

My dear friends, today is the third Sunday of Lent and due to the scrutiny of the catechumens the readings are taken from Year A instead of the normal year B readings. The Gospel reading focuses on Jesus Christ as "*the living Water*" The Third Sunday of Lent presents the long Gospel account of the meeting of Jesus with the Samaritan Woman at a well. In the Gospel, Jesus invites the woman to come to faith in him. Biblical scholars have suggested that the woman is an image of **faithlessness**—that of Jews, Samaria, and indeed all of us trying to quench our craving on something other than the "**living water**". When Jesus encountered the woman, He broke the normal practice of Jews and asks her, a Samaritan, for water. A conversation follows between the two which seems to have a lot of give and take. Jesus transformed the woman at the well because He was concerned about her. He wanted her to be the best person she could be. She heard His message screaming to her in her heart. She determined to change her life and then wanted to shout out to the world that she had had an experience of the Messiah "*can this be the Messiah*" (John 4:29)?

The Samaritans saw that the woman had changed, and that she was happy for the first time. They wanted a share in this happiness themselves and thought that she must be right in what she was saying about this Jew. Then they experienced Jesus. Now the woman became secondary to them. Jesus was all that mattered. They allowed the Word of God to change their lives. They believed and followed, not because of what the woman had said about Jesus, but because they had heard for themselves, "**we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world**" (Jn.4:42).

In fact, God had a plan for her and the people of Samaria (John 4:5-42). It seemed just like any other day. She was coming to the well on her own instead of with the women of the town, probably because she may have felt excluded due to her sinful past. There she met Jesus and he knew everything about her, about her past and her marriages. In the mind of Jesus, he was leading her *to faith*. Instead of the water of her plans, *Jesus offered himself as the water to sustain* her. Jesus uncovered her past so that what was sinful could be healed. She came to the well bringing a water-jar but *she found much more than water*, so she left her jar by the well and hurried back to the townspeople whom she had been avoiding, to tell them that she may have found **the Messiah**. Just as the Jews in the desert in the first reading are a warning to us, the woman of Samaria is an example to us. By sheer grace, like her, we have heard Jesus offer us the *living water*. Jesus knows all about us, even what we do not want to face. Yet, Jesus wants to give us a new identity in himself, to transform us. Let us avail ourselves for the grace of Lent, and do something for our salvation.

My dear brothers and sisters, I wish to conclude that Jesus asking the Samaritan woman for a drink (John 4:7), this thirst of Jesus is *symbolic*; it was for her faith that Jesus thirsted. So during the conversation Jesus gradually helped the gift of faith to grow in her heart. We see the woman's faith growing by the way she addresses Jesus; "...*I perceive that you are a prophet*" (Jn.4:19)? The titles she gives to Jesus show more and more respect and faith as their conversation progresses. Jesus thirsted for the woman's faith and awoke the love of the God in her heart. *Jesus thirsts for our faith* and wants to awaken the love of the God ever more in our hearts. This shows that we need more of Jesus in our lives. Having Jesus in the center of our lives makes our whole life better because he will give us the living water for our souls. Every day is better with Jesus in the center. Let us do our best to put Jesus in the center of our lives and worship the Father in **spirit and truth**, so that He will give us the living water to quench our thirst on earth and in heaven He will grant us beatific vision to see Him face to face. Amen!