

A LITURGY FOR HOME - LENT III

When life's circumstances prevent us from attending Church.

THE OPENING ACCLAMATION & CONFESSION

Leader + Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.

People **God's mercy endures forever.**

Leader Let us confess our sins to God.

Silence

People Have mercy upon us,
most merciful Father;
in your compassion forgive us our sins,
known and unknown,
things done and left undone;
and so uphold us by your Spirit
that we may live and serve you in newness of life,
to the honor and glory of your Name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Leader Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

People **Amen.**

THE OPENING COLLECT

Leader Let us pray
Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

People **Amen.**

A WORD OF SCRIPTURE

Reader A reading from the Gospel of John

Jesus came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would

have given you living water.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.” Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come back.” The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!” The woman said to him, “Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.” Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.” Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?” Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?” They left the city and were on their way to him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, “Rabbi, eat something.” But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” So the disciples said to one another, “Surely no one has brought him something to eat?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, ‘Four months more, then comes the harvest’? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.” Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world.”

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

REFLECTION

- "Jesus seemed to know the entire backstory of this woman. He knew her question about worship location was really a question about freedom, spirit and truth. He knew her faith in the Messiah, in the one to come, was more refined than any of his disciples at that point. He knew she was hopeful, but with hesitation. He knew she was strong, but beginning to waver. He knew her. He knew all of her." *The Rev. Dr. Brian Coulter*
- The meaning of all my life is its capacity of receiving the infinite love of God, and of making the best return I can. Love is not only the source of our being, but the substance also. *George Congreve, SSJE (1835–1918)*
- We need to examine the cups we bring with us to our prayer and to our worship. We need to see if they're already full of our own thoughts—and yes, prejudices. Do we give Jesus any room to fill us with the water that gushes up to eternal life? *The Rev. Susanna Metz*
- Certainly part of what makes this story interesting from beginning to end is the layers of misunderstanding, and to be truthful, one can't blame the Samaritan woman or Jesus' disciples for not 'getting it' the first time through both as Jesus talks about 'living water' and then 'food to eat.' One could not have really blamed either the woman or the disciples if they had walked away shaking their heads. *The Rev. Janet Hunt*

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- ✓ Jesus begins with his own physical thirst and ends up talking about the woman's soul thirst. What can I learn from this conversation about sharing the good news?
- ✓ In speaking with a woman to whom he was not related, and to a Samaritan, who was considered apostate by the Jewish community, Jesus crossed two cultural boundaries. What boundaries do I face in a normal day?
- ✓ In what ways do I identify with the Samaritan woman?
- ✓ Who are the "Samaritans" in our society? What fears do I have about talking with "them" or what prevents me from listening to their story, as Jesus did?
- ✓ How does our society sin against certain people or certain groups? How do I see my individual responsibility in this?
- ✓ What is it that you thirst for?

RESPONSE

Leader With all our heart and mind, we pray to You, O Christ.

Reader We for the mission of the Church, that in faithful witness it may preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth, we pray: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader For the peace of the world, that a spirit of respect and forbearance may grow among nations and peoples, For the poor, the persecuted, the sick, and all who

suffer; for refugees, prisoners, and all who are in danger; that they may be relieved and protected, we pray: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader For all who have commended themselves to our prayers; for our families, friends, and neighbors; that being freed from anxiety, they may live in joy, peace, and health, we pray: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader For all who have died in the communion of your Church, and those whose faith is known to you alone, that, with all the saints, they may have rest in that place where there is no pain or grief, but life eternal, we pray: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader For the prayers and intentions we hold in our heart - **Silence** - we pray: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader Gathering our prayers and praise together, we pray:

People **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Leader O Lord, support us all the day long, until the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in thy mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last.

People **Amen.**

Leader The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore.

People **Amen.**

God of healing and hope, in Jesus you meet us in our places of pain and fear. Look with mercy on those who have contracted the new virus, on any who are vulnerable, and on all who feel in danger. Through this time of global concern, by your Holy Spirit bring out the best not the worst in us. Make us more aware of our interdependence on each other, and of the strength that comes from being one body in you. Through Christ our wounded healer. Amen.

Reverend Sam Wells; St Martins in the Field, London