

# Companions IN PRAYER



Sisters of St. Clare  
Saginaw, MI

## *Who am I?*

As I think about this Sunday's Gospel passage from Luke 7:36—8:3, about a sinful woman who washed Jesus feet with her hair at a Pharisee's dinner party, I found myself thinking, "This gospel makes me wonder who I am. Am I the Pharisee or am I the sinful woman?"

As I thought about it, I believe that most of the time I am the Pharisee. I diligently live out my faith. I even joined a religious community to help me perform all the liturgies of the Church at the right time and in the right way. Like Simon in our gospel account, I feel quite confident in my role.

But in those moments when I am more honest with myself, I know that often while I may be following all the right rules of my faith, I can easily overlook, as Simon did, the great commandment of love. I cover my failures up. I perform my religious tasks for all to see. However, in our gospel for today, Jesus asks us to be honest with ourselves. Who are we?

In our text for today, Jesus uses a real event to shock Simon out of his arrogance. Simon, a Pharisee, prides himself on performing the commands of the law correctly. However, in this encounter with Jesus, Simon slips up. It is the sinful woman who comes to the dinner party and offers Jesus the care and attention that were Simon's responsibility. When Simon gets upset that Jesus is allowing this sinful woman to care for him, Jesus speaks up.

"Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has

bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love."

It is important to note that Jesus does not say that Simon is wrong to follow the law. But Jesus is upset that Simon is not following the law of love. Jesus is upset that Simon has broken the law of love and does not recognize it. The words of Jesus remind us that we must ask ourselves again and again not just whether we are keeping the law, but whether we are honest with ourselves about how faithful we are in keeping the great commandments of love. We must always ask ourselves, "Who am I?"

I believe that our gospel today reminds us that Jesus wanted us never to forget the great commandment that we love each other. It is easy to become like Simon. We all fail at love because we are human. Jesus says that we should recognize our failures and try again. If we look honestly into our hearts and see how we fail in loving, then we can grow in our ability to love. We can avoid being like Simon who does not recognize his own shortcomings. Simon did not ask, "Who am I?" We must always dare to ask ourselves who we are, and whether we are following the commandment of love.

*Sr. Laura and Sisters*

*(Given for a Mission Appeal in Vassar, MI for the Sisters of St. Clare, 2013)*

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