



MEDITATIONS FOR LENT by Father Robbie Low

SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY Luke 5: 27-32

There is a great difference between righteousness and self-righteousness. Jesus is frequently irritated by and contemptuously dismissive of the latter. In today's Gospel we see Him cosying up to a ragbag of sinners, swindlers, reprobates and social outcasts and the (self) righteous are duly appalled at His obvious lack of taste and, more importantly, His failure to discern.

He is dealing with people for whom there is, in the order of things, little hope of salvation. Their sin has cut them off from the means. He is duly criticised by a self-appointed army of those who keep the law, the ritual, the outward signs of holiness but have no time for the lost souls, contact with whom would make them ritually unclean. Yet the very nature of the Gospel, the Good News, is that it is for the lost, the detached, the sin-sick, the alienated, those who have been exiled from Eden. The good news is that it is for you and me and any who recognise, in Jesus, the doctor of the soul.

In the Ordinarate liturgy there is a beautiful prayer which leads into Communion. It is called the Prayer of Humble Access and it reads thus, 'We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy: Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us.'

'Non sum dignus' writ large. So we approach in humility and the priest approaches too, not in his own righteousness which is, as St Paul reminds us, no better than 'filthy rags', but clothed in the Alb, the white garment which

symbolises the righteousness of Christ. Only thus can we approach the altar of the sacrifice and participate in the banquet of eternal life.

Spiritual exercise: Pray that prayer(above) substituting 'I' for 'We'