

3 Lent A 2017 SML
JN 4:5-43

After Our Blessed Lord had:

- ✓ cleansed the Temple,
- ✓ worked miracles in Jerusalem,
- ✓ and told Master Nicodemus that He had come to be mounted and lifted up on the Cross just as the serpent was mounted and lifted up in the desert,

Our Lord left Jerusalem, which had rejected Him, and He went to Galilee.

Now, between Galilee in the north and Judea in the south was a strip of land that belonged to the hated Samaritans. Usually, the Jews would travel around this strip of land to avoid the Samaritans, but not Our Blessed Lord. Because He came as the temple for all peoples (cf. IS 56:7), Jesus passed right through the land of the Samaritans. The hour was noon, and Our Blessed Lord was tired from his journey. There, in His weariness, was His Wisdom, as He read the heart of a woman. Two of the greatest converts that Our Blessed Lord ever made, the Syro-Phoenician woman and the Samaritan woman, were made when He was tired. Sometimes when we feel most unfit to do the Father's business, we do it most effectively.

It's noteworthy that Our Blessed Lord was there first.

- ✓ Our Lord found the woman. The woman did not find Him.
- ✓ Our Lord found Zaccheus. Zaccheus did not find Him.
- ✓ Our Lord found Paul. Paul did not find Him.

And what ensued was a long conversation between the two, and a progression of spiritual development which finally ended in her coming to the knowledge of Jesus as Savior. Her imperfect understanding at first sneered at Him, that "You, a Jew" needed her help, when in fact, it was she who needed His.

If you only knew what God gives, and who it is that is asking you for a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.

He presented Himself under the image of water, just as a little later on, when men would ask for bread that nourishes, and He would present Himself under the appearance of bread. Though He spoke of Himself as the Gift of God, the woman only saw him as the weary, travel stained man of another race:

- ✓ She saw the Jew, not the Son of God
- ✓ She saw the weary man, not the One who would give rest to her weary soul
- ✓ She saw the thirsty pilgrim, not the One who would quench her thirst with living water.

Our Blessed Lord, seeing that she failed to comprehend the spiritual lesson, brought home to her why she was not understanding Him. Her life was immoral. He got into her conscience with a rather abrupt turn of conversation.

Go call her husband and come back.

Go . . . come. Go, face the truth of the life you live and then come, and receive the waters of life.

I . . . I have no husband.

Hers was an honest and truthful confession as far as it went; but it didn't go far enough. I don't have a husband because I'm living with my boyfriend. She had asked for living water, but she did not yet know that the well must first be dug. In the depth of her spirit there was potential for His gifts, but the waters of grace could not flow because of the hard rocks of her sin, the many layers of her transgressions, the habits that were formed like clay. These needed to be dug out before she could have living water. Sin had to be confessed before salvation could be obtained. Her conscience bothered her. He knew it and she knew it.

Our Blessed Lord was probing into her morals and behavior, alluding to the fact that she could not receive His gift

because of the way she lived. She then did what millions of people have done ever since when religion demands a change of conduct: she changed the subject. She was willing to make religion a matter of discussion, but she did not want to make it a matter of decision. Our Blessed Lord had brought the discussion full circle to the moral order, namely, the way she had conducted herself personally before God and before her conscience. She was living with her boyfriend. And if living with her boyfriend was no big deal, Our Blessed Lord would never have brought it up in the first place.

When it comes to marriage and family life, these are very, very uncertain times. Statistics show that 80 percent of couples who marry live together before they are married. And if couples do marry, few marry in the Church. We have eight weddings scheduled at St. Mary of the Lakes this year. Eight.

Cohabiting couples might give as their reason that living together will lower their risk of divorce, despite the fact that couples who live together have a 46 percent higher chance of getting divorced. This statistic came to be in our family. The one couple who lived together before they married is now divorced.

When you ask someone who is living with their partner, “On a scale of 0 to 10, what value do you give to marriage in order to live like you are married?” Their answer would have to be 0. We give marriage a value of zero. And that’s why there is a greater chance the marriage will not last. Conversely, if you ask a couple that refuses to live together until they are married, “On a scale of 0 to 10, what value do you give to marriage in order to live like you are married?” They answer would have to be 10. They give marriage a value of 10. Some things are obvious right out of the gate.

There are some who think there’s nothing wrong with cohabitation, living like you are married before you married. If that were the case, then I guess we should just start redlining the Bible. And use a red pen with a lot of ink because 56 places in the Bible speak against the sin of cohabitation. And if there were nothing wrong with cohabitation, then Our Blessed Lord would never have brought it up in the first place.