

March 23, 2014 – 3rd Sunday of Lent – Year A
Taking Steps: Moving Closer to the Lord

The Samaritan woman at the well.

What a powerful reading, re-enactment and sacred dance!

The unnamed Samaritan woman sure had a fateful meeting with the Lord at the well of Jacob.

It started rather awkwardly with Jesus asking her for a drink of water.

Men did not speak with women and Jews did not speak with Samaritans.

Her response was rather cold, formal and distant

— the way you would address a stranger.

She addressed Jesus as "Sir".

"Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep."

That was just step one of a rapid progression in their relationship.

After a few minutes into their conversation the Samaritan woman had a deeper insight about Jesus, took a second step and told him:

"I can see that you are a prophet."

As Jesus continued their conversation the Samaritan woman began wondering even more.

Hesitatingly, she took another step.

"I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Christ."

She then became one of Jesus' first witnesses and went into town to tell everyone about the man she had met at the well.

"Could he possibly be the Christ?"

Jesus stayed there for two days & cleared up the doubts of the people.

"Many began to believe in him because of his word."

What a marvelous progression by the woman and by the other Samaritans.

- Step one: greeting Jesus: Sir

- Step two: recognizing his specialness: Prophet

- Step three: acknowledging Jesus' true identity: Christ, the Messiah

If the Samaritan woman were living today we might call the steps:

- (1) "Hello", "Hi" or "Good morning."
- (2) "Oh!"; when she recognized something special about this person.
- (3) A gasp of "OMG!" (O my God!) would cross her lips as she recognizes that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, our Lord.

Such an experience -- such steps from "Hello" to "OMG!"

Aren't these steps in the lives of each one of us?

We are introduced to the Lord at some point in our lives.

We may be timid at the beginning.

Maybe we start cautiously and we repeat formal prayers we have heard others pray or prayers we have read in a book.

With time and the Lord's blessing, maybe we too can say "Oh" ...

this person Jesus Christ is really someone special,

he heals, he forgives and he is very special in my life.

As we face the altar and recognize God's presence here, in church, on the altar, in the Eucharist,

we can join in the words "OMG" - Oh, my God!

Maybe it brings us to our knees.

Maybe it brings us to tears.

How blessed we are in that step of our progression!

Our daily lives outside this church building also offer opportunities for such a progression.

Perhaps we meet someone accidentally, casually or formally and we say: hello, hi, good morning, pleased to meet you.

Then in our conversation together or thru observation of that person in what they do or say, we come to an appreciation of that person,

"Oh!" - I didn't know that they had that in them!

We see good qualities in them, loving actions and these good qualities are God qualities and loving actions that point us to see and know God's love.

A marvelous step in our progression is when we can recognize that this God-like person is a child of God, made in the image and likeness of God ... and we can say, "OMG!" ... and maybe give them a hug to confirm that.

{Exercise:}

1. Let me give you a moment of silence.
 - a. Think of a time when you encountered someone and came to see some God-like qualities in that person
 - b. No, I don't mean a bishop, priest, deacon, religious sister, or religious brother
 - c. ...
2. Now for a moment of prayer
 - a. pray in silence a thanksgiving for that encounter that opened you to see God in that other person or thru that person.
 - b. ..
3. Sometime soon do as the Samaritan woman did:
 - a. Tell someone else the story of your encounter with that God-like person
 - b. ...

As we attempt to "Dispel the Darkness ... Be the Light" my prayers for you are:

Blessings on your progression with the Lord!

Blessings on your progression with your neighbor!

