

### 3<sup>RD</sup> SUN LENT A MARCH 19, 2017

**1st Reading:** Exodus 17:3-7 [Give us water so that we may drink]

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 95 ["If today you hear God's voice, harden not your hearts."]

**2nd Reading:** Romans 5:1-8 [While we were still sinners, Christ died for us]

**Gospel:** John 4:4-30, 39-42 [The water I give shall become a fountain within you, leaping up to provide eternal life]

**Deacon:** Jesus had to pass through Samaria, & his journey brought him / to a Samaritan town named Sychar / near the plot of land which Jacob / had given to his son Joseph. / This was the site of Jacob's well. / Jesus, tired from his journey, / sat down at the well. / The hour was about noon. / Jesus disciples had gone into the town to buy food. /

When a Samaritan woman / came to draw water, / Jesus said to her,

**Jesus:** "Give me a drink."

**Woman:** "You are a Jew. / How can you ask me, / a Samaritan and a woman, / for a drink?" / You know / that Jews will not even use / the same dishes that Samaritans use.

**Jesus:** "If only you recognized God's gift, and who it is that is asking you for a drink, you would have asked him instead, and he would have given you living water.

**Woman:** "Sir, you do not have a bucket / and this well is deep. / Where do you expect to get this flowing water? /

Surely / you don't pretend to be greater / than our ancestor Jacob, / who gave us this well / and drank from it / with his children and flocks?"

**Jesus:** "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water I give will never be thirsty; no, the water I give shall become a fountain within you, leaping up to provide eternal life."

**Woman:** "Give me this water, sir, / so that I shall not grow thirsty / and have to keep coming here / to draw water."

**Jesus:** "Go, call your husband, and then come back here."

**Woman:** "I have no husband."

**Jesus:** You are right in saying you have no husband! The fact is, you have had 5, & the man you are living with now is not your husband. What you said is true."

**Woman:** "I can see you are a prophet. / Our ancestors / worshiped on this mountain, / but / you people claim / that Jerusalem is the place / where we ought to worship God."

**Jesus:** "Believe me, woman, an hour is coming when you will worship God neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You people worship what you do not understand, while we understand what we worship; after all, salvation is from the Jews. Yet an hour is coming, and is already here, when authentic worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth. Indeed, it is just such worshipers the Father seeks. God is Spirit, and those who worship God must worship in Spirit and truth."

**Woman:** "I know there is a Messiah coming, / the anointed one. / When He comes, / he will tell us everything."

**Jesus:** "I who speak to you am he."

**Deacon:** His disciples, / returning at this point, / were surprised / that Jesus was speaking with a woman. / No one put a question, however, / such as "What do you want of him?" or "Why are you talking with her?" The woman then left her water jar and went off into the town. She said to the people:

**Woman:** "Come and see someone / who told me everything I ever did!" / Could not / this / be the Messiah?"

**Deacon:** With that they set out from town to meet him.

**Peter:** Many Samaritans from that town believed in Jesus on the strength of the woman's word of testimony: "*He told me everything I ever did.*"

**Anna** The result was / that, when these Samaritans came to him, / they begged him to stay with them awhile. / So he stayed there 2 days, / and / through his own spoken word / many more came to faith. / As they told the woman: / "No longer / does our faith / depend on your story. / We have heard for ourselves, / and we know / that this really is / the Savior of the world."

[John 4:4-30, 39-42]



All of us have met Jesus at the well of the Baptismal Font. and once we have been to that **WELL OF BAPTISM**  
~ we no longer have a choice **IF** we will be **evangelists**, **Our only choice is how we will do it**

What does it mean to be an **evangelist**? It is what Jesus said in his first sermon at Nazareth:

You are sent to bring glad tidings to the poor, release to captives ~ to be **witnesses to the Gospel** ~!

In the late 90's, as Assoc Dir of Evangelization for Albany Diocese I had to figure out how to explain what the Pope meant by

'we are **ALL** called to be **evangelists**'

I thought about how I would say it to the 1<sup>st</sup> graders I had taught for many years, & came up with:

– It's to make a **verb** of the **"Good News"**

That's what an **evangelist** is --someone who **"GOODNEWS-ES"** others ~who spreads the Gospel by living the way Jesus did

**The Samaritan Woman is the model evangelist or witness. yet she is never named.**

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Do you know about the unnamed people in John's gospel? like

the Samaritan Woman, the Beloved Disciple, & the Mother of Jesus

**They aren't named because they are meant to be models for each of us.**

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When the Samaritan Woman met Jesus she didn't ignore Him. She talked to him

she asked him why he did what he did – what He meant by what He said.

Here was a Jewish man to whom she was an automatic outcast treating her with respect and dignity.

**She really entered into the experience of being with Jesus & when she heard,**

not **just** with her ears, **what it was Jesus was saying with his words**

**and the way he was interacting and relating with her SHE COULD NOT CONTAIN HERSELF.**

She had to go & tell **everyone she had met a prophet**—someone who had changed **her** way of looking at things.

Right in the middle of her everyday chores — she left her water jar and went off to tell the people.

**The Samaritan Woman is the only one in John's gospel given a preaching mission to a WHOLE GROUP**

***She brought the whole town to Jesus.***

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It was because she dared to share her -interaction with & belief in- Jesus ~with the others ~ that they were able to say,

“No longer, does our faith depend on your story. We have heard for ourselves & know this really is the Savior of the world.”

During this month when we think about the contributions of Women in the present & throughout history —maybe—

it's a good time to reflect on what this woman in our Scriptures has to say to us today, in THIS TIME & in THIS PLACE.

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Do you know anyone who is an **evangelist** like the Samaritan Woman? .....are you .....one of them?

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The message proclaimed in this Gospel story is set to music in this hymn:

♪ In Christ there is no east or west, In him no south or north.  
But one great family bound by love Throughout the whole wide earth. ♪

Jesus shared a drink of water from the same cup as a Samaritan woman, someone his people saw as an enemy. He was proclaiming good news to his world & ours when he did that. To share even a cup of water & conversation is not just about keeping our bodies alive. It is always a kind of ritual which signifies welcome & acceptance.

Prejudice was a reality in the time of Jesus, just as it is real today. Jews looked down on Samaritans, & women were considered to be less important than men. Jesus was far ahead of his own disciples - their reaction to him made that clear.

He was far ahead of his people, the people of Israel, who had left the slavery of Egypt, yet owned slaves themselves. He was far ahead of his time, & even the first century church - a community which accepted slavery as a cultural fact of life. He is far ahead of the church that sponsored crusades & executed dissenters.

He is even far ahead of us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century - when anyone who is perceived as a threat or who disagrees with us can be condemned & considered an enemy.

But at least he has helped us to understand that slavery is not acceptable. It took 19 centuries for the Gospel of Christ to sink in. And slavery has been abolished & outlawed, hasn't it? Yes, it is now illegal in most countries, yet the legacy & consequences of slavery still haunt the world. And what we call human trafficking is really a form of slavery which is still practiced throughout the world & even in our own country.

Of the estimated 27 million slaves existing in our world today, 80% are female & half of the 27 million are children. It was only in 2004 that human trafficking became a felony in NYS, providing support and help for those who are being trafficked.

But what can one person do about something like human trafficking? What can one person do about the LEGAL injustice that exists in our world? What can one person, or a few people do about corporate oppression of the poor, the state of health care, the lack of respect for life at its beginning and end, the lust for war that governments give in to, the destruction of the earth by pollution & fracking?

To paraphrase the great anthropologist, Margaret Mead, the world has never been changed except by one person, or a small group of people who catch fire with the spark of justice or peace or love or truth.



- Moses was 1 person, and he made water come from a rock
- St Paul was 1 person, and he passed on the unconditional love he experienced when Jesus forgave him even though he was persecuting the Church
- the Samaritan Woman was 1 person, and she left her former life when she left that water jar. & they are models of what we are all called to be.

The call of the **Spirit** is a call for each of us & all of us to be **evangelists**.

Francis of Assisi says, "Preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary use words."

**We are all called to be evangelists - to good news each other & the world in our own time.**

Today - at this Eucharist - you will hear words that come from the Scriptures & are a part of every Mass.

Do this in memory of me! — Love one another

Forgive one another

Heal one another

Spread the light to the world to one another

We are all called and empowered to be evangelists — **Our only choice is how we will do it.**

