

Third Sunday of Lent: The Samaritan Woman at the Well March 12 2023

Acknowledgment of Land, Seas, Skies and Waterways

We acknowledge the First Nations peoples as the first inhabitants of the nation and the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. We pay our respect to the Elders past, present, and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of First Nations peoples across the nation. We acknowledge the deep spiritual attachment and relationship of First Nations peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

Context- Third Sunday of Lent

The next stop on our Lenten spiritual pilgrimage is Jacob's Well in Sychar. Here we find Jesus in the middle of the day where he encounters a Samaritan woman. In biblical times, the well is a hive of community activity as it sustains all who live in the area. Traditionally, women would collect water first thing in the morning, therefore, it is an odd time of the day for the woman to be at the well when she encounters Jesus. The woman is a social outcast, an imperfect human. Jesus does not care for these particulars as he engages with her, he does not require perfection. As we sit at the well with Jesus, may we too remember that we do not need to be perfect to be able to enter into conversation with our Lord.



Figure 1 Church painting. Photograph. Britannica ImageQuest, Encyclopædia Britannica, 25 May 2016.

Scripture: Matthew 17: 1-9

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

The water that I shall give will turn into a spring of eternal life.

⁵ On the way he came to the Samaritan town called Sychar near the land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.⁶ Jacob's well was there and Jesus, tired by the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Give me something to drink.'⁸ His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, 'You are a Jew. How is it that you ask me, a Samaritan, for something to drink?' -- Jews, of course, do not associate with Samaritans.¹⁰ Jesus replied to her: If you only knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me something to drink,' you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water.¹¹ 'You have no bucket, sir,' she answered, 'and the well is deep: how do you get this living water?'¹² Are you a greater man than our father Jacob, who gave us this well and drank from it himself with his sons and his cattle?¹³ Jesus replied: Whoever drinks this water will be thirsty again;¹⁴ but no one who drinks the water that I shall give will ever be thirsty again: the water that I shall give will become a spring of water within, welling up for eternal life.¹⁵ 'Sir,' said the woman, 'give me some of that water, so that I may never be thirsty or come here again to draw water.'¹⁶ 'Go and call your husband,' said Jesus to her, 'and come back here.'¹⁷ The woman answered, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right to say, "I have no husband";¹⁸ for although you have had five, the one you now have is not your husband. You spoke the truth there.'¹⁹ 'I see you are a prophet, sir,' said the woman.²⁰ 'Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, though you say that Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.'²¹ Jesus said: Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.²² You worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know; for salvation comes from the Jews.²³ But the hour is coming -- indeed is already here -- when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth: that is the kind of worshipper the Father seeks.²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship must worship in spirit and truth.²⁵ The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah -- that is, Christ -- is coming; and when he comes he will explain everything.'²⁶ Jesus said, 'That is who I am, I who speak to you.'²⁷ At this point his disciples returned and were surprised to find him speaking to a woman, though none of them asked, 'What do you want from her?' or, 'What are you talking to her about?'²⁸ The woman put down her water jar and hurried back to the town to tell the people,²⁹ 'Come and see a man who has told me everything I have done; could this be the Christ?'³⁰ This brought people out of the town and they made their way towards him.³¹ Meanwhile, the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, do have something to eat',³² but he



Figure 2 Rome, Catacomb via Dino Comp., Samaritan. Photo. Britannica ImageQuest, Encyclopædia Britannica, 25 May 2016. quest.eb.com/search/109_237377/1/109_237377/cite. Accessed 13 Mar 2023.

said, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.'³³ So the disciples said to one another, 'Has someone brought him food?'³⁴ But Jesus said: My food is to do the will of the one who sent me, and to complete his work.³⁵ Do you not have a saying: Four months and then the harvest? Well, I tell you, look around you, look at the fields; already they are white, ready for harvest!³⁶ Already the reaper is being paid his wages, already he is bringing in the grain for eternal life, so that sower and reaper can rejoice together.³⁷ For here the proverb holds true: one sows, another reaps;³⁸ I sent you to reap a harvest you have not laboured for. Others have laboured for it; and you have come into the rewards of their labour.³⁹ Many Samaritans of that town believed in him on the strength of the woman's words of testimony, 'He told me everything I have done.'⁴⁰ So, when the Samaritans came up to him, they begged him to stay with them. He stayed for two days, and⁴¹ many more came to believe on the strength of the words he spoke to them;⁴² and they said to the woman, 'Now we believe no longer because of what you told us; we have heard him ourselves and we know that he is indeed the Saviour of the world.'

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Reflection by Kirby Will Project Officer Identity and Outreach.

Each year, Evangelisation Brisbane releases a compilation of daily reflections for Lent. In this year's compilation the title used for the Third Sunday in Lent is *Receiving the Light*. When I first read that, I was slightly confused because the gospel reading is about Jesus and his conversation with the woman at the well - nothing about light! The reflection also mentions that in both Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholic traditions the woman at the well has a name-Photine or Photini- and is well-revered. I was intrigued to learn more about Photine as her name means luminous one and clearly ties in with the name of the reflection. The more I pondered *receiving the light*, the more it came to make sense. Whilst there is no explicit mention of light in the passage, the entire encounter itself is a light-receiving moment for Photine. Through her interaction with Jesus and taking up his invitation to drink of the water he has to offer, she received the Light of Christ. She then goes out and shares this light with others in the community. The important lessons for us in this encounter are that there are no requirements to be a recipient of the Light of Christ and we must share the light with others; Jesus did not care for the woman's lack of social status or for social conventions, he only cared for sharing the heavenly reality of the Kingdom of God with her and then her response to go and share with others.



Jesus and the Samaritan Woman-Jorge Cocco

Prayer *From Ashes to Hope: Daily reflections for Lent and the Easter Octave. Evangelisation Brisbane.*

Lord Jesus, I give thanks for each encounter with you and for transforming my life with your loving presence. I pray that like the Samaritan woman, I may come to know your hope, courage and compassion and experience your light and living waters. Help me to respond in service to be your hands and feet, eyes and ears and voice for you in the world.

Amen

Call to Action:

- Have a discussion as a family about the ways in which you could share the Light of Christ with others.
- After reading the Gospel, have your children complete the [3rd Sunday in Lent](#) sheet
- Use this Loyola Press [resource](#) to guide your family reflection.
- Explore this [list](#) and consider how you could be of service in your community.

