



Deacon Steve Szmuto's Reflection

3rd Sunday of Lent

Exodus 17: 3-7 Psalm 95: 1-2, 6-9

Romans 5: 1-2, 5-8 John 4: 5-42

For the next several weeks, the Gospel readings are not taken from the Gospel of Matthew, but rather from the Gospel of John. On the fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent, the readings will focus on the miraculous healing of the man born blind and raising of Lazarus from the dead. And while today's reading from the Gospel of John is one of the most powerful revelatory moments, there are no mighty deeds of healings, no miracles, no thunderous signs of nature; rather we learn of a seemingly simple encounter with the woman at the well reveals Jesus as the Messiah merely by the

force of his divine word. For all its subtlety, it is one of the most dramatic passages in the Gospel of John, offering a moment of revelation of Jesus as the Christ to all peoples.

The story begins with a brief stopover in Jesus' journey at Sychar, a town in Samaria. There, a Samaritan woman was drawing water from the well around noon. Jesus commanded the woman to give him a drink. *"How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" –for Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.* This simple gesture, in opposition to the prevailing culture, portended the universality of Jesus' mission. As the conversation continued, Jesus drew the woman into a relationship of faith by the power of his words. In this man from Galilee, there was someone more profound than anything she had ever encountered – one who promised more than the water brought up from the earth. Jesus told her: *"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

As Jesus shared a complete understanding of who and what she was, he continued to teach the woman and she grew in her comprehension of him. *"The woman said to him, 'I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Christ; when he comes he will tell us everything.' Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking with you.'"*

The reality of our relationship with Christ is that, whether we came to the Church as infants or in later stages of our lives, there is a defining moment when we recognize that Christ is the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and that he invites us individually into a loving relationship with him: Before we believe as a faith community, I must believe; conversely, I believe because of Christ, and change our lives because we have chosen to follow him. We are individuals in our discipleship, yet we together make up the Body of Christ that is his Church. There are times when we do not live up to our commission either as individuals or as Church, but that is the nature of our humanity and why we must renew each day our commitment to follow the Lord.

We do not have to become perfect to be his disciples; rather we seek to be disciples so that we might grow in faith, hope and love. In his Letter to the Romans, Saint Paul reminds us: *"God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us."* Through our faith, we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ, we boast in the hope of the glory of God, and through this hope, the love of God is poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

As we continue our journey through Lent, let us recognize that in God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – we may come to the fullness of faith brought through the commemoration of Christ's passion, death and resurrection for our sake. And, like the woman at the well, let us not be afraid to proclaim our faith to those around us. The Lord meets us where we are; we have but to accept him into our hearts.

Deacon Steven Szmuto.