

Is there constant chatter in your head? Do you know what people confess most often? Being judgmental! And so you see you are in good company!

The men, yes I said men, the Scribes and the Pharisees in today's Gospel are into being judgmental bit time. Even as you hear this Gospel, don't you smell something rotten? a trap? Well, Jesus catches them at their own game. They want to kill this woman. But maybe their sin is the bigger one. More than anything they want to trap Jesus.

But what do we do about our judgementalness? Why are we judgemental? Where does it get us? What good does it do us? Well, if we're not feeling too good about ourselves we can think "Well at least I'm better than that character: But does this work? No, it just brings us a notch lower. It separates us from other people.

But I can't help it. How can I get it under control? How can I change this dreadful habit?

There was a Jesuit priest from India, Anthony De Mello, who was very gifted, a spiritual director and writer. His advice was, "Don't change. Be aware and you will change."

None of us want to be a hypocrite. Yet being judgmental can turn us into hypocrites.

But how do we become aware? It takes great determination. We have to learn to quiet our minds. We have to learn to pray in a new way. A good way to start is to find a quiet place and set aside a period of time. Remember how often Jesus went up in the mountains to pray.

Begin by simply listening to your breathing. Very possibly your thoughts will want to gallop like wildhorses, but persevere. Just return to your breathing. It is so relaxing and if you make the intention to be present to God you are praying!

The men in today's Gospel were in a horrible trap. They were so self-righteous. We can be free but we've got to be aware of the presence of God within us; to be aware of how deeply God loves us, that God longs to free us from our judgementalness, from all our sins.

Then maybe we won't throw any more stones. Then we will recognize, be aware of God's love and goodness in ourselves and in our neighbor and in the sinner woman.

And you can eat the Eucharist with deep joy!