

11th Sunday of the Year C

*What makes a man righteous
is not obedience to the Law,
but faith in Jesus Christ. (Ga 2:16)*



First Reading

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."

Second Reading

Galatians 2:16.19-21

We acknowledge that what makes a man righteous is not obedience to the Law, but faith in Jesus Christ. We had to become believers in Christ Jesus no less than you had, and now we hold that faith in Christ rather than fidelity to the Law is what justifies us, and that no one can be justified by keeping the Law. In other words, through the Law I am dead to the Law, so that now I can live for God. I have been crucified with Christ, and I live now not with my own life but with the life of Christ who lives in me. The life I now live in this body I live in faith: faith in the Son of God who loved me and who sacrificed himself for my sake. I cannot bring myself to give up God's gift: if the Law can justify us, there is no point in the death of Christ."

One of the Pharisees invited Jesus to a meal. When he arrived at the Pharisee's house and took his place at table, a woman came in, who had a bad name in the town. She had heard he was dining with the Pharisee and had brought with her an alabaster jar of ointment. She waited behind him at his feet, weeping, and her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them away with her hair; then she covered his feet with kisses and anointed them with the ointment.

When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who this woman is that is touching him and what a bad name she has." Then Jesus took him up and said, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Speak, Master" was the reply. "There was once a creditor who had two men in his debt; one owed him five hundred denarii, the other fifty. They were unable to pay, so he pardoned them both. Which of them will love him more?" "The one who was pardoned more, I suppose" answered Simon. Jesus said, "You are right." Then he turned to the woman. "Simon", he said "you see this woman? I came into your house, and you poured no water over my feet, but she has poured out her tears over my feet and wiped them away with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but she has been covering my feet with kisses ever since I came in. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. For this reason I tell you that her sins, her many sins, must have been forgiven her, or she would not have shown such great love. It is the man who is forgiven little who shows little love." Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." Those who were with him at table began to say to themselves, "Who is this man, that he even forgives sins?" But he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Meditation

The Gentile society of Luke's time had little regard for the dignity of women. Luke, in addressing himself to these hearers, is at pains to stress the role women play in Jesus' ministry and in the life of the Church. In today's passage Jesus is depicted as violating certain taboos in order to welcome a repentant woman.

During the meal given for Jesus by Simon the Pharisee, the woman enters unexpectedly. Rabbinic custom frowned upon any close contact between men and women outside the home. In addition, this woman is a public sinner. Ready to renounce her way of life, she now publicly puts her faith in this man who has come for people like herself. Her attitude stands in stark contrast to the calculated reserve of the devout Simon. Without knowing it, she is worthy of pardon. If it is true that people become what they are seen to be, we are transformed by Christ's look of love. In him death is not before us but behind us.

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Now after this he made his way through towns and villages, preaching, and proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom of God. With him went the Twelve, as well as certain women who had been cured of evil spirits and ailments: Mary surnamed the Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, Joanna the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, Susanna, and several others who provided for them out of their own resources.

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