

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Law vs. Jesus' Way Fifth Week of Lent Monday, April 7, 2014 8:15 AM
Dn 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62; Jn 8:1-11 (Will people accept Jesus' way?)

Today we begin Passion Week, and **Jesus' Passion is very well framed by these two stories.** They are both about the Law of Moses.

The Law of Moses was given, according to the story in the Scriptures, to the people to enact justice. **But in the first story the ending is rather bloody.** The text says, "Innocent blood was spared." Yes, innocent blood was spared; but not all blood was spared. And that's the problem with law, and that's the problem with the Law of Moses, and that's the problem Jesus had.

In the second story, again, the Law of Moses is front and center, but **Jesus finds a way to avoid bloodshed. The story ends with forgiveness and with actually new life.** This woman's life is handed back to her. This is redemption. She is liberated. Redemption means liberation actually from slavery. And people can be enslaved by their weaknesses and by their bad choices, which tend to become habits. Redemption frees people from themselves. Now this is **Jesus' whole mission: it is to redeem; it is to save, to restore, to give life, to give a new opportunity to people who have erred, strayed, gone wrong, become wayward.**

The Law doesn't do this. The Law is terminal. The Law ends the life of sinners, insofar as this can be discovered and adjudicated; and that's very fallible, and that's very flawed, and that's very iffy. **So law is not a way of bringing about life and justice and order and prosperity. So Jesus is looking for another way.** That's the meaning of the second story. The question is: **Will people accept his way? That question is what will lead to his Passion.**