

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

March 15, 2020

Third Sunday of Lent

Exodus 17:3–7 † Romans 5:1–2, 5–8 † John 4:5–42



Reflection by: Dyann Brown, OPA

Today's gospel recounts the story of the Samaritan woman's encounter with Jesus Christ at the well of Jacob. Her belief and practice prohibited involvement in any exchanges or activity with a Jew. As the woman approached the well to draw water, she meets a tired, thirsty Jesus who asks her to give Him drink. A dialogue ensues. She is alarmed by his boldness to ignore ethnic or tribal boundaries. He tells her that drinking water from the well will cause one only to be thirsty again. However, by drinking living water, one "...will never thirst... because the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." She becomes further convinced that He is divine not only by his knowledge of her previous legal and current common-law habitation, but also by His proclamation that "the hour is coming." Christ proclaims we will no longer worship God at a specific site—such as in the mountains or in Jerusalem in order to be faithful; instead, we can worship God in spirit and truth.

This story was stirring when I first learned it as a child in the West Indies. I learned the significance of living water as the life-giving grace Christians sought to achieve versus the organic element needed for basic human survival. We need the living water of faith in order to be a child of God.

The story continues to stir me today because one simple gesture *towards* another, *for* another, can transform long-held truths and actions that hinder rather than progress. How relatable this story is for our times—ecologically, civilly and socially. Millions worldwide lack access to drinking water while millions more revel and waste it. How can we save water now and for future generations?

A gesture in spirit and truth reflects charity towards others and ourselves. It can be easier to give to others and not to ourselves. Also, can we accept the charity of a lending hand from those we consider strangers (or strange) because they do not look like us—in ethnicity or at our social level? Do we fear them or are we emboldened by Christ's example to ignore prescribed boundaries?

Blessings for Lent in Spirit and Truth