

Today we will hear the Gospel of the Samaritan woman, or the woman at the well. If I were to give this story a title, it would be: “**Two strangers find common ground.**”

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John:

Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, “How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?” —For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans. —

Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink, ‘you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself with his children and his flocks?” Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but 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.”

The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water. "I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain; but you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem."

Jesus said to her, "Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You people worship what you do not understand; we worship what we understand, because salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed, the Father seeks such people to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth."

The woman said to him, "I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Christ; when he comes, he will tell us everything." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking with you."

Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in him because of the words of the woman. When the Samaritans came to him, they invited him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. Many more began to believe in him because of his word, and they said to the woman, "We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world." The Gospel of the Lord.

In 2000, five of my brothers and I ran a marathon from Schenectady to Albany. In preparing for the 26.2 miles, we train by doing this 18-mile run. The course began at my parent's village to a village nine miles up the road and then we would turn around and run home. Before we did our practice runs, one of us would drive the car along rural road and stash water along the way. On one hot humid day, we ran to the village nine miles out and began our journey back to my parents' home. We were all shocked to discover all the water we had stashed had disappeared, someone had come along and picked up our water bottles. I remember that day so clearly, thinking to myself "how are we going to make it back without water." We all survived but it was a struggle. That painful experience gave me a better understanding of what real thirst feel like.

Every time I read today's Gospel; I'm reminded of the day when someone took our water. As Jesus is sitting at the well, He was tired, hungry and thirsty after walking most of the day. Years ago, James Brieg wrote a book called the Emotional Jesus. The book suggests that if we don't know the emotions Jesus felt, we don't fully know Jesus. At the well that day, Jesus was experiencing all the emotions we would have had after walking a long distance.

This lonely woman who goes out to get water and meets Jesus, a dusty traveler who must have looked weary from His journey, His sandals and tunic were probable covered in brown dust, there must have been sweat on his brow.

Jesus, the exhausted traveler, asks the woman to draw some delicious well-water for him to drink. She hesitates, for she does not believe that they have anything in common. After all, Jesus was a Jewish man and she was a Samaritan Woman. As she pauses, Jesus tells her that he could give her living water which would quench her thirst forever. The longer these two strangers talk and listened to one another, the more connected they become; they do have things in common.

What is so amazing is that these two strangers were from very different worlds. Jesus was a carpenter, Rabbi, from a small Jewish village of Nazareth. The woman, from the outcast village of Samaria, who had had five husbands.

These two strangers meet along the way and they discover that what they have in common was their common humanity. What connected the woman to Jesus did not come about because she saw a powerful healing or an amazing miracle. The connection came about from an ordinary conversation where both Jesus and the woman were speaking and listening to each other with respect and caring.

This conversation blessed both Jesus and the woman. This woman world is turned upside down; she is one of the first person whom Jesus revealed as the Messiah. She was so captured by the encounter that she cannot wait to let everyone about Jesus.

The woman drops her bucket and returns to the town and was able to convince all the people that she had met and talked to the long-awaited Messiah. The words of Jesus transformed the woman and the words of the woman helped the people to believe in Jesus as the Savior of world.

This powerful story reminded me that what connects us together is our common humanity and when we treat each other with respect and caring great things will happen, especially during ordinary conversations.

The bible states, "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person."

Take some time this week to reflect on how you talk and listen to others. Ask yourself these questions, "Do you value all your conversations no matter who they are with?" "Do you speak words which are affirming and life giving?" "Do you see ordinary dialog as sacred moments?"

Let us pray: please pray after me: "Lord Jesus, you met the woman at the well but didn't treat her as a stranger but as a child of God. Give me the grace to recognize the value of an ordinary conversation. Help me to realize that when I talk and listen to another, it's an opportunity to bring them strength, peace and blessings. Thank you, Lord. Amen and Amen.

We bow our heads and receive God's blessings:

O Lord, touch the hearts of your faithful, and in your kindness give your people the grace to love you and your neighbor, that they may fulfill all of your commands. Through Christ our Lord.

May Almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. MAY MARY OUR LOVING MOTHER, HOLD YOU IN HER TENDER ARMS.