

FIRST READING – C LENT 5

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Thus says the Lord,
who makes a way in the sea,
a path in the mighty waters,
who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior;
they lie down, they cannot rise,
they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:
Do not remember the former things,
or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.
The wild animals will honour me,
the jackals and the ostriches;
for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert,
to give drink to my chosen people,
the people whom I formed for myself
so that they might declare my praise.

Pause – and look up at the assembly



Pause for **THREE** seconds
then look up at the people
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING – C LENT 5

A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

Brothers and sisters:
I regard everything as loss
because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.
For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things,
and I regard them as rubbish,
in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him,
not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law,
but one that comes through faith in Christ,
the righteousness from God based on faith.
I want to know Christ
and the power of his resurrection
and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death,
if somehow I may arrive at the resurrection from the dead.
Not that I have already obtained this
or have already reached the goal;
but I press on to make it my own,
because Christ Jesus has made me his own.
Brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have made it my own;
but this one thing I do:
forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,
I press on toward the goal
for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Pause for **THREE** seconds
then look up at the people
and say SLOWLY:



The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING – C LENT 5

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.
Early in the morning he came again to the temple.
All the people came to him
and he sat down and began to teach them.
The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman
who had been caught in adultery,
and making her stand before the people,
they said to Jesus,
“Teacher, this woman was caught
in the very act of committing adultery.
In the law, Moses orders us to stone such women.
Now what do you say?”
They said this to test Jesus,
so that they might have some charge to bring against him.
Jesus bent down
and wrote with his finger on the ground.
When the scribes and Pharisees kept on questioning him,
Jesus straightened up and said to them,
“Let anyone among you who is without sin
be the first to throw a stone at her.”
And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground.
When the scribes and Pharisees heard what Jesus had said,
they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders;
and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him.
Jesus straightened up and said to her,
“Woman, where are they?
Has no one condemned you?”
She said, “No one, sir.”
And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you.
Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.”



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURES IN DEPTH

Reading I: Isaiah 43:16-21

In Second Isaiah, the impending return from exile in Babylon is depicted as a new Exodus. The “former things” and the “things of old” refer to the first Exodus. This is now replaced by a “new thing,” the return from exile. In this new event the events of the first Exodus are repeated: “I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”

In Christian biblical theology, the proclamation of God’s act of salvation in Christ picks up the same imagery. The “new things” are now the death and resurrection of the Messiah, and the “drink” that God provides for his people consists of the sacraments of the new covenant.

Responsorial Psalm: 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6

The fourth stanza entitles us to apply the restoration of which the first and third stanzas speak and the “great things” of the second stanza to the death and resurrection of Christ:

He that goes forth weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
bringing his sheaves with him.

“The metaphor of sowing in the Old Testament almost demanded a messianic application” (E. Hoskyns).

Reading II: Philippians 3:8-14

The third chapter of Philippians is a polemic against Paul’s opponents. Whether they were Judaizers, that is, advocates of imposing the Jewish law on Gentile converts, or some kind of syncretists or “enthusiasts” is not certain, but current exegesis is inclining toward the latter (so not only the German Lutheran Schmithals but also the German Catholic Gnilka).

As enthusiasts, these opponents would fondly imagine that through baptism they had “already attained” and were already perfect. Against their position Paul holds out his *theologia crucis*, not simply as an abstract doctrine but as a reality to which his whole life as an apostle is conformed.

Only by becoming like Christ in his death, only by sharing his suffering and by living under the “not yet,” can the Apostle know the power of Christ’s resurrection now, and eventually attain the resurrection when Christ returns.

Gospel: John 8:1-11

The pericope about the woman caught in adultery, it is now agreed by most scholars, is not part of the original text of John, though, of course, it is part of the canonical text and, as such, has been rightly restored from the margin in the RSV Common Bible.

The earliest manuscripts either omit it or place it somewhere else. Some place it after Lk 21:38, which is an interesting interpolation, for the story has a definitely Lucan ring.

Despite its late attestation, it is certainly a very early and good tradition. Professor Bruce Metzger's verdict in his textual commentary is that it "has all the earmarks of historical veracity."

The Swedish New Testament scholar Harald Riesenfeld has offered an interesting explanation of why this story went underground, so to speak, for such a long time. It happened, he thinks, during the period when Church authorities were trying to enforce a strict discipline over Christian marriages. The story seemed at that time to encourage laxity in marriage standards.

Actually, this was a false impression. After all, Jesus did say to the woman, "Go, and do not sin again." He recognized sin as sin. And in saying, "Neither do I condemn you," he was not condoning the sin but pronouncing the forgiveness of God.

The scribes and Pharisees, however, come in for sharper condemnation and are put to shame. None of them could claim to be without sin. This is a pictorial illustration of Jesus' saying, "Judge not, that you may not be judged" (Mt 7:1).

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