

From the Pastor's Office

3rd Sunday of Lent

The story of the Woman at the Well is one of my favorite stories about Jesus. I love the pace of it. Time stands still. There is no hurry. Making a connection with this woman is all that matters. Jesus will wait hours if he has to. Meanwhile, the Apostles are here and there trying to find food. Townspeople are going about their business. At the middle of the day, at the hottest, people are taking their siestas. Gradually, the town becomes quieter and quieter. This is the time when the woman comes forth from the shadows. She doesn't want to deal with people. People are cruel. They will gladly hurt you. They will take your most vulnerable part and fire it in your face. We seem to have learned that from childhood. It is not just children. All of us, we can be very cruel. We seek out the vulnerable and the isolated and we condemn them over and over again. We love having dirt on people. Would you blame this woman for being cautious? To make things worse there is a Jewish man sitting by the Well. Jewish society says that it is not proper for a stranger woman to speak to a stranger man. It is not proper for a Samaritan to speak to a Jew. No doubt the Samaritan woman wished that this man would just go away. She has no choice. She has to approach. She needs the water. We imagine the scene of this woman sheepishly approaching the Well. The wild animal comes out of the shadows and comes close. Jesus doesn't make any sudden moves. He just sits and watches. She draws the water. This is an opportunity for Jesus to ask for some water. That makes sense. It is hot outside. He is thirsty. What could be wrong with that? The truth is that Jesus broke the ice. He makes sure that the woman knows very quickly that He is no threat to her. I guess when you spend your days living isolated from your community it must be nice to speak with a nice person. This man knows nothing about this woman. What harm is there in talking for a while? Without knowing it the woman begins to say more. She ends up having a great healing conversation with Jesus. We have all enjoyed those healing conversations where everything seems to get sorted. Everything fits into place. Clarity comes. I find new energy. Jesus sitting at the Well becomes the role model stance for every minister of the Church. People want to talk. Sometimes it takes a while to get going. Sometimes when they do get going they can't stop, they have so much to say. But, that's alright too. All those times I role-modelled Jesus sitting by the Well waiting for the man/woman to come close and trust me. Those were good times. I got more from it than them. What a lovely story.



With love,
Fr. Pat