

## THE WOMAN AT THE WELL; MARCH 15, 2020

Jesus is in pagan territory. He comes to a well located in Samaria seeking water and a woman of the neighboring village is there. A well is typically a biblical setting for betrothal, which is strange here given the distance that exists between Jesus, a Jew, and the woman, a Samaritan. Being a non-Jew, she would defile Jesus by touching or even serving him. Hence in asking her for water, he is intentionally breaking down the barriers between them. This simple gesture permits him to offer her “living water” - both a baptismal and nuptial symbol which invites her to make a faith response. Amazingly she accepts the proffered gift and her faith is born. Yet before this faith can be further strengthened, work must be done in order to enhance her receptivity. To this end Jesus holds open before her the reality of her idolatrous past, with her prior and current “husbands” representative of Canaanite deities previously worshipped by her.

By demonstrating his knowledge of that which she believed to have been hidden, her eyes are further opened to see Jesus as a prophet. He uses this opening to delve deeper, gifting unto her the Spirit of his Father. It is in this Spirit that she is able to accept Jesus as the Christ. This acceptance, being baptismal in nature, is akin to a spiritual marriage and in this way is the symbol of the well justified. This is the first of three Johannine readings which reveal Jesus as the object and source of our faith. Today he is shown as that living water which cleanses us of sin and opens our hearts to receive him in ever greater fullness as Lord and Savior.