

3<sup>rd</sup> Lent

A

3-27-11

So. Does anyone need to hear the Gospel again? Except for Palm Sunday, it's the longest Gospel we will ever hear—and perhaps the most misunderstood. Is this the story of yet another immoral woman whom Jesus forgives? Like the woman caught in adultery, or the gal who cried on Jesus' feet and dried them with her hair, or even Mary Magdalene, whom people wrongly believe to be a prostitute? Ladies, are you a little tired of thee "immoral woman" stories? And now this Samaritan woman, five marriages, five divorces, now living with some dude? The Elizabeth Taylor of her day? Wrong.

It helps to realize that the Samaritan people had worshipped five different false gods, and that even now their faith in God was tainted by false worship.

She meets Jesus at high noon, whereas Nicodemus met Jesus at night, because he was afraid.

It helps to realize that in the OT, marriage partners were found at wells: Isaac's wife Rebecca was found at a well; Jacob met his wife Rachel at a well; Moses met his wife Zipporah at a well.

And now Jesus, the bridegroom, meets the Samaritan people at the most famous well of all. Finally, the Samaritans meet the love they have been looking for five hundred years.

She is the only person in the bible who brings a whole group of people to believe in Jesus.

At this point I want to invite you to attend the Easter Vigil this year. Because on Holy Saturday night, six people will meet Jesus at the water. They and I will climb into the Baptismal Pool, and—like the Samaritan woman—they will meet Jesus at our parish “well.”

Those of us already baptized will feel the water too. At the Vigil and on Easter Sunday, I will sprinkle all of you with water from our “well”—but only after we all renew our baptismal promises.

So we leave the Samaritan woman in peace. We have been unfaithful to Jesus more than she. And we might each ask ourselves this question: does Jesus want to meet me at some well?