

## 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent – April 6/7, 2019 – Reflection

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"A woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery ... the law commands us to stone such women. They asked Jesus what He would say. Jesus said, 'Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' They all went away. Jesus spoke to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you? Then neither do I. Go, and from now on do not sin any more.'"

(The Gospel of John)

Just a little over two weeks ago, I went to confession for the first time in about two years. For most of my life, I've been carrying things around ... secrets, shames, habits, excuses, lies ... that I never really confessed ... because I never would admit they were wrong ... and if they weren't wrong, how could I be sorry and why would I wanna change??

I don't know ... maybe I'm getting older ... maybe I'm starting to accept my own mortality ... maybe I'm going through a spiritual awakening ... maybe I'm just tired of feeling guilty all the time. Whatever's happening, I've had this urge for some time now to make a really good confession, one that wouldn't hold anything back, one that wouldn't offer all sorts of justifications for my actions, one that would lay all

my cards on the table, one that would make me stand before the Good Lord with no cover-ups, no masks, no spin.

It was part of my prayer this Lent for God to show me the priest He wanted me to go to for this baring of my soul. One day, I was sitting at my desk in the parish house and my cell rang. The voice on the other end was of one of our senior priests calling just to touch base. I took his call that came outta the blue to be a little sign from God that he was the one. I asked if I could see him and told him I wanted to make a lifetime confession. And so, on a Thursday late morning, I sat in his office and poured out my soul. He couldn't have been more compassionate, more caring ... I felt like I was talking to Jesus. Father gave me absolution for everything and thanked me for choosing him to go to. I told him I didn't choose him, God did.

I left there feeling like the weight of the world had been lifted from my shoulders and from my heart. I came back to our parish offices and told everyone I saw that I'd just been to confession. I think one person was a little scandalized, told me that was something private, not to be shared, that I sounded almost like I was bragging.

And ya know what? I was bragging 'cause I was happy, relieved, unburdened. I felt like a new man and, maybe, for the first time in a very long time, I felt like God loved me and I wanted to shout it from the mountaintops. I wanted to tell anybody and everybody that God forgives. The Church absolves. And, I've been freed.

A woman was dragged into the town square ... guilty as sin ... and the one person who could have thrown the stone didn't. I dragged myself into the court of confession and He didn't throw anything at me either.

You can get what I got. You can have what I have. You can feel what I feel. You don't hafta wait for a phone call outta the blue. Pick yourself up outta the dust. Come to Jesus. Come to the Church. Get that monkey off your back.

They say confession is good for the soul. I say they're wrong. It's not good. It's GREAT!