

Jesus asks for a drink of water at the well in Samaria. In Poland, as millions of refugees pour out of war-torn Ukraine, they are welcomed with bottles of water, food, shelter, and a temporary home. In Russia, the person on the street is stressed over the sanctions that have upended economic stability. “Many Russians have lost their life savings due to the collapse of the ruble, many of them have blamed the West rather than Putin.”¹ Others are not deceived by the propaganda and protest the war begging, “Give me the truth.”

We live in troubling times. As if the threat of another world war is not enough, we are exhausted by the never-ending virus and its new variants. Like the Israelites in the desert, we are prone to grumble as we thirst for a return to normalcy. Where is God amidst all of this turmoil and trouble?

Saint Paul reassures us, “For Christ, while we were still helpless, died at the appointed time for the ungodly. Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person ... But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us” (Rom 5:6-7a, 8). Through his death and resurrection, Jesus offers us the life-giving water of baptism that washes away sin. Jesus endured the troubled life of man, that we might share in the joys of life everlasting. “Whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (Jn 4:14)

The woman at the well teaches us of the saving power of Jesus to make all things new again. She was an outcast in the community. In order to avoid the scorn of her neighbors, she approaches the well when no one should have been there. She has drifted from one relationship to another ... searching for fulfillment but always coming up thirsty ... time after time. She is thirsting for peace in her life.

Jesus asks her for a drink of water. He thirsts for the woman to turn away from sin and she responds. Jesus does not threaten her, instead he liberates her. She leaves her water jar and searches for others. She invites them to experience salvation. “Come see a man who told me everything I have done” (Jn 4:29a). They came, they encountered Christ, and they believed. “We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world” (Jn 4:42).

In one sense, the woman of Samaria represents those who are journeying through Lent to be baptized at the Easter Vigil. They thirst to be cleansed of every sin and indiscretion in life. At the Easter Vigil, the Elect will become new creations in Christ.

In another sense, the Samaritan woman represents all of us who struggle with temptation and make choices that often bring turmoil to our lives. Only Jesus can bring peace. Only God can renew the face of the earth.

We seem to be at a decisive moment in history. Some fear we are on the verge of World War III. Warring parties beg for more arms, rather than the life-giving waters of Jesus. Arms may provide a false sense of security, but they only bring further death and destruction in a futile effort to bring about peace by force. Amidst this death and destruction, the church prays for peace under the mantle of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The church calls to our Mother imploring her Son for the peace we all thirst for.

Mary, Queen of Peace please preserve our world from the madness of war.

Reunite families torn apart. Comfort frightened children.

Console the sick and elderly who suffer alone.

Shield men and women defending their homes.

Change the hearts of leaders to seek peaceful solutions.

Bring harmony to our broken world.

We ask all this through your help and intercession, Most Blessed Mother,

as you lead and direct us each day into greater love for and obedience to your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, intends to consecrate Ukraine and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on Friday, March 25th, the Feast of the Annunciation. In solidarity with our brothers and sisters who are suffering due to violence and aggression, we have been asked to prepare for the consecration by praying a novena for peace.

Lest we think our prayers will have no effect, we should remember Mary's roll in fostering an end to the cold war. On the 25th of March 1984, Saint John Paul II consecrated Russia and the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Mary's Immaculate Heart is pure love. Her "Yes" at the annunciation changed the course of salvation history. She continued to say "Yes" throughout her earthly life remaining free of the stain of personal sin. Mary's Immaculate Heart stood at the foot of the cross as her Son was crucified. As his blood poured forth from the brutality of the cross, Mary said "Yes" again to her new role as Mother of the Church, mother of every warring brother or sister whether they be Ukrainian or Russian.

Humanity thirsts for peace. Humanity thirsts for an end to the insanity of war. Let us earnestly pray for the victims of this war to know the same peace that the woman of Samaria found at the well. "Lord, you are truly the Savior of the world; give [us] living water, that [we] may never thirst again" (Jn 4:42-15).

ⁱ Fox News report.