

Third Sunday of Lent



JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN (ST. John 4:5-42)

“GIVE ME A DRINK”

In writing the story John is anxious to tell us who Jesus is and what he is like. But first he shows us Jesus as the weary traveller who wants to make inroads into people’s lives. No matter who they are. It is Jesus who makes the first move expressing his need for a drink. Thirst knows no boundaries. The woman is taken aback that a Jew no matter how thirsty would bother to ask a Samaritan for a drink. Jesus expects her to be good Samaritan and his expectation confuses her. It has been said “If we take people only as they are, we make them worse; if we treat them as though they were what they ought to be, we steer them in the right direction” (Goethe). Jesus intrigues her by suggesting that if she knew his real identity, she would ask him for living water-she thought he meant flowing water-not the stagnant water found in a cistern. The fact that he has no bucket worries her, but the water Jesus has to give turns into a spring inside people. Jesus is not talking about making the local water authority redundant.

When two people meet for the first time, they can become overwhelmed by the real differences between them. The difference of gender, age, personality, background, religion, education can all contribute to making the encounter short, sharp and hopeless. They might be unable to face each other honestly because the barriers between them seem insurmountable. Nothing will happen unless one of them takes the initiative to overcome the differences between them. And nothing will come of that initiative unless the other person is intrigued into responding.

So, Jesus tells the woman who he is and in telling her he gives her the living water-now she can go home and face her own people. She is one of the first witnesses of John’s Gospel to lead others to Jesus. Her past did not hinder her from being a messenger of Good News. For Jesus did not make her feel small, but helped her to unburden her soul and put her life in order.

MAY THE LIVING WATER PROMISED BY JESUS, FILL US WITH HIS LIFE.