

## Quotations

1

Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe.

Saint Augustine, 354–430

2

Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.

Martin Luther King, Jr., 1929–1968

## Related topics

*For further study:*

Grace and sin; baptism; social dimension of sin; Jesus the Messiah; reconciliation

## Closing Prayer

O God, living and true,  
look upon your people,  
whose dry and stony hearts are parched with thirst.

Unseal the living water of your Spirit;  
let it become within us an ever-flowing spring,  
leaping up to eternal life.

Thus may we worship you in spirit and in truth  
through Christ, our deliverance and hope,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
holy and mighty God for ever and ever.

Opening prayers · Lent 3, Year A<sup>4</sup>

CPL • LBC Year A Lent 3.odt • 2020-04-07

<sup>4</sup> *Opening prayers : scripture-related collects for the years A, B and C from the sacramentary* / International Commission on English in the Liturgy. – Norwich : Canterbury Press, 1999.

4

# The Third Sunday of Lent

## Principal Service readings

Exodus 17.1-7	Water from the rock
Psalms 95	Come into God's presence with thanksgiving
Romans 5.1-11	Faith guarantees salvation
John 4.5-42	Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well (water of life; true worship; fields ripe for the harvest)

## Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,  
speak to our hearts in the stillness,  
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,  
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;  
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

## Gospel Reading

### *Jesus and the woman at the well*

<sup>3</sup>Jesus came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>4</sup>Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

<sup>7</sup>A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' <sup>8</sup>(His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) <sup>9</sup>The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink," you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' <sup>11</sup>The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?' <sup>12</sup>Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' <sup>13</sup>Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup>but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' <sup>15</sup>The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'

<sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' <sup>17</sup>The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I

have no husband"; <sup>18</sup>for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!' <sup>19</sup>The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup>Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup>You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup>But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. <sup>24</sup>God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.'<sup>25</sup>The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.'<sup>26</sup>Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.'

<sup>27</sup>Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you want?' or, 'Why are you speaking with her?' <sup>28</sup>Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, <sup>29</sup>'Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?' <sup>30</sup>They left the city and were on their way to him.

<sup>31</sup>Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, eat something.'<sup>32</sup>But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.'<sup>33</sup>So the disciples said to one another, 'Surely no one has brought him something to eat?' <sup>34</sup>Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. <sup>35</sup>Do you not say, "Four months more, then comes the harvest"? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. <sup>36</sup>The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup>For here the saying holds true, "One sows and another reaps."<sup>38</sup>I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.'

<sup>39</sup>Many Samaritans from that city believed in Jesus because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I have ever done.'<sup>40</sup>So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. <sup>41</sup>And many more believed because of his word. <sup>42</sup>They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.'

John 4.5-42 NRSV<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> New Revised Standard Version Bible is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

## Comments and Questions

The setting of today's reading is the town of Sychar (or Shechem), which is associated with the patriarch Jacob,<sup>2</sup> though the Old Testament does not actually mention Jacob's well being there. The Samaritans were not considered by Judeans to be truly Jewish, as they worshipped not at Jerusalem but at Shechem – 'this mountain', as the woman called it. Jesus tells here that there will come a time when true worshippers will worship neither at Shechem nor at Jerusalem. This prophecy had perhaps been fulfilled by the time John was written, after the temple in Jerusalem had been destroyed. 'True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth', Jesus says.

The woman recognises that Jesus is a prophet, especially after he reveals to her that she has been married five times and that she is not married to her current partner. Jesus eventually reveals to her that he is the Messiah, but she does not initially call him this. She wants to go back to her fellow townspeople and ask them if this figure could be the Christ. Because of what she says, many townspeople believe in Jesus. After Jesus has stayed with them for some time many come to believe in him, after hearing him for themselves. They then claim that he is 'the saviour of the world'. Though this is a common term for Luke and for Paul, this is the only instance in John's gospel where Jesus is called 'saviour'.<sup>3</sup>

We can discern a growth in faith in the woman, as she recognises Jesus as prophet, then Messiah, then saviour. Coming to faith is a process. It is estimated that it usually takes at least two years. How has your faith grown over time? Can you think of someone who helped in the development of your faith?

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 33.18; 48.22; Joshua 24.32.

<sup>3</sup> *Living liturgy: spirituality, celebration, and catechesis for Sundays and solemnities, year A, 2020* / Brian Schmisek, Katy Beedle Price, Diana Macalintal. – London : Catholic Truth Society, 20189. – p.84.