

St Robert Bellarmine SJ | Thursday 17 September 2020

Today is Thursday the 17 September, the feast of St Robert Bellarmine SJ, in the twenty fourth week of Ordinary time.

“My sin not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more, praise the Lord O my soul...” As Salt of the Sound sings ‘It Is Well With My Soul’, enter into the presence of God now, knowing you are a deeply loved sinner...

Today’s reading is from the Gospel of Luke.

Luke 7:36-50

One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee’s house and took his place at the table. And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner.” Jesus spoke up and said to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” “Teacher,” he replied, “Speak.”

“A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?” Simon answered, “I suppose the one for whom he cancelled the greater debt.” And Jesus said to him, “You have judged rightly.” Then turning towards the woman, he said to Simon, “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. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.” Then he said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” And he said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

‘Her sins, which were many, have been forgiven.’ Imagine these words spoken of you. How does it make you feel? Do you recognise yourself described like that?

Jesus paints a picture here of a righteous person – or a self-righteous person – who loves little. Do you recognise yourself there? Does this description fit you, even just a bit?

Listen to the second part of this passage again, as Jesus speaks to this woman and to Simon the Pharisee. Can you imagine yourself as either of these characters? Which one of them do you most identify with?

Jesus makes the connection here between forgiveness and love, between being forgiven a great deal and loving a great deal. Does this make sense to you? Speak to him now about where you can or can’t see that connection in your own life, how you feel about what he says,



how you want to respond...

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.