

**FATHER MARK SCHULTE**  
**HOMILY**  
**THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT (A)**  
**MARCH 8, 2026**

**“High Noon”**

My Brothers and Sisters, on this Third Sunday of Lent, Holy Mother Church presents to us the story of Jesus speaking to the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4:5-42). Jesus and the Samaritan woman are the key figures, and the well is the object they have in common that brings them together. This was an occasion that under ordinary circumstances would be highly unlikely to happen. From a practical perspective it was high noon, the heat of the day. Most people would have likely drawn their water earlier in the morning when it was cooler. But maybe the woman was trying to avoid other people. She was five times divorced and living with a sixth man and for that reason was probably living on the edge of the community and was reluctant to encounter other people at the usual water collecting time.

She was a divorced Samaritan woman, and Jesus was considered to be a Jewish rabbi. Jews and Samaritans didn't ordinarily associate with each other, and a Jewish rabbi would surely be expected not to talk to a Samaritan woman, much less one that was divorced. But Jesus wasn't an ordinary Jewish man confining Himself to local social customs.

The woman presents an opportunity for Jesus to seek the salvation of a soul, for He has come into the world to save all souls, not just the Jews. Through their conversation Jesus wins over the woman's trust. She realizes that Jesus is no ordinary man and considers Him to be a prophet. She can see that Jesus is concerned about her spiritual welfare. Jesus said: "If you were to ask me, I would give you living water, ... water that would quench your thirst permanently". The water that Jesus wants to give is the Holy Spirit, but she is not yet aware of this. In time she rushes back to her friends to tell them about the extraordinary man that she met at the well (CCC 1137).

The image of the well is significant in scripture. Again, from a practical perspective people need water. The well becomes a place of social gathering. A well tends to unite a community under a common purpose. Isaac, Jacob, and Moses all met their future wives at a well (Gn 24:10-20; 29: 10 – 20, Ex 2:15 – 21). All believers have Jesus as their spiritual bridegroom and now the Samaritan woman has met Jesus, her spiritual bridegroom. She introduces Jesus to her family and friends and at their request Jesus remains with them for two days. Many of them will proclaim their faith in Jesus as well.

In the first reading Moses struck the rock and water flowed out of it for the Israelites (Ex 17:3-7). The well itself is a source of life-giving water. Both the rock and the well become a symbol of Jesus who is the source of the Holy Spirit, the life-giving water that brings eternal life to all who partake of it.

Once again it was high noon, the heat of the day. Jesus could have chosen to stay in the shade avoiding anyone who came to the well, but His own thirst, His thirst for souls moved Him past His own discomfort toward the spiritual needs of others, the Samaritan woman and her community.

Spreading the Gospel message is not a work of convenience. We must, like Jesus, take the opportunity when it presents itself. This often calls for a certain sense of self-denial. A postponing of one's own needs for the sake of others. This requires some self-discipline. The season of Lent is a particular time in which we strive to build spiritual self-discipline. Through our prayer and fasting during Lent we discipline our minds and bodies the way an athlete prepares for a race.

We need spiritual nourishment for this arduous task therefore we should go to the well which is Jesus Christ. Receive nourishment from the Holy Eucharist and receive healing from the Sacrament of Confession. In this way you can support yourself by leaning on the spiritual rock Jesus Christ.

Every community has its own proverbial "well" where the people gather. Go there and like Jesus engage others and call them to the life-giving waters of the Holy Spirit. This is the duty of a faithful Apostle which each of us strives to be.

When was the last time you had the opportunity to share the Catholic Faith with someone but failed to do so because it was inconvenient or would have made you uncomfortable?

NOTE: CCC = Catechism of the Catholic Church