

Lent 3 – 2026 Year A

Exodus 17:3-7; Ps 94; Rom 5: 1-2. 5-8; John 4:5-42

A Samaritan woman goes down to the village well to draw a pitcher of water. She does not expect or want to encounter anyone else, after all it is in the middle of the day, it would be wiser to come in the cool of the dawn. This is her first irritation. Her second is that Jesus speaks to her. This is an outrage of decency. Jewish men do not speak to unescorted women. And she is a Samaritan; Jews and Samaritans cannot stand each other. *'Give me a drink'*, Jesus says. Her outrage at this request is evident: Her reply is curt and prickly: *'What, you are a Jew and you ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?'*

Rather than an escalating heated exchange, what develops between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is a dialogue during which the Samaritan woman gradually becomes aware that she might be in the presence of someone who understands her, someone she needs, that she has always needed.

After a few minutes of misunderstanding Jesus makes it clear that what he can offer her a drink, not water from an earthly source, but something spiritually life-giving for a thirsty soul. Unlike water, if she takes this drink, she will not be thirsty again.

*'If you only knew what God is offering
and who it is that is saying to you:*

¹ John 4:10

² where they believe that Abraham bound Isaac to offer his son in sacrifice to God, and where their holy temple is.

³ https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/lent/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19091992_lent-1993.html Accessed 5 March 2026

*Give me a drink, you would have been the one to ask
and he would have given you living water.*¹

Her mockery of Jesus soon evaporates. She starts calling him 'sir' rather than the contemptuous title of 'Jew'. She tries to connect her own Samaritan faith with what he is telling her as he directs her away from her focus on Jacob's well and Mt. Gerizim—the Samaritans' holy mountain - and towards himself.² Her natural scepticism overcome, she becomes excited about what Jesus is telling her and goes to her village declaring that she may have found 'the Messiah'

The Samaritan has responded to Jesus, but the initiative was from Him. It still is. Pope St John Paul the 2nd wrote in his Lenten message to the Church in 1993 *'Look upon Jesus nailed to the Cross, dying, and listen to his faint voice: 'διψῶ' " I thirst" (Jn 19:28).*³ What do these words mean to us?

I have told you the following story before, but it bears repeating..

St Teresa of Calcutta, Mother Teresa - heard those words 'I thirst' repeatedly in the year 1947 in a series of visions, Here encountered Mary at the foot of the cross. From the cross Jesus spoke to Teresa while Mary, standing behind her, rested her hand on her shoulder: *'Will you refuse to do this for Me – to take care of them, to bring them to Me?'*⁴ Jesus was speaking to Teresa about the poor and dispossessed who also surround his cross in her vision. He said: *'I thirst'*. St Teresa heard, and responded by setting out to serve the poorest of the poor in India.⁵ In doing this she gave the Lord drink,

⁴ St Teresa in *'33 Day to Morning Glory'* Day 16 & 17

⁵ See the letter that Pope John Paul II wrote called 'I Thirst'. This gave St Teresa her context. http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/lent/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19091992_lent-1993.html accessed 10/03/2020 : 'I invite you during this Lent to meditate upon the word of life which Christ left to his Church in order to enlighten the journey of each of her

Lent 3 – 2026 Year A

so that his thirst for the salvation of souls might be slaked. Whenever and wherever she encountered destitution or despair, she heard the tortured Jesus say from the cross *'I thirst'*. Those words *'I thirst'* was written on every wall of her missions of Charity. It is why I have put those words on our food bank collection boxes in each Church.

I see the story of the Samaritan woman and the story of Mother Teresa as meetings at the same well. They both have Jesus asking for a drink and there by inviting a response from them. It is demanding a response of recognition so that we yearn to ask Him for a drink ourselves. But more than that, it opens up a course of life that desires to quench the true thirst of the Lord of Life. The Samaritan woman returns to the village to tell her story and send more souls to Jesus. Mother Teresa goes out to feed the poor and forgotten so that Jesus' thirst for compassion and the sharing of his love might be fulfilled.

You who will soon receive 1st Holy Communion; you who are to be soon Baptised, you who are to be confirmed, you are coming here out of a response to Jesus' call. In some way or fashion that we may or may not understand He is asking something of you. He is giving you something of infinite worth from His own self, and then he is going to send you out again, because to each one of us he is saying *'I thirst'*. As a community we all need to remember this again, with the joy of the Samaritan woman, with the conviction of Mother Teresa. Both of these are the cry from the cross and the cry of Resurrection.

members. Recognize the voice of Jesus who speaks to you, especially during this Lenten season, in the Gospel, in the liturgical celebrations, in the exhortations of your pastors. Listen to the voice of Jesus who, tired and thirsty, says to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well: "Give me a drink" (Jn

4:7). Look upon Jesus nailed to the Cross, dying, and listen to his faint voice: "I thirst" (Jn 19:28). Today, Christ repeats his request and relives the torments of his Passion in the poorest of our brothers and sisters.'