

GOSPEL PEARLS

Two precious teachings

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Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At daybreak he appeared in the Temple again; and as all the people came to him, he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman along who had been caught committing adultery; and making her stand there in full view of everybody, they said to Jesus, 'Master, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery, and Moses has ordered us in the Law to condemn women like this to death by stoning. What have you to say?' They asked him this as a test, looking for something to use against him. But Jesus bent down and started writing on the ground with his finger. As they persisted with their question, he looked up and said, 'If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.' Then he bent down and wrote on the ground again. When they heard this they went away one by one, beginning with the eldest, until Jesus was left alone with the woman, who remained standing there. He looked up and said, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' 'No one, sir' she replied. 'Neither do I condemn you,' said Jesus 'go away, and do not sin any more.' (John 8, 1-11)

In the episode of the woman caught in the act of adultery, Jesus teaches us not to judge people, but only their behaviour, thus distinguishing sin from the sinner. A second teaching of the Gospel is that we must not give in to wrong behaviour without fighting to change it: in fact, Jesus concludes by saying "go and sin no more". Dwell on your day yesterday and sincerely ask yourself how many times have you judged a person by their appearance by condemning them in your heart. And also ask yourself how many times have you continued to do something wrong by saying that in your case you were justified; you may find that the one to be condemned is yourself.