



5th Sunday of Lent

Isaiah 43:16-21
Ps 126:1-6
Philip 3:8-14
John 8:1-1

Monday March 22

Daniel 13:1-9,15-17,
19-30,33-62
Ps 23:1-6
John 8:12-20

Tuesday March 23

Numbers 21:4-9
Ps 102:2-3,16-21
John 8:21-30

Wednesday March 24

Daniel 3:14-20,91-92,95
Daniel 3:52-56
John 8:31-42

Thursday March 25

The Annunciation

Isaiah 7:10-14
Ps 40:7-11
Hebrews 10:4-10
Luke 1:26-38

Friday March 26

Jeremiah 20:10-13
Ps 18:2-7
John 10:31-42

Saturday March 27

Ezekiel 37:21-28
Jeremiah 31:10-13
John 11:45-57

Today's Gospel reading shows us a good example of how to treat someone who is, as Jesus says elsewhere in scripture (Matt. 25) "the least of these." The recipient of Christ's compassion in this story was considered to be unworthy of life itself.

She was a woman which in her society meant she was inferior to men. She was a sinner and deserved punishment. She was one single person facing a condemning crowd alone. How much more of a "least" one could anyone be?

When have you felt alone and insignificant? Perhaps you've faced a condemning crowd. Then again, have you ever treated others as if they're not important? Yes, none of us can cast the first stone.

There are many in the Church who feel forgotten

and neglected. We all know some of them.

If we're already busy in parish or diocesan ministry or in our own personal lives, seeking them out and giving them attention feels too overwhelming. These people become too insignificant to warrant the expense of our time, the development of resources, and the sacrifice of our personal comfort.



If the diseased and suffering have pain that we don't know how to handle, we look away. Catholics with broken marriages often feel condemned, and many who could be receiving Communion stay

away because they've been misinformed about the Church's rules, and no one is reaching out to lead them back.

Although the Church has been stopping abuses against children, often the lustful or abusive treatment of adults is not addressed, because they are dismissed as "less vulnerable" – they are of least concern.

Identifying the least among us and reaching out to them is a good Lenten exercise.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. Which persons are you neglecting because their situation makes you feel uncomfortable or inadequate? Which members of your family or parish do you avoid because you like them "least" of all? Begin to give them compassionate attention by praying for them, then discern if the Lord is inspiring you to do anything more.
2. Share the story of a time when you encountered – or were – one of "the least of these".
3. Did anyone show compassion? How?
4. Where was Jesus?