



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square

Third Sunday of Lent, 19 March 2017

Multimedia

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

The Gospel for this Third Sunday of Lent presents Jesus' dialogue with the Samaritan woman (cf. Jn 4:5-42). The encounter takes place as Jesus is crossing Samaria, a region between Judea and Galilee inhabited by people whom the Hebrews despised, considering them schismatic and heretical. But this very population would be one of the first to adhere to the Christian preaching of the Apostles. While the disciples go into the village to buy food, Jesus stays near a well and asks a woman for a drink; she had come there to draw water. From this request a dialogue begins. "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?". Jesus responded: If you knew who I am, and the gift I have for you, you would have asked me for and I would have given you "living water", a water that satisfies all thirst and becomes a boundless spring in the heart of those who drink it (cf. vv. 9-14).

Going to the well to draw water is burdensome and tedious; it would be lovely to have a gushing spring available! But Jesus speaks of a different water. When the woman realizes that the man she is speaking with is a prophet, she confides in him her own life and asks him religious questions. Her thirst for affection and a full life had not been satisfied by the five husbands she had had, but instead, she had experienced disappointment and deceit. Thus, the woman was struck by the great respect Jesus had for her, and when he actually spoke to her of true faith as the relationship with God the Father "in spirit and truth", she realized that this man could be the Messiah, and Jesus does something extremely rare — he confirms it: "I who speak to you am he" (v. 26). He says he is the Messiah to a woman who had such a disordered life.

Dear brothers and sisters, the water that gives eternal life was poured into our hearts on the day of our Baptism; then God transformed and filled us with his grace. But we may have forgotten this great gift that we received, or reduced it to a merely official statistic; and perhaps we seek “wells” whose water does not quench our thirst. When we forget the true water, we go in search of wells that do not have clean water. Thus this Gospel passage actually concerns us! Not just the Samaritan woman, but us. Jesus speaks to us as he does to the Samaritan woman. Of course, we already know him, but perhaps we have not yet encountered him personally. We know who Jesus is, but perhaps we have not countered him personally, spoken with him, and we still have not recognized him as our Saviour. This Season of Lent is a good occasion to draw near to him, to counter him in prayer in a heart-to-heart dialogue; to speak with him, to listen to him. It is a good occasion to see his face in the face of a suffering brother or sister. In this way we can renew in ourselves the grace of Baptism, quench our thirst at the wellspring of the Word of God and of his Holy Spirit; and in this way, also discover the joy of becoming artisans of reconciliation and instruments of peace in daily life.

May the Virgin Mary help us to draw constantly from grace, from the water that springs from the rock that is Christ the Saviour, so that we may profess our faith with conviction and joyfully proclaim the wonders of the love of merciful God, the source of all good.

After the Angelus:

Dear brothers and sisters, I wish to assure my closeness to the beloved population of Peru, severely affected by devastating floods. I pray for the victims and for the security forces involved.

Yesterday in Bolzano, Josef Mayr-Nusser, father of a family and representative of Catholic Action, was beatified. He died a martyr because he refused to adhere to nazism out of faith to the Gospel. For his great moral and spiritual standing, he constitutes a model for faithful lay people, especially for fathers, whom today we remember with great affection, even though the liturgical Feast of Saint Joseph is celebrated tomorrow, because today is Sunday. Let us pay our respects to all fathers with a big round of applause. [applause]

I address a cordial greeting to all of you pilgrims from Rome, from Italy and from various countries. I greet the Neocatechumenal communities from Angola and Lithuania; as well as those in charge of the Community of Sant'Egidio in Africa and in Latin America. I greet the Italian faithful from Viterbo, Bolgare, San Benedetto Po, and the students from Torchiarolo.

I wish everyone a happy Sunday. Do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!*

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