

Homily 2022.03.20 3rd Sunday, in Lent (Year C – but using year A readings)

We use the year A readings for this Sunday and the next two Sundays because we have a Catechumen, Aruna Wijetunge, who is preparing for Adult Baptism at Easter. His first RCIA ‘Scrutiny’ will take place at the 10am Mass today. Please keep him in your prayers.

There is the theme of water in the first reading and Gospel, which is an obvious link to Baptism. But there is another reason why the Gospel of the Samaritan Woman at the Well is chosen for this Sunday when a parish is preparing for adult Baptisms.

The Gospel outlines the complete journey of faith in all its stages:

- A chance encounter, unexpected, unlooked for, unwanted. The sixth hour is midday – the wrong time to fetch and carry water. The woman, with a bad name in the town, was trying to avoid everyone, and she wasn’t pleased to find a Jew lounging about by the well who wanted to talk. Faith always begins by encounter, by a meeting of persons.
- She’s feisty, answers Jesus back, teases him about having no bucket.
- An offer is made: living water, that means you won’t ever get thirsty – she’s interested, *but only in it for what she can get out of it.*
- The reckoning, the uncomfortable truth telling, the examination of life – the five ‘husbands’
- The prophetic voice, and its recognition and acceptance. ‘I see you are a prophet, sir’.
- The questioning, the questions you’ve always wanted to ask but never dared. ‘You Jews say it has to be in Jerusalem, but we Samaritans say it has to be here – what’s this all about?’
- True worship is in Spirit and in Truth
- Recognition and Revelation of who Jesus is: ‘I am He’.
- And then, Mission and Ministry – the Woman puts down her water jar and rushes off to the village to tell the people about Jesus
- She brings them to Jesus
- And then, the last act of a minister (and a parent too) is to step back out of the picture. Having connected the people directly with Jesus, a mediator is no longer needed. ‘Now we longer believe because of what you said, we have seen him ourselves...’

Who then will we encounter as we go forth from this Mass? Will we present something interesting, intriguing to them to arouse their curiosity about Christianity? Will we bring someone to Jesus through our enthusiasm for Him and his prophetic voice in our lives, telling us everything?