

FAITH @Home

www.waterfordlismore.ie

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Diocese of Waterford & Lismore

Celebrating and supporting faith, hope and love in the heart of the family!



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Year A 3RD SUNDAY OF LENT

"TO THE HEIGHTS" YOUTH EDITION ALSO AVAILABLE

Sunday Mass Readings

FIRST READING:

Exodus 17: 3-7

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalm 94 (95): 1-2, 6-9

SECOND READING:

Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

GOSPEL:

John 4:5-42

"Anyone who drinks the water that I will shall give will never be thirsty again..."



Henryk Siemiradzki, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Hear

Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading. Don't have one? No worries, you can find this week's readings online [here](#).

Check out [this video](#) on the readings for children.

Pray

- In the Gospel today we hear the story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan Woman at the Well.
- What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this piece of Scripture? How do these words resonate with you personally?
- Their encounter is surprising on many levels: Jesus a Jewish man speaking with a Samaritan woman, and one who is an outcast at that. Have you ever been surprised by Jesus? Have you felt His presence in your life at a time you did not expect?
- Is there anything in your heart this Lenten season that you feel you need to bring to Jesus in prayer, and maybe even to confession? Jesus wants to speak to your heart this week in a personal way: find a time and a place where you can allow those encounters to happen.

Talk

In today's Gospel we hear Jesus speaking at length to the Samaritan woman at the well.

- How do we get water in this house? What would life be like if we had to get our water from a well far away? What if we had to walk there? Talk about how this is the situation for many people still in the world today.
- The woman at the well in today's story was there at the hottest time of the day because she wasn't accepted by society, but Jesus accepted her. How did Jesus show her that He loved and accepted her?
- How did meeting Jesus change her life?
- Do we love Jesus as much as this woman and spread His message like she did? How could we do that this week?

Family Challenge!

Jesus is the Living Water - He provides for all our needs: let's remind ourselves of that this week by placing a bowl of Holy Water in a Sacred Space in our homes. We can bless ourselves with the water each day as a reminder of our baptisms and how much Jesus wants to be in a close relationship with us too!

PERSONAL ENCOUNTER

In today's Gospel, the dialogue between Jesus and a woman from Samaria is among the most lengthy and most theological found in Scripture. The most startling aspect of the conversation is that it happens at all. Jesus, an observant Jew of that time, was expected to avoid conversation with women in public. The animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans should have prevented the conversation as well. The woman herself alludes to the break from tradition: "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" Yet Jesus not only converses with the woman, he also asks to share her drinking vessel, an action that makes him unclean according to Jewish law.

The initial conversation between Jesus and the woman is better understood if we consider the importance of water, especially in the climate of Israel. At first, the woman understands Jesus' promise of "living water" in a literal sense: "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." With no running water, the daily trip to the well by the women of the community was of paramount importance. The women of the town would have traveled to the well in the early morning, but this woman came to the well at noon, the hottest time of the day. The timing of her visit is a clear sign that she is an outcast within the Samaritan community. We learn in her conversation with Jesus that she is an outcast because of her "many husbands." Behind the conversation lies the animosity and rivalry between the Jews and the Samaritans. Samaritans shared Jewish ancestry, but Samaritans had intermarried with foreigners when they lived under the rule of the Assyrians. Samaritan religion included worship of Yahweh, but was also influenced by the worship of other gods. When the Jews refused Samaritan help in the building of the Temple at Jerusalem, the Samaritans eventually built a temple for themselves at Mt. Gerizim (the same mountain mentioned by the woman at the well). Like the Jews, the Samaritans believed that a Messiah would come. The high point of the conversation is when Jesus reveals himself to her as the Messiah. His answer to the Samaritan woman's questions about worship is meant to predict a time when worshiping in truth and spirit will become the way to worship.

After the conversation, the Samaritan woman becomes a disciple. Even though she is an outcast and not a Jew, she returns to her town to lead others to Jesus and to wonder whether she has found the Messiah. The Samaritan townspeople return with her to meet Jesus for themselves, and many are said to come to believe in him.

The significance of the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman has many levels. The first is personal: The woman is herself converted to belief in Jesus as Messiah because he knows her sin but speaks with her just the same. The second is social: Having come to know Jesus as the Messiah, the Samaritan woman becomes an evangelist to her own people.

The third level of the story is educational: Jesus uses his encounter with the Samaritan woman to teach his disciples that God's mercy is without limit. The disciples return from their shopping quite confused to find Jesus talking with a Samaritan, and a woman at that! But the conversion of the Samaritan townspeople is a foretaste of the kind of open community that will be created among those who believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

Loyola Press Sunday Connection

CHECK IT OUT: YOUTH 2000









"Youth leading youth to the Heart of the Church!" Youth 2000 is a Catholic youth organisation that organises fantastic faith festivals, retreats, prayer groups and other events for young people aged 16-35 across the island of Ireland, and has been doing so for over thirty years. Check out their upcoming Munster Retreat in St Brendan's College, Killarney, Co. Kerry 24th - 26th March - a gathering of young people from across Ireland for a weekend of inspiring talks and testimonies, fantastic workshops, great music and great people! Donation only. More info on www.youth2000.ie

MUNSTER RETREAT
ST BRENDAN'S COLLEGE
KILLARNEY
24TH-26TH MARCH
Luke 1:28
"Rejoice, so highly favoured, the Lord is with you"
AGE 16-35
DONATION ONLY
www.youth2000.ie



Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did..
John 4:29

HE SEES YOUR HEART

There's a lot going on in this story: think of the context - a Samaritan woman out at the hottest time of the day because she is an outcast in society. Her life choices have been less than ideal, but here is a woman suffering and alone, dejected and weary. Along comes a Jewish man - the very notion that conversation would happen between them in that kind of cultural context was unheard of: Jews hated the Samaritans didn't they? Not to mind a Jewish male speaking to a female like that. There's a lot of symbolic language that the woman struggles to grasp at the beginning, but by the end of the encounter she is transformed. She knows she is accepted, she is loved, she is cherished. She knows she's being called to more. She knows she has met the Messiah (Jesus revealed this to her first). She knows her life will never again be the same, and she is so full of joy and excitement that her witness converts many in her town. What a beautiful encounter: a real heart meets heart moment. And it's not just for her - it's what Jesus wants with each of us: for us to let down our guard because He sees the real us anyway and loves us. He wants your heart and He's not afraid of the mess. This Lent, remove what you need to to make space for that encounter with Him. You won't regret it. Find some time this week to have an honest conversation with Jesus. You might find it easier to write your thoughts on paper. Speak from your heart and allow yourself time to sit in silence and see what kind of living water He wants to offer you too. Write down any thoughts or ideas, or any bible quote or line from a lyric that strikes you... watch out for ways Jesus will try to speak to your heart this week too!



• Jesus and the Outcast Woman at the Well (The Chosen)



• The Well (Casting Crowns)

Check out our *To the Heights Youth Newsletter*



Family Prayer

Jesus, set my heart on fire with a zeal and love for you like the Samaritan Woman at the Well!

Amen



EVENTS

Revive the Wonder: 3 part series on the mystery of the Eucharist Tuesdays 14th, 21st, 28th March in St Oliver's Parish Church, Clonmel at 7.30pm with guest presenter each week followed by time of prayer. More info on www.waterfordlismore.ie

Youth 2000 Munster Retreat: St Brendan's College, Killarney, Co. Kerry March 24th - 26th March for ages 16 - 35. More info on www.youth2000.ie

Family Day at Holy Family Mission, Sunday 26th March 10am - 3pm. Prayer, Talk, Mass, Music, Fun and Games for all the Family! Bring a packed lunch! Booking is essential: email info@holyfamilymission.ie

Arise Family Conference: Tramore, Co. Waterford, April 10th - 13th. Workshops, Guest Speakers, Fun & Activities, Sacrament. For more information check out www.arisefamilyconference.ie

Retreat for Men at Holy Family Mission, April 28 - 30. Main speaker Fr Philip Mulryne OP (former Man Utd player). €250 full board accomm. More info: (052) 6133181 / info@holyfamilymission.ie

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