After spending a few minutes considering this Gospel, continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection.

This is a story of devotion and repentance, but a story also of the welcome of and hospitality given to Jesus. He does not rebuke the sinner or interrogate her. He sets no pre-conditions, demands no promise of improvement. The details of her sin are unimportant to him; the heartfelt repentance is all that matters. Of all the evangelists Luke especially stores up stories of the return of sinners: the Prodigal Son, the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector at Prayer, Zacchaeus, the Good Thief and the story of this woman too. To Matthew's story of Joy at the Man's Found Sheep Luke adds the story of Joy at the Woman's Found Coin (typically adding an example using a woman as well as a man). In contrast with Jesus and the woman stands the host at the dinner-party, Simon the Pharisee. Simon is not evil, but is a stickler for the observance of the Law, and is judgmental of others. However, Jesus is attentive to Simon as well: he gives him a question he can answer so that Jesus can affirm him; then Jesus points out Simon's shortcomings, then gently but firmly offering to Simon too the opportunity for repentance.

Who shows the most love in this story, and how? Do you, like Simon, find it too easy to judge others and hard to forgive?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

Reflect

After spending a few minutes considering this Gospel, continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection.

Who shows the most love in this story, and how? Do you, like Simon, find it too easy to judge others and hard to forgive?

Respond & Request

Now slowly and prayerfully read the Gospel once again but this time in silence. Consider how this Gospel could apply to your life in general. Then thank God for any insight you may have received. Conclude by asking God to bless you with one of the following spiritual gifts to help you act on any resolution you have made: love, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, self control, patience, or joy. Please remember to pray for the Church and particularly our school families. Then conclude by requesting the prayers of Our Lady & St Joseph.
First Reading: David’s Repentance

2 Samuel 12:7-10, 13

Nathan said to David, “The Lord the God of Israel says this, ‘I anointed you king over Israel; I delivered you from the hands of Saul; I gave your master’s house to you, his wives into your arms; I gave you the House of Israel and of Judah; and if this were not enough, I would add as much again for you. Why have you shown contempt for the Lord, doing what displeases him? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, taken his wife for your own, and killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. So now the sword will never be far from your House, since you have shown contempt for me and taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.” David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” Then Nathan said to David, “The Lord, for his part, forgives your sin; you are not to die.”

The account of David’s adultery with Bathsheba is a great story. When Bathsheba tells him she is pregnant, he tries to disguise his crime by persuading Uriah, her husband, to sleep with her. When Uriah refuses, David arranges to have him killed in battle, in the hope of escaping the charge of adultery. This is where our reading begins, as David’s own prophet, Nathan, tells David the score. David’s is a story of rags-to-riches, shepherd boy to king, outwitting King Saul at every step, winning his way into the counsels of the Philistines, gradually building up his powerbase. For all his charismatic leadership, courage, ability to charm both men and women, skilled (and often crooked) diplomacy, David’s true greatness lies in his repentance which we witness in this scene. In the Bible he is the model of the great sinner and the great repentant – indeed of the great public penitent, for he repents humbly and unremittingly. Amid all his faults, David’s warm and open relationship to the LORD is his salvation. It is glimpsed often in his story, and, though it does not save him from his great fall over Bathsheba, yet it brings him back to the LORD in heartfelt penitence. The story is, of course, chosen by the Church to pair with today’s gospel reading about repentance.

Do you find it harder to forgive or to ask for forgiveness?

Second Reading: Crucified with Christ

Galatians 2:16, 19-21

After Eastertide and the celebration of the feasts of the Lord we return to our readings from Ordinary Time and find ourselves in the middle of St Paul’s letter to the Galatians. Paul is addressing a group in the Roman province of Galatia (part of modern day Turkey), who were probably mostly Jewish; he has helped them to see that the promises to Abraham were fulfilled in Christ. Then some other Jewish Christians came down from Jerusalem and told these new Christians that they must still observe the Jewish Law. Paul was furious, calls them ‘Fools!’, and re-asserts his teaching that one must trust only in Christ and his resurrection. He asks them to tell him who is the source of the works of the Spirit, which were plain for all to see among them. Is it the Law or is it Christ (who now lives in them)? Half measures will not do, and Paul goes on to tell of the total commitment of his own life to Christ. Once a burningly zealous Pharisee, he is now dead to the Law and lives only with the life of the Spirit in Christ. We cannot win our own salvation; it is won for us by Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross.

“Salvation is won for us by Christ.”