



### Lenten Reflection for Saturday, March 26th

Larissa Shaterian

You can listen to the reading and reflection by clicking [here](#).

#### Luke 18:9 - 14

*He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."*

I find myself tempted to read this passage with the same binary mindset that the Pharisee measures his world with. It's a lens where A being true means that B is false. It's easy to enter into this mindset because we are taught to see the world in binaries from when we are small. However, my experience has taught me that gender is beyond boy and girl, that race is much more than Black and white. There are never only two solutions to a question—the world is much more complicated than that!

We all, usually during the course of one day, will ignore or bypass the image of God in ourselves or in creation and, during the course of the same day, will repair hurt places in souls and in the world.

In this time of the middle of Lent—of *this* Lent, where sometimes I have kept my disciplines well and other times I have skipped them because I am overwhelmed and exhausted—in *this* time, I am called to read this passage knowing that I am both the Pharisee and the tax collector. There are times when I indulge in binary thinking—like the Pharisee—, when the sweet sweet whisper of an easy answer overwhelms my thoughts. And I usually despair in those times, because neither answer affirms our full selves, our full creaturehood in

God's Creation. There are also times when I recognize myself for who I am: a child of God, born into a specific context, trying my best.



*Larisa (la-REESE-uh, like La Reese's Pieces) Shaterian is a postulant from the Diocese of California. She is a first year Masters of Divinity student from Union Theological Seminary! Before then, she was working as a tutor in the Bay Area and finishing up an MA in Folklore from UC Berkeley. She loves to garden, see theater, and spend time with her friends. The mothers and she have agreed that she will be [one of] the seminarians working at Holy Apostles next year. She is really looking forward to this! In the meantime, she is attending Holy Apostles as regularly as she can muster to worship, be in community, and to get to know you all.*