to tango yet the man caught in adultery is nowhere to be found)—trumps hypocrisy or pride or sloth or greed. Her adultery trumps every transgression, every sin that any of them has committed. But Jesus says NO to their—and our—desire to create a hierarchy of sin where some sins are worse than others (and maybe Jesus specifically says no to the hierarchy of sins created by men to obscure their own misconduct while they shine a light on the misconduct of women). Jesus says sin is sin is sin—and we are all guilty.

The passage ends, of course, with all those who were present leaving the scene, until Jesus is alone with the woman. And here Jesus again shows the difference between himself and religious authority gone astray: Jesus speaks to the woman, the first time the woman is treated as a subject, with inherent worth and dignity—not an object, not something to be used, a tool, a prop, a means to some other end—but as a person, created in the image and likeness of God. And despite whatever sinfulness she had participated in, he withholds his condemnation.

Jesus resists our attempts to draw lines, placing some of us in the circle—"the adulterers"—and others of us outside the circle—the "good" people, who while sinful, are at least not as bad as those in the circle, those adulterers. Such circles exist to make us feel better about ourselves while we point our fingers at those bad people who are so much worse than we are. Jesus invites us to see "the accused through our own sinfulness," not our comparative righteousness. And to take up our place in the circle with them, in the community of sinners.

Johnny Zokovitch



St. Cronan Catholic Church
Fifth Sunday of Lent
April 02-03, 2022

Mass Information

SUNDAY – 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.
SATURDAY VIGIL – 5:00 p.m.
Wednesdays – 8:00 a.m.
Masks are required for all Masses

The Mass for Sunday, April 3 can be found on our website: <https://www.stcronan.org/>

Live-streaming continues at the 10:00 am Mass. PLEASE BE ON TIME! Live-streamed masses are available on our Facebook page any time after the 10:00 Mass, <https://www.facebook.com/StCronan>



ALL THINGS NEW

Archdiocesan Survey: This is the FINAL WEEK to complete the Disciple Maker Index Survey. All surveys are due by April 4. If you have not yet completed your Survey for All Things New, please do so soon. The link is: <https://portal.catholicleaders.org/d/y2xk8y> If you need support to complete it online, or a paper copy, they are available in church, or please call the office: (314) 289-9384. We need as many participants as possible. THANKS! If you would like further information, you can visit the Archdiocese's website <https://allthingsnew.archstl.org/> or call our office at 314-289-9384. You can also leave comments about the process at this website.



LBGTQIA+ Listening Session: Thanks to all who joined the listening session last Sunday afternoon. We welcomed over 100 people and the conversations were intense and Spirit-filled. If you did not have a chance to sign up for a kinship group or information on New Ways Ministry and would like to do so, please send your email address to Mary: mary@stcronan.org If you were not able to join us, but would like to leave comments for the Synod Committee, you can do so here: <https://allthingsnew.archstl.org/Ways-to-Engage/Synod-on-Synodality/Feedback>

Preparing for Lent: This week's theme is Community and Compassion. In preparation for Lent, please pick up the reflection sheet for this week on the tables near the Bulletins, take it home, and prayerfully consider some of the suggested actions. It is available online as well. If you would like to share some of your reflections or actions with the Community, please write them on the index cards and place them in the basket. I will see that they are attached to the wall. If you have reflections and are not attending Church, email them to me at diane@stcronan.org and I will share them with the community.

Decorate for Holy Week: We will decorate for Palm Sunday after the 10:00 Mass on Sunday, April 3. We will decorate for Easter at 10:00 a.m. on Holy Saturday, April 9. Please join us if you can.

Holy Week: Several readers are needed for the Passion on Palm Sunday, and the Triduum. Many people have offered. I'm attaching the sign up sheet so you know who is needed. Please email me, Diane, at diane@stcronan.org to volunteer, or sign up on the Google Doc at this link: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EvT_fv7ygb5-StwtLtH_dMICt1prqdv3/edit?usp=sharing&oid=103057187619177728911&rtfpf=true&sd=true or sign up in Church.

Coffee and Donuts is back! Please join us in the Hospitality Room in the Parish Center after the 10:00 Mass

Consecration of Ukraine and Russia to Mary. This prayer was said around the world last Friday at 12:30 our time. If you missed it and would like to help dedicate the People of Ukraine and Russia to Mary's protection, it is available on our website: <https://www.stcronan.org/>

Help Me With Vital Statistics We are updating our data bases in the Parish Office and we need your help. We have noticed that many parishioners do not have a "joined date" entered in their profiles. If you remember the date you joined St. Cronan as an active parishioner, please shoot Mary a short email mary@stcronan.org or give her a call 314-289-9384. Even if it's just the year. That way we can update our data base. We don't know if we will need this important info for "All Things New" or not, but certainly, these vital statistics are needed for other purposes. Thank you for your assistance.

The Gardening Committee, who take care of the Church grounds, are in need of pots for thinning plants. You can leave them on the side of the rectory.

Stations of the Cross in Atonement for Abuse and for the Healing of All will be offered online on Friday March 8 at 3:00 p.m. They will be available on our Website.

Live Meetings: We are opening up for live meetings. If your committee or organization would like to meet live in the Coffee and Donut room or conference room at the Parish Center, please contact Mary, mary@stcronan.org to schedule your date and time.

Donations for Ukraine: There was a second collection for Ukraine last Sunday, March 26-27. If you missed it, you can put it in next week's collection, or mail it to the office. You also can give to the Ukrainian Children's Aid and Relief Effort, Inc. or UCARE, Inc., is a charity serving the needy and orphaned children of Ukraine. If anyone wants to financially help the Ukrainian situation, please consider this charity. The website is www.ucareinc.org. Bob Hoffman has worked with this group for years..

Compassionate St. Louis: St. Cronan has become a member of this movement to help make our city a more compassionate place. You will be seeing their logo on our bulletins and signs. For further information, please visit their website: <https://www.compassionate-stl.org/about-us>

Day-Long Women's Retreat: Mark your Calendars! Women's Day Long Retreat planned for Saturday, June 25, 2022. Tentative time from 8:30am to 4:30pm. In person and outdoors. Centrally located near Hampton and Hwy 44. Theme and details to follow. Donna Moromarco, Kim Madden, and Mary Middendorf are in the planning stages. Express your interest in attending by emailing mary.middendorf@gmail.com as soon as possible. Space is limited.

Prayers Please: Laurel Hayes; Laurel Hayes' parents, Jerry and Nancy; Rose; Robert Nathe's Mother, Eileen; Colleen Wallace's godson, Lachlan; Michelle Frank; Jennifer Lyle and Krista Rakers; Jessica; Nick Ambrose; Al Sprehe; Phil Milner; Leslie Conway; Mike's grandson, Jack; Jim Gorman; Andrew Viraugh's father.; Sharon Orlet's sister, Betty; Nancy Buck's daughter, Jeanne; Kathy Bayless; Tom Kuciejczyk-Kernan's brother, Steve; Barry Buchek's wife, Mary; Trish Curtis' mother and brother; Gavin Barrett-Hayes; Barb Sopp's cousin, Patty Struckhoff; Marie and Roland Martir's granddaughter, Maggie; David Gaillardetz' father, Richard; Fr. Gerry's classmate, Fr. Pat O'Laughlin.