

In this Gospel reading, Jesus and the Samaritan woman seem to be talking about drinking water but it's about more than that. The conversation we overhear is not just about her but very much about us as well.

We do not know the name of the woman in question, maybe because she really stands for all of us in some way. She had several strikes against her. First, she was a Samaritan and there was deep-seated resentment between the Jewish people and the Samaritans that was already centuries old in Jesus' time. Secondly, she was a woman and women were to be silent in the presence of a rabbi. Finally, she was known as a sinner.

The Samaritan woman was a person on the margins of the society in which she lived. Jesus reaches out to her as He does so to us. Jesus knows our past as He knew hers. What interests Him now is our future.

The well was the place where people gathered. In a sense, the church is our well. Here we gather with other Christians and here we too can meet the Lord. Through the liturgy, the Lord speaks the truth of who we are, what we have done with our lives and what we can become if we follow Him.

Finally, there is the water. We all need water. Water is necessary for human life. But, Jesus knew she needed something more than drinking water in her life. He gradually leads her from her need of drinking water to show her the need that she has for a living, flowing, spiritual refreshment which we know as grace or the Holy Spirit. By pursuing the needs of the body, we can forget the very real needs of our soul. Like the Samaritan woman, we too must face the truth about ourselves in an encounter with Jesus Christ, confess our sins and come to know Jesus as Savior in our life.

The time of Lent calls us to be like Moses in the first reading and strike open the rock that blocks the flow of God's grace into our life.

Strike the rock of anger to let in the peace of Christ.

Strike the rock of lust to let in an appreciation of our human dignity.

Strike the rock of envy to let in the grace of gratitude.

Strike the rock of addiction to release the grace of temperance.

Strike the rock of sloth or apathy to reclaim spiritual energy and enthusiasm.

Strike the rock of pride to unleash the grace of honesty.

Strike the rock of greed to discover spiritual wealth in Christ.

Strike that rock through penance and confession, by changing the way we live.

If we do not take the call of Lent to heart, then we can be like someone who is thirsty and reads about water, listens to talks about water, sees beautiful banners about water, hangs pictures at home that show water, collects books about water, sings songs about water, joins discussion groups about water, hears stories about those who have found water until finally one day, he or she dies of thirst. What happened? He or she never drank the water.

Jesus has living water that will bring life to our life.