

**June 12, 2016 – 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

### **Courtesy**

An embarrassing display. The occasion was already delicate, to say the least. Jesus had been invited to a private dinner in the house of Simon the Pharisee. This was an honor, but at the same time a dishonor, since Simon ignored the usual courtesies due to a guest in that culture: Water to cleanse his feet, a kiss of welcome, the anointing of his head.

As dinner went on, “a sinful woman” barged into the house without asking, and sat on the floor right behind Jesus. She began weeping. We are not told why, only that she obviously loved Jesus a lot. At the dinner, she “began to bathe his feet with her tears.” And she actually dried them with her hair. What an embarrassing display. Finally, she took out a beautifully ornamented flask – which she had brought carefully for this purpose. She spread the precious ointment which it contained upon his feet, giving them repeated kisses.

To the other guests she seemed completely out of control. Simon the Pharisee said under his breath, *If this man were a prophet, he would know who and what sort of woman this is.*

Jesus certainly did know. Not only about her sins, but her goodness, which he was seeing. He accepted both tenderly. And then he gave a sharp rebuke to Simon the Pharisee. Then, with deft words, he showed that her actions came directly from her loving heart. Here is the important line, which I will paraphrase: \*

*Her many sins have been forgiven; that is the reason she has shown such great love. If she had been forgiven only a little bit, her love would be small as a result.*

Notice it is not the case that the woman loved Jesus and therefore was deserving of forgiveness. It is just the opposite. He had already forgiven her sins, and as a result she loved him. God's love is always first no matter how sinful we are. It remains personal and present for each of us, if we can let go of our guilt.



It is because we are all so inadequate that his love takes the form of absolution. Usually you and I have it backwards. We think we must get rid of all our sins and become perfect and sinless in order for God to love us. In reality we are already loved to perfection by the good Lord, and we begin to reform as we slowly let that love in. We begin to recognize who we really are. We soften our hearts toward the mess we have made of our lives, because we see that somehow we are loved as we are.

*In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins (1 John 4:1-10).*

Let it happen.

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\* The words of the USCCB (American) Bible translation (1986) are, “her many sins have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love.” Correct. The word “hence” carries the meaning. This passage was changed when it was placed in the lectionary: “Her many sins have been forgiven because she has shown great love.” This conflicts with the whole point of this Gospel reading: that we don't earn our salvation by being sinless.

[John Foley, SJ – Source: [http://liturgy.slu.edu/11OrdC061216/reflections\\_foley.html](http://liturgy.slu.edu/11OrdC061216/reflections_foley.html)]

## **NEWS**

**Confessions** – An opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered this Sunday after Mass.

**Parish Feast** – St. Bonifatius, one of our parish churches, celebrates their annual “Feast around the church” this weekend. ICCH members might want to join them for lunch/ coffee and cake after our Sunday Mass, e.g....