

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

In Need of Mercy Fifth Week of Lent Monday, March 23, 2015 8:15 AM
Dn 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62; Jn 8:1-11 (St. Turibius of Mogrovejo, bishop) (Daniel is sent to confront corruption and Jesus is sent to confront righteousness—both real problems.)

Today's readings contrast two different issues. **Daniel is sent to confront corruption and Jesus is sent to confront righteousness.** Those are two different problems, but **they are both real problems.**

In the first case of course the elders are evil and deceitful. In the second case the **scribes and Pharisees** are not evil and they are not deceitful exactly, although they were **ignorant** because in fact the Law of Moses does not command the stoning of the woman caught in adultery. The Law of Moses, **the written Law, commands the stoning of the man who is caught in adultery, not the woman.** Women are not even subject to the Law in Moses. That came later; that is part of the development of Law that took place after the seventh century. So they didn't even know that, and **they didn't distinguish between the true Law of Moses and their interpretation of the Law of Moses.** That's the first problem.

But **Jesus** goes beyond that. He is **there to establish the role of mercy.** He is not about exonerating people. **He is about forgiving** them. And in so doing he shows this crowd that they are just as much in need of mercy as the woman—a lesson we could all take to heart.