

Rocca di Papa, 3rd March 1983

“As if I were his or her mother”

“Let among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her” (Jn 8:7). Jesus said this to those who wanted to stone the adulteress.

The central idea in Jesus’ commands is always love. This is why he doesn’t want us Christians to condemn anyone. In fact he says, “Do not judge,” and proclaims, “Blessed are the merciful.” Jesus wants mercy. Nevertheless, from what he says one could conclude that there is someone who could throw the first stone: whoever is without sin.

This is certainly not one of us, we are all sinners. But there is a person who is without sin. And we know who she is: the Mother of God. Could Mary, then, “throw a stone” at someone who erred? Did she ever do such a thing when she was on earth?

We know our Mother. We know what Scripture says about her, what Tradition has handed down to us about her, what the People of God have always thought about her. Mary loves everyone. She is merciful. She is the advocate of the most unfortunate. It is to her that countless Christians have turned, when they have had the impression that God’s justice was upon them. Mary does not throw stones. Quite the contrary, no one except Jesus spreads love the way she does.

Why? Because she is a mother, and mothers only know how to love. It is typical of a mother to love her children as herself, because there’s something of herself in them. ... We too can find something of ourselves in others. For we must see Jesus in ourselves and in every neighbor.

What shall we do?

With each neighbor, at home, at work, or on the street, with the people we talk; with those we speak to over the phone, or for whom we carry out our daily work – with every person we meet these days, we must think: “I must act as if I were his or her mother,” and act accordingly. Mothers are always serving, Mothers always find excuses for their children. Mothers are always full of hope.

“As if I were his or her mother”, this is thought which must be foremost in our minds these days. This must be our resolution, if we want to be sure not to throw stones: and to be Mary’s presence here on earth for everyone we meet.

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