



SUNDAY GOSPEL

Thirsting for the Water of Life

John 4:5-7, 9-11, 13-29, 40-42

Jesus came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that 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 have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'

Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I have no husband".' The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me the hour is coming when you will worship neither on this

mountain nor in Jerusalem. The hour is coming when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming.' 'When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.' Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.'

Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, 'Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?'

So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.' ■

GOSPEL REFLECTION

Pope Francis

Today's Gospel presents Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman. She found Jesus seated, "wearied as he was with his journey". He immediately says to her: "Give me a drink". In this way he overcomes the barriers of hostility that existed between Jews and Samaritans and breaks the mould of prejudice against women. This simple request from Jesus is the start of a frank dialogue, through which he enters with great delicacy into the interior world of a person to whom, according to social norms, he should not have spoken. But Jesus does! Jesus is not afraid.

When Jesus sees a person he goes ahead, because he loves. He loves us all. He never hesitates before a person out of prejudice. Jesus sets her own situation before her, not by judging her but by making

her feel worthy, acknowledged, and thus arousing in her the desire to go beyond the daily routine.

The outcome of that encounter by the well was the woman's transformation: "the woman left her water jar" and ran to the city to tell people about her extraordinary experience. She was excited. She had gone to draw water, but she found another kind of water, the living water of mercy from which gushes forth eternal life. She runs to the village, that village which had judged her, condemned her and rejected her, and she announces that she has met the Messiah: the one who has changed her life.

Every encounter with Jesus changes our lives, always. It is a step forward, a step closer to God. And thus every encounter with Jesus changes our life. It is always, always this way.

In this Gospel passage we likewise find the impetus to "leave behind our water jar", the symbol of everything that is seemingly important, but loses all its value

before the "love of God". We all have one, or more than one! I ask you, and myself: "What is your interior water jar, the one that weighs you down, that distances you from God?" Let us set it aside a little and with our hearts; let us hear the voice of Jesus offering us another kind of water, another water that brings us close to the Lord.

We are called like the Samaritan woman, to witness to our brothers and sisters. To witness to the joy of the encounter with Jesus; for, as I said, every encounter with Jesus changes our life, and every encounter with Jesus also fills us with joy, the joy that comes from within. And so we must tell of the marvellous things the Lord can do in our hearts when we have the courage to set aside our own water jar. ■

TALKING POINTS

1. In the words of Pope Francis, 'What is your interior water jar, the one that weighs you down, that distances you from God?' How do the things that seem important in the day-to-day grind become completely secondary when faced with the things of God?
2. Discuss the challenges of 'setting aside our water jar', our other important things, and focussing on living with God. How can you shift your day-to-day focus to remember the importance of God's love for you?

PRAYER POINTS

Pray for each other: Ask about and pray for the needs of the group members. Individuals might pray for themselves or ask someone else to pray for them.

Reflect: Spend some time asking Jesus to help you to set aside your 'water jar' and be completely focused on him.

Response: *We have heard and we believe; we know that You are the Saviour of the World.*

Closing Prayer: Loving God, we know that your Son Jesus is our Saviour and our hope. Remind us day after day of the need to set aside other things, because He is calling us to Him.

