

John 4:5-42

Jesus enters Samaria en route from Judea to Galilee. Exhausted by the heat, Jesus rests; his disciples go for food (v. 8). Rabbis did not speak to strange women in public and Jews considered Samaritans ritually unclean, so the woman is surprised by Jesus' request (v. 9). Jesus answers her: if you knew that God gives to those who ask ("the gift of God", v. 10) and that I am his agent, you would be the one asking for a drink, "and he would have given you living water". She misunderstands, thinking that he asks for bubbly spring water. (A legend about Jacob: for him water rose to the top of this well and overflowed.) Are you counting on such a miracle, for "you have no bucket" (v. 11). This water was good enough for Jacob, so are you greater than him? Jesus contrasts the well water with "water gushing up to eternal life" (v. 14). (In John, living water is the vehicle of the gift of the Spirit in baptism.) While she still doesn't understand, she at least now asks (v. 15). Vv. 16-18 are difficult, but they do show that Jesus has insight, so he must be "a prophet" (v. 19), and can therefore resolve a religious dispute: the common ancestors of the two peoples worshipped on Mount Gerizim ("this mountain", v. 20) but Jews claim that the only proper worship site is Jerusalem. Jesus replies (v. 21): "the hour" of God's intervention in the world "is coming"; then cultic sites will be irrelevant. Samaritans, by accepting only part of the Bible, denied themselves access to the part of God's end-time plans given through the prophets ("what you do not know", v. 22); "Jews" are at least on the right track. The time is both "coming, and ... now here" (v. 23) to worship God spiritually, discerning "truth", the reality revealed in Jesus. God is "spirit" (v. 24, life-giving power). She decides to wait to understand until the "Messiah" (v. 25) comes, but Jesus tells her: "I am he" (v. 26). In her haste to tell others about this amazing man, she leaves her "water jar" (v. 28) behind. Come, she says, judge for yourselves! Jesus tells his disciples that the food that sustains his life is obeying the Father and completing his task (v. 34). There is no time for delay (v. 35a) for God's harvest, "gathering fruit for eternal life" (v. 36, conversion to Christ) is ready now. Others have already begun to sow, have preached the good news. Meanwhile, after hearing the woman's witness, many hear for themselves and come to belief in Christ. Jesus is "truly the Saviour of the world" (v. 42).

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Visit of Bishop Kenneth

It will be great to see Bishop Kenneth for a visit on Mothering Sunday - 22nd March at the 9.30am Kilnasoolagh service and the 11.30am service at St Columba's, when he will preside and preach. Do come and say hello.

Holy Week and Easter

Please see the poster in church for full details - service times will also be given in the next newsletter.

Prayer Workshop

Postponed - more information to follow.

Martin Sheen movie – 'The Way'.

Venue will either be the Rectory or in church depending on numbers. 7.00pm Friday 3rd April.

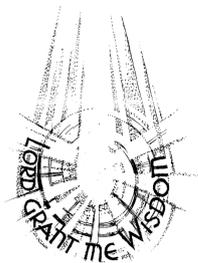
Sunday School at Ennis

It is proving difficult to find a convenient time to meet to discuss the setting up of a Sunday school. I will make contact again with those who signed the 'expressions of interest' sheet to see if we can find a time to meet.

Gluten free

Gluten free bread is available at Communion.

Rector: Email: frkevinobrien@me.com Tel: 065 672 4721



3rd Sunday of Lent (Year A)

Readings and Hymns

Collect

O God, the fountain of life, to a humanity parched with thirst, you offer the living water that springs from the Rock, our Saviour Jesus Christ: stir up within your people the gift of your Spirit, that we may proclaim our faith with freshness and announce with joy the wonder of your love. we ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen**

Hymns

- 1) 643, Be thou my vision (Spanish Point / Kilnasoolagh)
- 1) 322, I bind unto myself today (Ennis)
- 2) 360, Let all the world in every corner sing
- 3) 576, I heard the voice of Jesus say
- 4) 369, Songs of praise the angels sang

Exodus 17: 1-7

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarrelled with Moses, and said, 'Give us water to drink.' Moses said to them, 'Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?' But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?' So Moses cried out to the Lord, 'What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.' The Lord said to Moses, 'Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.' Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarrelled and tested the Lord, saying, 'Is the Lord among us or not?'

Psalm 95 (S01)

- 1 O come let us sing | out · to the | Lord:
let us shout in triumph to the | rock of | our sal | vation.
- 2 Let us come before his | face with | thanksgiving:
and cry | out · to him | joyfully · in | psalms.
- 3 For the Lord is a | great | God:
and a great | king a · bove | all | gods.
- 4 In his hand are the | depths · of the | earth:
and the peaks of the | mountains · are | his | also.
- †5 The sea is his and | he | made it:
his hands | moulded | dry | land.
- 6 Come let us worship and | bow | down:
and kneel be | fore the | Lord our | maker.
- 7 For he is the | Lord our | God:
we are his | people · and the | sheep of · his | pasture.
- 8 Today if only you would | hear his | voice:
'Do not harden your | hearts · as you | did · in the | wilderness.
- 9 'When your | forebears | tested me:
'put me to the proof though | they had | seen my | works.
- 10 'Forty years long I loathed that gener | ation · and | said:
'It is a people who err in their hearts
for they | do not | know my ways.'

11 'Of whom I | swore · in my | wrath:
"they | shall not | enter · my | rest."
Glory to the Father and | to the | Son:
and | to the | Holy | Spirit.
As it was in the be | ginning, is | now:
and shall be for | ever. | A- | men.

Romans 5: 1-11

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

John 4: 5-42

So, 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 worshipped 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 worshippers 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 labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.' 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 for 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 Saviour of the world.'

Post Communion Prayer

Lord our God, you feed us in this life with bread from heaven, the pledge and foreshadowing of future glory. Grant that the working of this sacrament within us may bear fruit in our daily lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Commentary

Exodus 17:1-7

The Israelites travel "by stages" towards the Promised Land. As God showed his power during their slavery, winning their freedom by inflicting ten plagues on the Egyptians, he now tests the Israelites' faith in him, as provider and ruler, ten times. If they trust in him, he will save them. This reading is about one of the tests, but who tests whom? (vv. 2, 7). Earlier, at Marah, the people had water but it was bitter; here, at "Rephidim" (v. 1, an oasis in the Negev or Sinai) there is no water at all; the well has run dry. The Israelites are serious: the Hebrew translated "quarrelled" (v. 2) is a legal term. They bring a case against Moses, but to him, their charge is against God: they doubt that he can feed them, be their god, in this hostile desert environment. As in other tests, God simply grants the people's request, without rebuking them. He orders Moses to take representatives of the people, "some of the elders" (v. 5) to the "rock at Horeb" (v. 6). The elders see his show of power. The parallel with Egypt continues: the "staff" (v. 5) is the same one Moses used to poison the Nile. ("Massah and Meribah", v. 7, come from words for test and quarrel.) In giving manna, bread from heaven, earlier, and now water (from an earthly rock), God shows his mastery over creation.