

DON'T TAKE ANYONE AWAY FROM JESUS

According to Luke, Simon, a Pharisee, was very interested in having Jesus at home and invited him for a meal. Probably, he was curious about this Galilean, as he was getting quite famous among the common people who were already considering him a prophet. Jesus, as usual, accepts his invitation: the *Good News* will always be announced to everyone.

During the meal, something unusual happened. A prostitute, who had a bad name in town, came in the hall and threw herself at the feet of Jesus and burst out in tears. She was evidently showing her gratitude for being so compassionate towards people like her who were otherwise hated by everyone else. To everyone's surprise, she began to kiss and wipe Jesus' feet with her tears, and she anointed them with costly perfume.

Simon the Pharisee watched everything in horror. A public woman, a sinner, was touching Jesus in his own home. He couldn't believe what he saw: how could this man, presumed to be a prophet of God, accept such behaviour? That woman had to be taken away from Jesus.

Jesus, however, allowed the woman to wipe and kiss his feet. She needed Him more than anyone at the time. Jesus, with special understanding, spoke about God's forgiveness, and then invited her to search within her heart the faith that would save her in the future. Jesus told her: "Your sins are forgiven...Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

All the gospels speak of Jesus' welcome and understanding of people who are excluded or ignored by the religious majority: they are kept away from God's temple and blessings: public women, tax collectors and lepers. Jesus' declaration, of course, sounds scandalous: such people are God's special friends. The reason for such love is just one: they are most in need of support, dignity and love.

A day will come when all of us will have to examine, in the light of Jesus' life and deeds, which should our attitude be, within the Christian community, towards certain kinds of people, such as prostitutes, homosexuals, lesbians: we choose to ignore their problems and difficulties as if they did not exist at all.

There are a few questions that we ought to put: where can those people find the same welcome Jesus showed to them? Who can talk to them about God the way Jesus did? How can they learn from us to live their sexual orientation in a responsible and humane way? Can they share their faith in Jesus with anyone, in peace and dignity? Can anyone deny Jesus' true care and concern for those who are excluded by most religions?

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Gospel Network THE GOOD NEWS
Spread Jesus love for those who are socially displaced.
Pass it on

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Luke 7, 36-8, 3