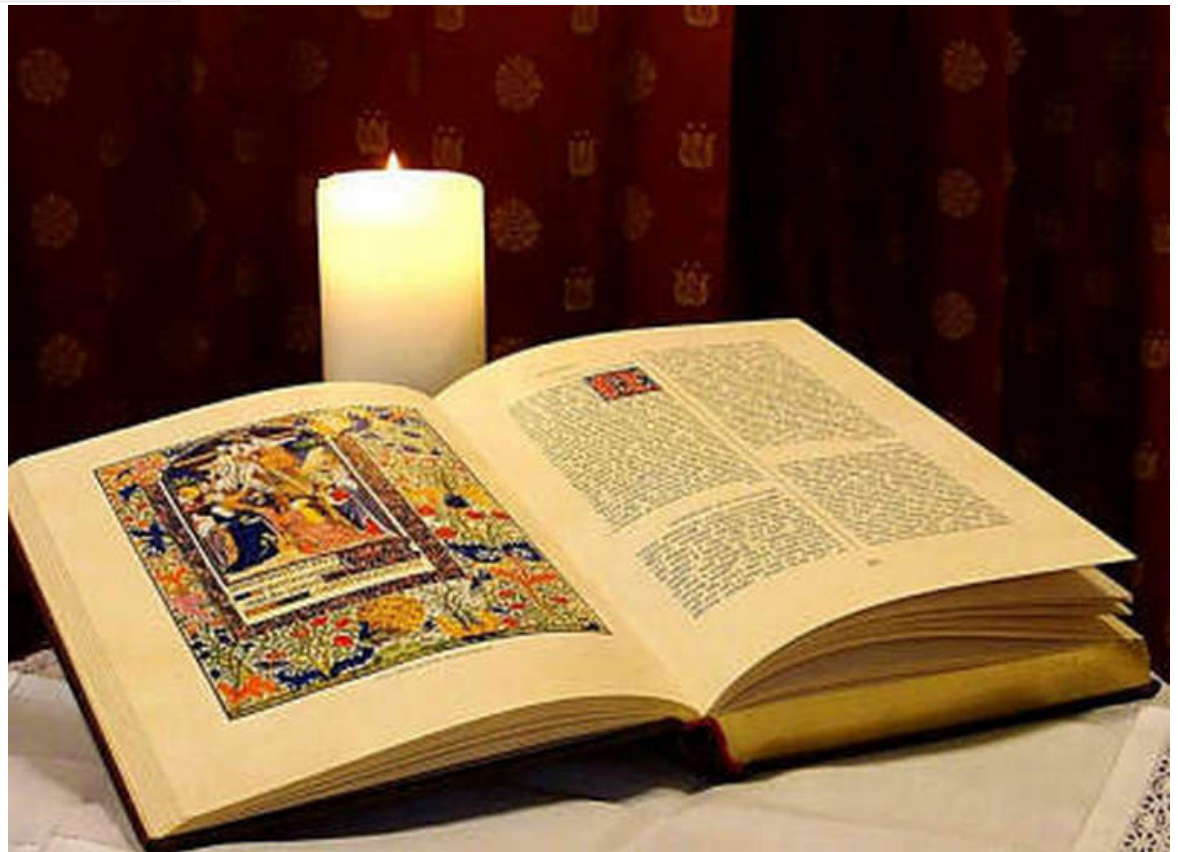


GOSPEL PEARLS

Three teachings

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Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who

is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more." (John 8: 1-11)

The woman's accusers had set a trap for Jesus. To escape entrapment, Jesus first forces the accusers to subject themselves to the same judgement to which they have subjected the woman. Starting with the eldest, obviously not only the wisest but also the most sinful, the accusers disappear. The first lesson, therefore, is this: remembering our sins is the first step towards humility and conversion. The second teaching concerns the object of our judgement as children of God: we, not being God, can judge behaviour but not persons. The third teaching is that as long as we are alive, it is never too late to accept God's mercy and sin no more.