



Mercy MOMENTS.

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The Name of God is Mercy

In Pope Francis' latest book, *The Name of God is Mercy* he uses the story of the woman caught in adultery to illustrate the nature of mercy through the actions of Jesus. In this extract from the book's preface, Andrea Torielli summarises a homily given by Pope Francis in 2014.

The woman, Pope Francis went on to note in his homily, did not claim to be a victim of false accusations, she did not defend herself by saying "I didn't commit adultery". No, she acknowledged her 'sin' and answered Jesus by saying, "No one condemned me, Lord." And so Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and from now on do not sin anymore."

Therefore Francis concluded, Jesus forgives. But here there is something more than forgiveness. Because as a confessor Jesus goes beyond the law. In fact, the law stated that she must be punished ... Christ ... does not say that adultery is not a sin,

but he does not condemn her with the law. This is the mystery of the mercy of Jesus.

Mercy, Pope Francis said is difficult to understand: it does not erase sins. What erases sins is God's forgiveness. But mercy is the way in which God forgives. Jesus ... defends sinners from their enemies; he defends the sinner from a just condemnation.

This Pope Francis added, also applies to us ... how many of us would deserve to be condemned! And it would be just! But he forgives. How? With mercy, which does not erase the sin; only God's forgiveness erases it, while mercy goes further. It is like the sky: we look at the sky when it is full of stars, but when the sun comes out in the morning, with all its light, we don't see the stars anymore. That is what God's mercy is like: a great light of love and tenderness because God forgives not with a decree, but with a caress.

Source: Pope Francis: *The Name of God is Mercy*, 2016. (pp xv - xvii).

REFLECTION

The name of Pope Francis' book, *The Name of God is Mercy* invites us to see mercy as a divine attribute.

> How does this align with your understanding of mercy?

The story of the woman caught in adultery places Jesus in a position of choosing between the woman and the law she has broken. It was intended by the Pharisees as a test.

> Have you ever faced a situation like this where the rules demand one response and care of the person another?