

In the auto industry, there are all sorts of service manuals. You trace your way through a flow chart ... if this, then that, if that, then this ... you trace your way through a bunch of either-or questions until you were told to replace one thing or another.

Then you would try again, and see if whatever was wrong was fixed. And if not, you try something else.

Of course, the book didn't always cover every situation. In fact, it couldn't cover every possible situation. In those cases, you needed to 'think outside the box.' Some people are good at it - other people just lock up and keep turning pages, looking for an answer.

Some people just had a knack for finding out what was wrong and fixing it. Others would have everything taken apart and not know where to go next.

In the Gospel, we hear of the scribes and Pharisees who bring a woman accused of adultery to Jesus for Him to judge. They think they're pretty clever. You see, if Jesus doesn't condemn her ... then he's in contradiction to the Books of the Law. But if he does condemn her ... then he's in conflict with the Roman authorities who reserved judgment in death penalty cases to the Roman governor.

The scribes and Pharisees try to put Jesus in a lose-lose situation so that no matter what side he takes, he's in trouble with somebody.

But Jesus turns the table on them with:

*Let the one among you who is without sin
be the first to throw a stone at her.*

Sort of like saying "you go first" ... and one-by-one they realize that if they stay, they'll be trapped in their own trap.

Instead of getting boxed in by the trap laid for Him by the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus operates 'outside the box' and turn the trap back on them.

In the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, the Lord says:

*Remember not the events of the past,
the things of long ago consider not;
see, I am doing something new!*

In other words, God is trying to get the Israelites to ‘think outside the box’ in terms of their own situation ... and to move beyond their past. Saint Paul, in his Letter to the Philippians goes so far as to refer to everything as a loss and rubbish - with the sole exception of:

the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

What does this mean for us?

Oftentimes we feel trapped by our own past situations or by the rules or at least our own perception or misunderstanding of the rules. There is ONE THING that we must shift our focus onto ... namely the “*supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus [as our] Lord.*”

When we maintain our focus on personal knowledge of Jesus Christ, we find ourselves freed from any of the traps of our past ... and able to move outside of our prior limitations.

We need to allow God into our lives so that He can do ‘*something new*’ in us and with us and for us.

Next week is Palm Sunday — we are getting very close to the end of the Lenten season. Let us renew our resolutions and persevere in our Lenten practices.

And, as we approach this altar to receive the sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ - let us focus on the ONE THING that we need ... the ‘*supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus*’ our Lord ... and as we pray for a deeper knowledge of Jesus Christ in our lives ... let us receive the graces that will work a ‘new thing’ within us ... so that we, too, can operate ‘outside of the box’ of our past ... ‘outside of the traps’ of our shortcomings and sins.

So that we can move forward into the Easter Season as the children of God the Father, renewed and redeemed in Christ Jesus, and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.