

## MESSAGE FOR LENT

We talk a lot about repentance at Lent. That's because Jesus did too – that's how his ministry began. Ultimately, Jesus opens minds to experience “full-on” Repentance - that is Metanoia - a Mind-Shifting, Heart-Changing, Life-Transforming journey to come to know the path to Salvation.

### 4/3- FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT SCRIPTURE

1st Reading: Isaiah 46:16-21

2nd Reading: Philippians 3:8-14

Gospel: John 8:1-11

### WATCH ‘METANOIA’

We invite you to watch “Metanoia” produced by Fr. Dave Pivonka, TOR, president of the acclaimed Franciscan University in Steubenville. The series need not be viewed in sequence.

**Episode 4: Sin & Mercy** - <https://thewildgooseisloose.com/metanoia>  
(Sign in to create a free account)

### OPENING PRAYER

As we enter the final days of Lent, we pray that our understanding and attitude to sin changes, so that we may change! Pray to experience metanoia, to repent, to believe in the Gospel, to live the Gospel way:

*Jesus, your mercy is greater than any sin.*

*You will never turn away from us.  
You will always open your heart.*

*Help us to know our sin so we may know your mercy.*



### FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT - GOSPEL OF JOHN

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 all of them, they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?'

They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he 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 they heard it, 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.'

### REFLECTION

Commenting on what options are presented in the Gospel story, St. Augustine says, “Only two are left: misery and mercy”. Jesus upholds the Mosaic Law, as only the sinless can pass judgement. Jesus is also the one with the authority of the Father to forgive. Jesus condemns the sin, pardons the sinner, and calls her to repent. Jesus is just and generous!

Jesus is loving and tolerant of everyone, but not tolerant of sin! He also calls the woman's accusers to conversion – to let go of their condemnation of the woman (but not limited to that). Note that while she was “caught in adultery” the man was not brought forward for judgement, exposing their calculating use of her to seek vengeance on Jesus. We know they walk away, one by one, an acknowledgement that they are sinners and have no standing to accuse. But we do know not if any have been moved to change their thinking.

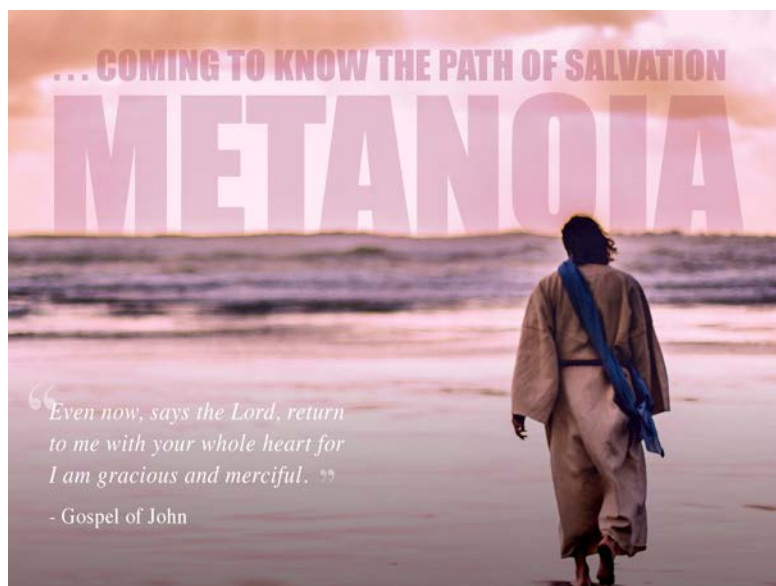
## DISCUSSION

- Is it easy or hard for you to condemn the sin but not the sinner? What happens in you when heart and head seem in conflict?
- Have you ever acted with prejudice (or a righteousness) that you are more holy than another? Have you considered that sin leads us to this wrong thinking – causing us to dismiss others or even an entire group of people?
- Jesus came for healing and mercy – to heal the sick, love the sinner. Do you approach Him as either of those?
- Mercy is a high priority in Jesus' value system. Is there someone to whom you are called to be merciful (forgiving)? Talk out why, how, when will you approach this need.
- If you have not yet had the chance to watch episodes of "Metanoia" narrated by Fr. Dave Pivonka, TOR – this week covers the full scope of our Lent journey – Episode 4: Sin & Mercy. Fr. Dave poses this question: Did you ever think that it is your sin that causes Jesus' death? Or that it can cause yours?

### PRAYER THE WAY TO PALM SUNDAY

Pray daily a decade of "the Jesus Prayer"  
- starting today, until Palm Sunday.

*"Lord Jesus Christ,  
Son of God,  
have mercy on me,  
a sinner."*



### MY LENTEN JOURNEY TO JESUS

It is worth remembering where we started, and what metanoia can mean for us: Change begins with our acknowledgement that we live most of our lives facing the wrong direction.

Sinning essentially says I don't want the path of Jesus – I want my own path. When we repent, when we change our hearts and lives, when we reorient ourselves in God's direction, we get on the right eternal path, discover new faculties for seeing and responding to God's call in our lives.

**This Lent, through the Gospels, reflect upon the journey to prepare for the joy of Easter:**

...to quiet, isolated places to pray, such as the desert, where Lent always begins;

...to high places where we come closer to God and see a glimpse of our own future glory, like the mountain of Transfiguration;

...to the garden, where we are given new chances to bear fruit by the "gardener" and the "owner";

...to dark valleys, where even in our lowest of lows, as prodigal sons and daughters, we discover the Father has never abandoned us, has always loved us, always welcomes us back to full communion;

...and this week, to get closer to a deeply, personal encounter with Christ the sinless one, the perfect one, the forgiving one.