

## **Women of the Church**

### **Month 22 Week 1**

#### **The Woman at the Well**

The story of the Woman at the Well is found in John 4:4-42. In this Gospel account, Jesus was traveling from Judea to Galilee. He chose to go through Samaria, rather than around it, as many Jews did, due to discord between Jews and Samaritans. Jesus, weary from traveling stopped at a well (Jacob's well), while his disciples went into the town (Sychar) to obtain food. As he sits at this well, a Samaritan woman comes to draw water. It is said that this woman came to the well at this time of day, when others were already gone, as she is noted to be a woman ostracized from her community due to her lifestyle. Jesus initiates interaction with the woman, by asking her for a drink. This was unusual, as in this culture, men did not typically speak to women, and Jews did not speak to Samaritans. The woman questions Jesus. He does not directly answer her questions, but he continues to interact with her, showing that he knows all about her. He speaks with her about "living water" and about worshipping in Spirit and truth. He then reveals himself to her as the Messiah. The woman leaves her water jar behind and goes quickly into the town to tell others about Jesus. Many of the townspeople then approach Jesus. He stays two days talking with them. This woman, transformed and saved, led others to their salvation through her testimony.

It is said that this woman's encounter with Jesus is the longest between the Messiah and any other individual in the Gospel of John. "The story of the woman at the well is a rich example of love, truth, redemption, and acceptance. And best of all, not only does Jesus accept her, but He accepts us, too. He wants us all in His holy kingdom — if only we, too, believe" (Jessica Brodie). "We should notice too that this conversation has such extraordinary power because it is Christ, the God-man, who speaks. The power of God to move the human heart, and the power of Jesus' words to communicate divine truths, is made manifest through a conversion that is both complete and sudden. For in no other way can we explain how a pagan woman living in sin and enslaved by her carnal desires is moved to confess Jesus as the Christ, as the Savior of the world, after a short conversation. And it is certain that her conversion is not simply a matter of words, for she immediately goes forth to confess Jesus to her people and in this way brings a multitude to salvation" (Fr. Sebastian Walshe).

Although the woman is not named in the Bible, the Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholic traditions celebrate her as a saint, with the name "Photine" (which means "luminous one"). It is said that she brought so many to the faith that she was brought before the emperor Nero to answer for this; she later died as a martyr.

<https://st-ignatius.net/what-was-the-significance-of-the-woman-at-the-well/>

<https://shop.catholic.com/blog/jesus-and-the-woman-at-the-well/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samaritan\\_woman\\_at\\_the\\_well](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samaritan_woman_at_the_well)

**Women of the Church**  
**Month 22 Week 2**  
**The Woman at the Well**  
**Reflections**

Jesus know this woman's life and her sins. Yet he openly accepts and loves her. He makes a point to show her the truths of salvation without judging her. He offers her what she needs for her life to be transformed on the spot.

- Do I believe that Jesus accepts me as I am with my past failures and sins?
- What are my deeper hungers and thirsts which only the Lord can satisfy?
- How can I be transformed right here and now?

Jesus breaks the boundaries of religion and culture and even goes so far as to ask a favor of the Samaritan woman.

- What is attractive about the way Jesus relates with the Samaritan woman?
- How can I break the boundaries of religious and cultural biases so as to accept and learn from others different from me?

<https://www.marquette.edu/faith/reflections-lent-3.php>

The woman's water jar symbolized all the things that had failed to fulfill her in the past.

- What is my "water jar," the thing I look to for satisfaction, value and identity?
- What are the things I use to satisfy myself instead of Christ?
- What would it take for me to believe that Jesus is greater than my water jar?

<https://newspring.cc/devotionals/eveandadam/the-woman-at-the-well>

*Who Does He Say You Are?* Colleen Mitchell

After her encounter with Jesus, the Samaritan woman goes immediately to others in her community (even though she appears to be ostracized from them) to tell them about Jesus the Messiah.

- What made the Samaritan woman so eager to immediately tell others about Jesus?
- How/why was her invitation effective in bringing others to Christ?

*Living as a Confident daughter of God* Patricia Mitchell

**Women of the Church**  
**Month 22 Week 3**  
**1The Woman at the Well**  
**Prayers/Devotions**

--Listen to “Woman at the Well” by Olivia Lane <https://youtu.be/JVfI1b2aK64>

Or read the lyrics at <https://genius.com/Olivia-lane-woman-at-the-well-lyrics>

--“...You have the water I need. You are the life I long for. You are the source from which my freedom flows. And you draw me near and offer yourself to me. I want you, Jesus. I want so badly to be “fixed”, to be saved. I am greedy and insistent, so ready to be done with this life of idols and false ideologies and with lusting after the wrong things. I’m so ready that I want to skip the step that cost me something. I want to run to you and leave it all behind. But I’m still carrying my jar...

I say it today like I am saying it for the first time. I say it with the faith of the woman at the well. I believe that you are the Savior, and I want to worship in Spirit and in truth. Give me the water of life. I will set down my jar and take up my mission, set down my shame and take up my salvation, set aside my sinful ways to walk with you. Lead me, Lord, to new life. Amen”.

(Excerpts from prayer in *Who Does He Say You Are?* By Colleen C. Mitchell)

--Refer to this website for a nice Lenten devotional on the Woman at the Well, by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, which can be used at any time: <https://todayscatholic.org/the-woman-at-the-well/>

## **Women of the Church**

**Month 22 Week 4**

### **The Woman at the Well**

#### **Practical Applications**

--This Gospel story show us that Jesus breaks through cultural, gender, and religious boundaries to offer his love and the gift of salvation. Decide upon at least one way you can serve or help someone else who is “different” or not like you.

--This story also show us how God may transform and use the least likely person to promote His kingdom. Tune into Jesus and how he may be working through others around you. Make it a point to be open to others and to see what is good about them and how God may be working through them. Try to incorporate this as a pattern or habit. Journal your experiences and growth.

--Think of something (an object, symbol, behavior, thought pattern) that may represent your water jug—something that you have hung onto for security or meaning. Determine what you can replace this with in your life—physically, emotionally or spiritually—that will draw you closer to the Lord. Practice “setting down” this thing and replacing it with a better/healthier alternative. Journal about your experience.

--Pope Francis cites the Samaritan woman’s story as evidence that each one of us need to be a missionary disciple. Determine two specific ways that you might evangelize to others in your life. Do it!! Journal about this or discuss your experience with a fellow believer.