

SUNDAY THEOSIS #2-58

Good News from the East

By Father John Zeyack

Sunday of the Samaritan Woman (John 4:542)

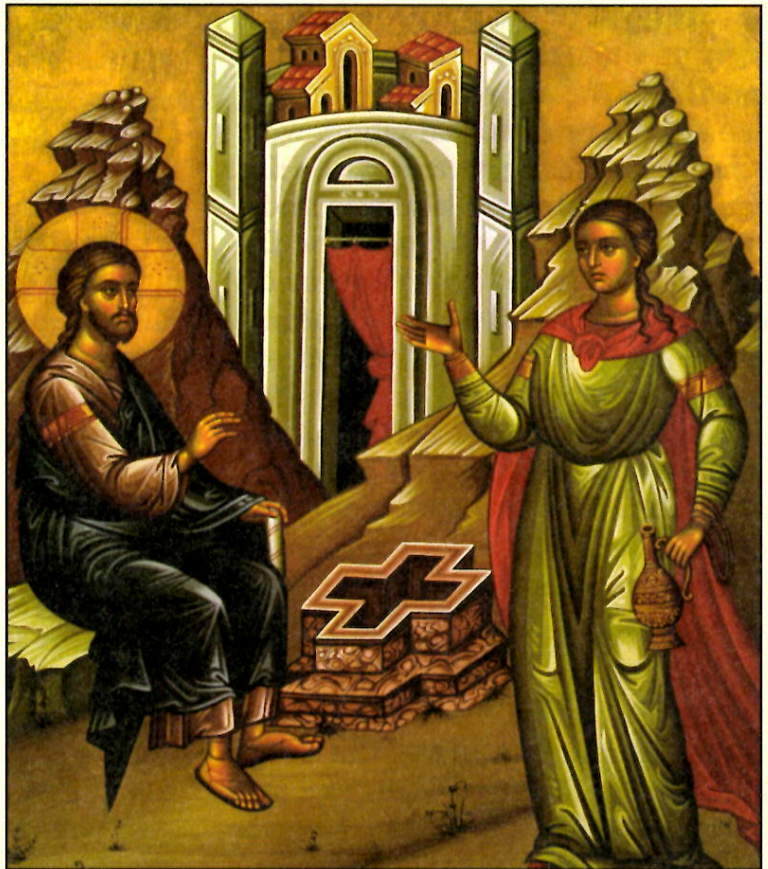
The Woman at the Well

The Gospel reading today takes place at the well. When you live in the desert, water is experienced as essential for life. It's simple, no water equals no life. The well is also the meeting place. It is the place of encounter and engagement. Jesus meets the woman at the well.

The woman at the well comes to draw water. Yet when she leaves, she leaves behind her water jar for she has found something more than water, more life-giving: she has found the source of life. The people, when they come to Jesus at the well, tell the woman after they hear Him speak, "No longer does our faith depend on your story.

We have heard for ourselves and we know that this is really the Savior of the world!"

Jesus is the meeting place for Christians. He has established the New Covenant in His Body and His Blood: "Take this and eat it. This is My Body. Drink of this all of you. This is My Blood of the New Covenant for the remission of sins. Do this in memory of me."



Jesus is the source of faith. He opens up for us and is the gift of Divine Life. It is around this that our faith, our worship, our community, our identity is made as Christians.

The communion hymn for mid-Pentecost on Wednesday says, "He who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood lives in Me and I live in him, says the Lord. Alleluia!"

Our Communion hymn for today says, "Receive the Body of Christ! Drink the source of immortality. Alleluia!"

Our liturgy, our worship identifies Jesus as the well, the source of immortal life, the source of divine life. Jesus is the one around whom we gather and offer ourselves with Him. Jesus is the one who leads us and teaches us, who meets us in the Divine Liturgy. Jesus is our source of faith and hope. At every Eucharist we receive Him into our lives. At every Eucharist we offer ourselves to Him as we receive our Lord and our Savior. At every Eucharist we are united to Christ and one another. The Eucharist is the source of immortality!

Our Holy Father John Paul teaches this faith that we hold as Catholics that the Eucharistic Sacrifice is "the source and summit of the Christian life." It is the lifegiving well. The Eucharist contains the Church's entire spiritual wealth: Jesus Christ, who

offers Himself to the Father for the redemption of the world. Our Holy Father teaches, "The Eucharist is the one sacrifice of the Cross, which is represented until the end of time." The Eucharist fulfills Jesus' command at the Last Supper, "Do this in remembrance of me."

It is with joy today that our parish, the Church here in Rahway, celebrates the First Holy Communion of four of our children. They begin that journey of faith in which we tell those who have taught us, "We no longer believe because of what you have said, it no longer depends on your story." We have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is really the Savior of the World.

Treating Others

In the Gospel Jesus meets a woman at a well (John 4:142). She has had five husbands. Most people have enough to deal with living with just one man or just one woman. But I would like you to hear another story that might help us understand the Gospel a little better.

Once upon a time there was a rich king who had four wives. He loved the fourth wife the most and adorned her with rich robes and treated her to the finest of delicacies. He gave her nothing but the best. He also loved the third wife very much and was always showing her off to neighboring kingdoms. However, he

feared that one day she would leave him for another. He also loved the second wife. She was his confidante and was always kind, considerate and patient with him. Whenever the king faced a problem, he could confide in her, and she would help him get through the difficult times. The king's first wife was a very loyal partner and had made great contributions in maintaining his wealth and Kingdom. However, he did not love the first wife. Although she loved him deeply, he hardly took notice of her!

One day, the king fell ill and he knew his time was short. He thought of his luxurious life and wondered, "I now have four wives with me, but when I die, I'll be alone." Thus, he asked the fourth wife, "I have loved

you the most. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?" "No way!" replied the fourth wife and she walked away without another word. Her answer cut like a sharp knife right into the king's heart. The sad king then asked the third wife, "I have loved you all my life. Now that I am dying, will you follow me and keep me company?" "No!" replied the third wife. "Life is too short! When you die, I'm going to remarry!" His heart sank and turned cold. He then asked the second wife, "I have always turned to you for help and you've always been there for me. When I die, will you follow me and keep me company?" "At the very most, I can only send you to your grave," her answer came like a bolt of lightning, and the king was devas-



tated.

Then a voice called out: "I'll leave with you and follow you no matter where you go." The king looked up, and there was his first wife. She was so skinny as she suffered from malnutrition and neglect. Greatly grieved, the king said, "I should have taken much better care of you when I had the chance!"

In truth, we all have four wives in our lives. Our fourth wife is our body. No matter how much time and effort we lavish in making it look good, it will leave us when we die. Our third wife is our possessions, status and wealth. When we die, it will all go to others. Our second wife is our family and friends. No matter how much they have been there for us, the furthest they can stay by us is up to the grave. And our first wife is our soul, often neglected in pursuit of wealth, power and pleasures of the world.

However, our soul is the only thing that will follow us wherever we go. So we must cultivate, strengthen and cherish it now, for it is the only part of us who will follow us to the throne of God and continue with us throughout Eternity.

I think we have one more. And that is our faith. It opens up to us the reality of God's presence and mercy in our lives. Jesus says, "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" (John 4:14).

This is what our faith offers us – not empty relationships, or unfaithful loves, but the very love of God Himself. And to know God's love is to know our own goodness and fully become ourselves. May we allow the Lord Jesus to be the bridegroom of our souls.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock (Rev. 3:20). I am the way and the truth and the life (John 14:6). I am the vine, you are the branches (John 15:5). Remain in me, as I remain in you (John 15:4). This is the invitation that Jesus gives to the lonely woman at the well. This is the invitation that Jesus gives to each one of us.

For more educational information, visit:

Books: www.ecpubs.com

Media: www.olfoundation.net

StreamingVideo: www.oltv.tv