

WORD FROM THE PASTOR

3rd SUNDAY IN LENT - GROWING IN GOD'S MERCY AND COMPASSION



The gospel on this third Sunday of Lent invites to reflect on Mercy and Compassion of God. The Gospel invites us to meditate on an extraordinary scene. Saint John reveals to us the whole mystery of God. He begins with the water that fertilizes the earth and gives life to the world. This takes place in Samaria, at Jacob's well. It is there that Jesus stopped, weary from his journey. And it is there that he meets the Samaritan woman. Normally, this encounter should not have occurred. Jews and Samaritans avoided each other. Ancient rivalries divided them. This woman who comes to draw water is a symbol of our wounded humanity. God sees us rushing towards danger and falling into sin. He does everything to pull us out of it.

Jesus calls us to “Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge, and you will not be judged yourselves; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned yourselves; grant pardon, and you will be pardoned.” A look at social media reveals many casting stones at others – judging and condemning offenders as if they have no skeletons in their own closets. They forget what Jesus said to those who wished to condemn the adulterous woman: “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her” (Jn 8:7).

He revealed to us the mercy and compassion of God for sinners. Jesus said, “God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him” (Jn 3:17). **How can we grow in mercy and compassion for sinners? We must first be conscious of our own sinfulness. We must be ashamed of our sins.** Shame is what helps us desire not to sin again. Today, our modern generation unashamedly boasts adultery as something normal. Indeed, people are no longer ashamed of the evil they do.

We must have heart contrition of heart. Without contrition of heart, there is no real repentance or conversion. **Only then can we turn to God for forgiveness. When we have received God’s forgiveness for ourselves, we can then forgive those who have hurt us or those who have done wrong to others. We will make excuses for them too.** If God has forgiven us our sins, then how could we refrain from forgiving others and overlooking their faults? We become more aware that each of us faces different circumstances in our personal battle against sin.

So, instead of looking at and judging others with condemnation, we must look at them with the eyes of love. When we love, we have no time to judge; instead, we feel with the person and care for them, seeking relief for their struggles. It is **LOVE** that gives us the capacity to be compassionate and merciful.

The same Lord meets us in every situation of our lives, even the most complicated. Despite our weaknesses and sins, He refreshes us at the Source of Living Water, that of His Word and his Eucharist. Then, like the Samaritan woman, we are sent to proclaim that Jesus is truly the **“Savior of the World.”**

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Dean of Northwest Broward Deanery of the Archdiocese Miami – March 8, 2026