

SEPTEMBER 16, 2021  
Memorial of St. Cornelius, Pope & St. Cyprian, Bishop, Martyrs  
Luke 7: 36-50

“LOVE WITHOUT MEASURE”

“According to St. Augustine of Hippo: The measure of love is to love without measure.”<sup>1</sup> We can not measure love, there is no boundaries and must be limitless. This is what the gospel is teaching us today. Simon, a Pharisee, invited Jesus to his house and a woman bringing an alabaster jar of ointment, sitted at the feet of Jesus. She bathed His feet with her tears, wiped it with her hair, anointed and continued kissing his feet. All these things were happening in front of Simon with doubt and negative thoughts about Jesus and the woman. This occasion led Jesus to talk about the two debtors who owned the creditor one with five hundred and the other fifty denarii. The question of Jesus ‘which of them will love him more’ was a simple and ordinary question but with great impact to listeners and Simon answered rightly: ‘the one for whom he cancelled the greater debt.’ For Jesus, love is recognizing not the sin but the person who is willing to accept, and with humility ask for forgiveness through words and deeds. The woman did not uttered any words but her gesture of love, humility and service were proof of her eagerness to received the grace of forgiveness from Jesus. Sometimes it is very hard to say the word ‘sorry’ but we show it through our gesture of love.

“This is a really extraordinary story. To appreciate this one has to enter into it visually and be really present with all one’s senses active. What comes across is the amazing composure and inner security and freedom of Jesus during the whole episode. He shows absolutely no signs of being uncomfortable or embarrassed. He does not pull away or tell the woman to stop what she is doing. Here is this woman, known to be a public sinner, who comes in and weeps over him, wipes his feet with her hair and keeps

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<sup>1</sup> [www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com)

kissing them passionately. The guests are highly disturbed, shocked and probably embarrassed but Jesus remains perfectly at ease. The reason is that he knows what the woman is doing and is not worried about what others might think she is doing. Let us admire his ability to focus totally on the woman and not be self-conscious about the other people around. Can one imagine what a tabloid publication might have made of this scene?! What if something like that were to happen today with a bishop or a priest? Or some other prominent person? How would most clergy – or other public people react in such a situation? Jesus can see that the woman is expressing both sincere repentance and a great affection for Jesus. She is expressing her repentance in the only way that she knows. She is a highly tactile person; it is part of her way of life. To the sexually immature, what she is doing and Jesus' acceptance of it seems at the very least unbecoming and at the worst bordering on the obscene. But Jesus says her sins are now forgiven. It was really the passionate love she was showing which indicated that had won forgiveness. Love and sin are incompatible; they cannot co-exist in the same person. She was loving Jesus so much at that moment that she could not be a sinner. Simon could not see this. His concept of sin was purely legalistic. For Jesus it is relational.”<sup>2</sup>

My brothers and sisters, this is one of the moments we can see how God, in Jesus Christ, always invites, attempts, calls and tries to restore, rehabilitate and not to punish sinners. God always gives us second chances, actually many chances, not only once but many times. His desire for us is that we may be made healthy, whole and live through inner peace and harmony through His love and mercy.

Let us ask the intercession of the martyrs Sts. Cornelius and Cyprian, who amidst persecution, they continuously serve the Church and the people with love and forgiveness. St. Cornelius wrote to St. Cyprian: “My very dear brother, we have heard of the glorious

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<sup>2</sup> [livingspace.sacredspace.ie](http://livingspace.sacredspace.ie)

witness given by your courageous faith. On learning of the honor you had won by your witness, we were filled with such joy that we felt ourselves sharers and companions in your praiseworthy achievements. After all, we have the same Church, the same mind, the same unbroken harmony. God's merciful design has warned us that the day of our own struggle, our own contest, is at hand. By that shared love which binds us close together, we are doing all we can to exhort our congregation, to give ourselves unceasingly to fastings, vigils and prayers in common. These are the heavenly weapons which give us the strength to stand firm and endure; they are the spiritual defenses, the God-given armaments that protect us. Let us then remember one another, united in mind and heart. Let us pray without ceasing, you for us, we for you; by the love we share we shall thus relieve the strain of these great trials."<sup>3</sup>

My brothers and sisters, let us pray for one another that we may be faithful to our Lord, pour out our lives in His service, for the glory of God and salvation of souls like Sts. Cornelius and Cyprian.

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<sup>3</sup> [fatherkevinestabrook.blogspot.com](http://fatherkevinestabrook.blogspot.com)