

The Third Sunday in Lent- 15<sup>th</sup> March 2020

St. John 4 v 5 – 42

#### THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

As we continue through our forty day pilgrimage toward the events of Holy Week and Easter – drawing closer to Jerusalem and to the ascent which leads to Calvary – we pause today, on our journey, at the Well of Jacob – one of the gospel “stations” in Lent as, Sunday by Sunday, we draw closer to Jerusalem. We are following Jesus, and today He is exhausted, and so He takes His rest at the Well of Jacob.

His whole Ministry, His whole Life, is one long journey to Jerusalem. We might reflect that that is true of our own lives - one long journey to “ Jerusalem” – and, of course, the journey to Jerusalem is, for Jesus, the journey to a particular hill in Jerusalem, and to a particular Tree – the Tree of the Cross.

And today, Jesus is exhausted. Though Divine, Jesus lives His Divinity through the weaknesses and limitations of His human nature. “ The Word became Flesh”. God did not pretend to become flesh. He did not just *appear* to be flesh – as though our senses were deceived. God, the Eternal Word, took flesh to Himself and suffered in that flesh. Indeed, He took flesh precisely to offer that Flesh, in sacrifice upon the Cross. So the journey to the Cross begins in eternity! And from the moment of His Conception, each event in the Life of Jesus is a “station” on that journey to the Cross.

And, today, Jesus falls exhausted at the Well of Jacob. He will fall again – approaching the summit of His Sufferings. Then He will need the help of Simon - but today ( at this station ) it is the woman of Samaria of whom He asks for help. Jesus asks her for a drink. He asks her for help. He asks for compassion. In fact, we might say that Jesus is asking for her co-operation, so that in co-operating with grace the woman may become the recipient of grace. Although she does not yet realise it, the woman has a much greater need – a greater thirst – than the One who is asking her for a drink.

In the same way that Jesus “fishes” for ( and captures ) Peter the fisherman – trapping and catching Peter in his own fishing boat! so also, Jesus ( in wanting to meet the deep thirst of this Samaritan woman ) first asks her for a drink. In the same way, Jesus says to each one of us, “ Give me your life”. Why? Because Jesus wants to give *us* life! Jesus cannot mend our lives, or heal our lives, or cleanse our lives – until we first give Him our lives! Jesus asks us to give so that He can bless what we give.

As, during this Lent, we set our faces toward Jerusalem, we pray for a deeper and deeper surrender to Jesus, a greater generosity, a richer and richer experience of Him, the grace to hold nothing back, so that in the total giving of ourselves we may, like the woman at the well, become recipients of divine grace and that this Season of Lent may lead us to Resurrection and a New Pentecost. May the Risen Jesus, seated at the right hand of the Father baptise us in new outpourings of the Holy Spirit, to Whom be glory now and forever. Amen.