



## FINDING A STILL CENTRE

In the midst of our busy lives  
A quiet place in the heart of our community  
July 5th 2020

**Living in God's strength - Standing on the side of Mercy**

**Music on arrival:** Clarinet Quintet in A Major, Op.108.K.581:11.Larghetto. Mozart

### Opening Prayer:

Loving God, you have made us in your own image,  
diverse, beautiful and precious in your sight.  
May we see that same precious beauty in every person,  
a unique creation beloved of you.  
May we celebrate the life we can bring to each other.  
Give us the courage to stand unequivocally for justice,  
for truth, and for the reconciliation  
and hope that is ours through Jesus Christ.  
Help us to dismantle racist agendas.  
Help us to transform unjust structures.  
Help us to decolonize our Christianity.  
Help us to love you with all our heart, soul and strength.  
Help us to love one another as you commanded us to do.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord

**Amen.**

Archbishop Fereimi Cama, Archbishop Richardson, Archbishop Don Tamihere



Gobi desert – Photo Jane M

### Lectio Divina: John 8:2-11. (NRSV)

#### Context:

This passage is intriguing in that it is thought that it was not an original part of the Gospel. The earliest manuscripts do not record it, and those, which do, often do not place it at this point. Yet there is evidence of its historical source. The setting is thought to be within Jesus last week in Jerusalem. The Law required that eye witness account was necessary if punishment was to be inflicted for adultery. According to the Mishnah, stoning was the punishment when the woman was betrothed, strangling if she were married. It is unhelpful to ask what Jesus wrote on the ground, he simply refuses to pass judgment. His answer is designed to have the effect described in vs 9. “when they heard it they went away one, by one”. Jesus had said he came not to judge but save; yet his very presence has the effect of judging her self-righteous accusers. The setting of the story lends itself to our imagination wherever we might place ourselves in the scene!

*The passage will be read 3 times with 5 minutes between each phase. First phase: read with focus on the passage and context. Second phase: meditate on how the passage speaks to you and your life. Third phase: contemplate, pray, and rest in the presence of the Holy.*

**‘At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of**

adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

**Centering Prayer and time of silence** *You may choose a sacred word or phrase to repeat rhythmically and repetitively, to lead you into a silence of up to 20 minutes.*

**Music for meditation:** The Peacemakers: I Offer You Peace. Jenkins

**An invitation:** to pick up a stone to take home and incorporate it into a reflection on the reading.

### Closing Prayer: Merciful One

Merciful One,  
I hear in myself the echoes of a woman crying in fear and shame.  
I feel in myself the weight of those stones of judgment, ready to cast at the slightest provocation.  
Help me to know Christ in me.  
Help me to be a reflection of the one who stands for justice, who invites us all into relationship, who offers forgiveness, who embodies grace.  
Help me to stand with those whose lives are threatened by judgment.  
Help me to stand on the side of mercy.  
Help me daily to drop the stones I wish to cast and replace them instead with the gifts of connection, compassion, and community.  
In the name of love, I pray.

**Amen.**

'Mercy Instead of Sacrifice', Thea L. Racelis in A Child Laughs, Prayers of Justice and Hope, Maria Mankin, Maren C. Tirabassi, P. 92-93

### Blessing:

God of the Southern sea and of these islands,  
of Maori, Pakeha and of all who dwell in our land;  
we give you thanks and praise for our country,  
and for what we have achieved together.  
Increase our trust in one another;  
strengthen our quest for justice,  
and bring us to unity and a common purpose.  
You have made us of one blood;  
make us also of one mind.  
Bless all those throughout our world who know  
Intolerance and injustice.  
And bless us that we may stand with them in mercy.  
**Amen.**

Adapted from the collect from "Te Pouhere Sunday" ANZPB.



Waikato – photo, Jane M

### Reflection:

*The crisis created by contemplative justice-seeking guaranteed the eventual end of overt practices of domination, for domination could not withstand the steady gaze of the inner eye of thousands of awakened people. —Barbara A. Holmes  
In Richard Rohr's summary Week 23,  
'Contemplation and Racism', June 7-12, 2020,*