

### GOSPEL

*John 4:5-15, 19-26, 39-42 (Shorter form)*

Jesus came to the Samaritan town called Sychar, near the land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well is there and Jesus, tired by the journey, sat straight down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman 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, 'What? You are a Jew and you ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?' – Jews, in fact, do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus replied:

'If you only knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you:  
Give me a drink,  
you would have been the one to ask,  
and he would have given you living water.'

'You have no bucket, sir,' she answered 'and the well is deep: how could you get this living water? 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?' Jesus replied:

'Whoever drinks this water  
will get thirsty again:  
but anyone who drinks the water that I shall give  
will never be thirsty again:  
the water that I shall give  
will turn into a spring inside him, welling up to  
eternal life.'

'Sir,' said the woman, 'give me some of that water, so that I may never get thirsty and never have to come here again to draw water. I see you are a prophet, sir. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, while you say that Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.' Jesus said:

'Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know; for salvation comes from the Jews. But the hour will come – in fact it is here already – when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth: that is the kind of worshipper

the Father wants.

God is spirit,  
and those who worship  
must worship in spirit and truth.'

The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah – that is, Christ – is coming; and when he comes he will tell us everything.' 'I who am speaking to you,' said Jesus 'I am he.'

Many Samaritans of that town had believed in him on the strength of the woman's testimony, so, when the Samaritans came up to him, they begged him to stay with them. He stayed for two days, and when he spoke to them many more came to believe; and they said to the woman, 'Now we no longer believe because of what you told us; we have heard him ourselves and we know that he really is the saviour of the world.'

### REFLECTION OF POPE LEO XIV

*8 March 2026*

Since the first centuries of the Church's history, the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, the healing of the man born blind and the resurrection of Lazarus illuminate the path of those who, at Easter, will receive Baptism and begin a new life. These great Gospel passages, which we read beginning this Sunday, are intended for the catechumens to help them on their journey to become Christians. At the same time, these passages are heard once again by the entire community of believers to help them to be more authentic and joyful Christians.

Indeed, Jesus is the response to our thirst. As he suggested to the Samaritan woman, the encounter with him stirs in the depths of each person "a spring of water gushing up to eternal life" ( Jn 4:14). How many people in the entire world are searching even today for this spiritual spring! "Sometimes I am there too," writes the young Etty Hillesum in her diary. "But more often stones and grit block the well, and God is buried beneath. Then he must be dug out again." [1] Dear friends, there is no energy better spent than that dedicated to freeing our heart. For this reason, Lent is a gift: we are starting the third week and now we are able to intensify the journey!

It is also written in the Gospel that: “His disciples came [and] they were astonished that he was speaking with a woman” (Jn 4:27). They are reluctant to accept his mission as their own, so the Master has to prompt them: “Do you not say, ‘Four months more, then comes the harvest’? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting” (Jn 4:35). The Lord still says to his Church: “Lift up your eyes and recognize God’s surprises!” In the fields, four months prior to the harvest, one sees practically nothing. But there, where we see nothing, grace is already at work and its fruits are ready to be gathered. The harvest is great: perhaps the workers are few because they are distracted by other activities. Jesus, on the other hand, is attentive. According to custom, he ought to have simply ignored that Samaritan woman; instead, Jesus speaks with her, listens to her, and shows her respect – without a hidden agenda and without disdain.

How many people seek in the Church this same sensitivity, this availability! And how beautiful it is when we lose track of time in order to give attention to the person we are encountering, as we see in this passage. Jesus was so spiritually nourished by God’s desire to reach people on the deepest levels that he even forgot to eat (cf. Jn 4:34). Thus, the Samaritan woman becomes the first of many female evangelizers. Because of her testimony, many from her village of despised and rejected people came to meet Jesus, and also in them faith bubbled forth like pure water.

Sisters and brothers, today let us ask Mary, Mother of the Church, to be able to serve, with Jesus and like Jesus, those men and women thirsting for truth and justice. This is not the time for opposition between one church and another, between “us” and “them”: those who worship God seek to be men and women of peace, who worship him in Spirit and in truth (cf. Jn 4:23-24).

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/Homily?



**Head:** What strikes you about the way Jesus speaks with the Samaritan woman – especially his willingness to stop, listen, and give his full attention to someone others would have ignored?



**Heart:** When I encounter people in my daily life, do I truly give them my attention, or am I usually distracted, hurried, or already thinking about the next thing?



**Hands:** Who might God be inviting me to slow down for this week – someone to listen to, notice, or accompany with the same attentiveness that Jesus shows at the well?

## PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. “Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray”)
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others’ prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the ‘Glory Be’.