

The prophet Isaiah addresses a people who have just lived an extended period of captivity. He tells him good news: it is today that God intervenes to save his people. The latter will be able to return to the Promised Land; the desert he will cross will be punctuated with oases; it must be seen as a sign that God can give life and hope to the driest hearts.

This good news concerns us all today: in this world of ours, many live in despair. It is in this world as it is that we are sent. Our mission is to reveal the Source of living water, the one that makes all deserts bloom, those of our families, those of our life, those of our world, those of our Church. It is from him that we are invited to draw every day.

St. Paul gives us his testimony. His encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus caused a radical reversal in his life. Initially, he was an ardent defender of Jewish law. But after his conversion, he now has no other pride and ambition than to "know Christ" and to "achieve the resurrection of the dead" by communing with the sufferings of his Passion. For us as for Paul, true liberation is that which comes from Christ. It is a gift that God gives us out of pure mercy. It is with him that we will find the strength to free ourselves from everything that locks us in on ourselves.

St. John shows us the mercy that liberates. Last Sunday, Jesus spoke of it in the form of a parable, that of the prodigal son. But today we see him facing a very real situation: a woman guilty of adultery is brought to him. His accusers are scribes and Pharisees, experts in the law of Moses, people known for their religious fervor. According to the law of Moses, this woman must be stoned. But if they turn to him, it is to trap him, they throw the sinful woman at the feet of Jesus so that he himself may fall: if he refuses to condemn her, he is in contradiction with the law of Moses; and if he condemns her, he is in contradiction with the mercy he preaches.

But Jesus makes a reversal: he opens a new trial, that of the accusers: ***"The one of you who is sinless, let him be the first to throw a stone at him."*** While Jesus has the delicacy to look down, everyone examines his conscience and... Withdraws. He remains a sinless man, Jesus; only he would have had the right to condemn, but he does not: ***"I do not condemn you either, go and henceforth sin no more."*** The threat of death disappears, the path of a new life opens for this woman.

As we read this Gospel, we think of all scandals, big or small. Some are known only to the familiar entourage. The Press, TV, and the Internet spread others. So, the languages are going well. Of course, sinners and fishermen are no longer stoned. But we sneer, we denounce the one who has made a mistake; he is being pushed into his bad reputation. He is not given any chance to get out of it.

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