

## SPIRITUALITY

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

cf. John 4:42, 15

Lord, you are truly the Savior of the world;  
give me living water, that I may never thirst again.

### Gospel John 4:5-42; L28A

Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon.

A woman of Samaria came to draw water.

Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink."

His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.

The Samaritan woman said to him, "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?"

—For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.

Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

The woman said to him, "Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water?"

Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself with his children and his flocks?"

see reverse side

~~Continued in Appendix A, p. 271, or~~

John 4:5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-42 in Appendix A, p. 272.



### Reflecting on the Gospel

Though we are in Cycle A, the Gospel of Matthew, the Third Sunday of Lent (as well as the Fourth and the Fifth) bring us readings from the Gospel of John, marking the "scrutiny Sundays." These gospel readings precede the "scrutinies" (examinations) of adult catechumens and candidates that take place after the homily. Even when the scrutinies take place in Cycle B or Cycle C, the readings from the Gospel of John are used. (See "About Liturgy" for more on the scrutinies.) The stories from the Gospel of John that make up the three

scrutiny Sundays are the woman at the well, the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus from the dead. In each story there are those who gradually come to believe in Jesus. The titles used for Jesus are significant in each.

Today we accompany Jesus as he meets the woman at the well. The setting is the Samaritan town of Sychar (Shechem), noteworthy because of its association with the patriarch Jacob (Gen 33:18; 48:22; Josh 24:32), though the Old Testament never mentions the well of Jacob. Samaritans were not considered by Judeans to be truly Jewish, as they worshipped not at the temple (which was in Judea) but at Shechem ("on this mountain"). Jesus tells the woman that there will come a time (considered fulfilled at the time of the writing of the Gospel of John) "when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth." No longer will

it matter whether one is at a particular place for worship.

The woman recognizes that Jesus is a prophet, and Jesus himself eventually reveals to her that he is the Messiah, the Christ. Even so, she does not initially refer to him with that title herself. Instead, she goes back to her townspeople claiming that she met someone who could be the Christ. Because of her word, many of the townspeople believed in him. After Jesus stayed with them for some time, many more came to believe in him, hearing him for themselves. They then claim to know that "he is the savior of the world." Though this is a common term in Luke and Paul, this is the only instance of Jesus being called "Savior" during his public ministry in the Gospel of John.

Thus we have a gradual coming to faith in the encounter at the well. The woman recognizes Jesus as a prophet and senses he could even be the Christ. She immediately evangelizes, spreads the good news to her townspeople. Some come to believe on her word alone, but more come to believe upon hearing Jesus for themselves. Such an encounter leads them to proclaim him as "Savior." Certainly, much more could be said about this multivalent reading, but for the scrutiny Sundays, it seems appropriate to focus on the experience of coming to faith in Jesus.

### Living the Paschal Mystery

Each of us came to faith through someone else. Each of us can recall hearing about Christ from another person who likely meant something to us. The woman at the well shared her experience with the townspeople. Many believed upon hearing, and many more heard for themselves and believed. Even the process of believing or, rather, coming to faith is gradual. Terms like "prophet"

**Third Sunday of Lent, March 15, 2020**

**Gospel (cont.)**

or John 4:5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-42; L28A

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near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.  
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Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well.  
It was about noon.

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Jesus said to her,

"Give me a drink."

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The Samaritan woman said to him,

"How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?"

—For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.—

Jesus answered and said to her,

"If you knew the gift of God  
and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,'  
you would have asked him  
and he would have given you living water."

The woman said to him,

"Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep;  
where then can you get this living water?"

Are you greater than our father Jacob,

who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself  
with his children and his flocks?"

Jesus answered and said to her,

"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again;  
but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst;  
the water I shall give will become in him  
a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

The woman said to him,

"Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty  
or have to keep coming here to draw water."

"I can see that you are a prophet.

Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain;

but you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem."

Jesus said to her,

"Believe me, woman, the hour is coming  
when you will worship the Father  
neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.

You people worship what you do not understand;

we worship what we understand,  
because salvation is from the Jews.

But the hour is coming, and is now here,

when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth;  
and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him.

God is Spirit, and those who worship him  
must worship in Spirit and truth."

The woman said to him,

"I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Christ;  
when he comes, he will tell us everything."

Jesus said to her,

"I am he, the one speaking with you."

Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in him.

When the Samaritans came to him,

they invited him to stay with them;  
and he stayed there two days.

Many more began to believe in him because of his word,

and they said to the woman,

"We no longer believe because of your word;  
for we have heard for ourselves,

and we know that this is truly the savior of the world."