Closing prayer

Together:
Lord,
we rejoice that you are our creator and ruler.
As we call upon your generosity,
renew and keep us in your love.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

(Solemn Blessing for Second Sunday of Lent)

Stewardship link

Mercy and insight are but two of God's gifts to us which we come to understand through the Gospel and which we are called to nurture and share with all those we meet.

To do

Insight and mercy are two great gifts from God.

Spend some time each day this week reflecting on your own moments of 'failure'. Bring insight and mercy into your reflections.

- What insights do your failures offer you?
- Be merciful with yourself in your failures. Allow this to help you to come closer to God who is infinitely and abundantly merciful.

Try to be conscious of opportunities for moments of mercy in your life – perhaps with the work colleague who makes a mistake or the driver who cuts you up. Their failings may be a gift for you – allowing you to share in Christ's merciful mission.

Take some time to note your responses in your notebook.

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Diocese of Portsmouth

Stewardship Reflection

5th Sunday of Lent Year C

'What have you to say?'

(John 8:5)

Opening prayer

Leader:
Let us pray
for the courage to follow Christ.

Response:
Father,
help us to be like Christ your Son,
who loved the world and died for our salvation.
Inspire us by his love
and guide us by his example.

(Opening Prayer for Fifth Sunday of Lent)

To share

What insights have you had in the last week? Is there something in your notebook that you would like to share with others in the group?

To listen

John 8:1-11

To think about

This is a familiar and powerful passage from the Gospel which gives us deep insights into Jesus' mission. Jesus stands in the Temple, the heart of observance of the Jewish Law, and comes across a situation in which a crowd seeks to carry out the very clear commands of that Law.

It is important to remember that the Law is seen by the Jewish people as a gift from God and is more than just a set of rules. It has divine status as God's action in the world. For Jesus to contradict the Law in any way would be seen as contradicting God.

When he is challenged, though, Jesus does not contradict the teachings of Moses. Instead, he brings to them the clarity and understanding which are central to his whole ministry. He shows that laws are there for guidance but should be rooted in justice and, above all, mercy.

He does not deny the reality of the woman's sin but he uses it to show that weakness and failure are something we all have in common. The insight about their own sinfulness brings the men in the crowd into a new relationship with the Law. For the condemned woman, it is mercy that brings about a new relationship.

The Law is a gift given to guide and support us. It is not a master to be obeyed slavishly but is entrusted to us as wise stewards, to be followed with mercy and self-reflection.

To reflect on

Think of a time when you have judged someone harshly.

Think of a time when you have felt judged by others, without them knowing the full story.

How good are we at bringing the feeling of being judged into our own judging?

To discuss

For the men in the Gospel passage, their own failings became a gift to them, allowing them to understand mercy.

How easy, or even possible, is it to see our failings and weaknesses as a gift?

Perhaps even more challenging, how easy is it to see the failings of others as a gift?

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