

Personal Notes
050227 Third Sunday of Lent 28A
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The question is, Who is faithful enough to worship God? God, himself, helps with the answer. To begin, the Faithful have an idea what the United States Marines mean with their slogan about recruiting a few good people. God puts similar words in the mouth of Jesus when he says in John 4:23, *But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him.*

From these 28A readings for the Third Sunday of Lent, Spirit and truth join in academic and non-academic enterprises. Anyone in any sort of education, for example parent to child, faces the need to prioritize truth over politics, to say what is true rather than what is politically correct. The Father seeks such people, worshipping in Spirit and truth. In the readings, Jesus is referring to the Samaritan woman.

The Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, accepted the truth that she had had five husbands and that the current man with whom she was living was not her husband. But then, what? Jesus reacts to the Samaritan woman with two truths. First, the Samaritans did not know what they were worshipping on their mountain. Samaritans worshipped God on their mountain, rather than in the Jewish city of Jerusalem. Second, it did not matter, because the hour is at hand to worship in Spirit and truth.

After the Samaritan woman heard the voice of Jesus number her husbands, and she accepted that, Jesus went on to let her know that he is the Christ. The first time Jesus says, "I am he," the Messiah,¹ the Christ (John 4:25) does not mean Jesus is changing his name. Not yet. *Christ*, in this sense, was probably used as a common noun, a generalization of what to look for.²

This means that people who do not understand can become worshippers in Spirit and truth, whom the Father seeks. As the final verse, verse 42, relates, *this is truly the savior of the world.*³ Not only the Israelites, but also the whole world is to worship in Spirit and truth.

¹ John Kloppenborg, "An Analysis of the Pre-Pauline Formula 1 Cor 15:3b-5 In Light of Some Recent Literature," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 40, No. 3 (July 1978) 364, 355-356.

² Edwin D. Freed, "Ego Eimi in John 1:20 and 4:25," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 41, No. 2 (April 1979) 288-291.

³ Stanley B. Marrow, "Κοσμος in John," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 1 (January 2002) 97.

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Water symbolism⁴ at the well reaches back into the Exodus readings, where the Israelites grumble against Moses because of thirst. These Israelites were not thirsting for the waters of Baptism, but rather for the waters that gushed forth when Moses struck the rock in Horeb. Scholars have a difficulty identifying either Mount Horeb or Mount Sinai as geographic places and tend to merge the two into one place.

Before taking the courage to strike the rock, Moses burst out in frustration, “*What shall I do with this people? A little more and they will stone me!*” (Exodus 17:4) The question the Israelites asked was “*Is the LORD in our midst or not?*” (Exodus 17:7).

Were the Israelites worthy enough to worship God? Certainly, but eventually, with Jesus, the Faithful would learn that such worthiness comes as a Divine grace, particularly as spelled out in Romans 5:5, *the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*⁵ Worthiness does not come through the law, but through a gift from God.⁶

God’s gifts do come with the sacraments, outward signs instituted by Christ to give grace. God also gives inward signs. God does speak to the Faithful. The Responsorial antiphon answers, *If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts* (Psalm 95:8).⁷

The psalmist reminds the Israelites that they did harden their hearts at Horeb, at the place known as Meribah and Massah, in the desert. In the Gospel, Jesus explains that Spirit and truth keep the heart malleable before the voice of God. Romans explains that the virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity are the gift of the Spirit and truth,⁸ enabling the Faithful to worship God.

⁴ See Dennis M. Sweetland, review of Wai-Yee Ng, [Water Symbolism in John: An Eschatological Interpretation in the Catholic Biblical Quarterly](#), Vol. 65, No. 1 (January 2003), 133-134.

⁵ Joseph Plevnik, S.J., “The Understanding of God at the Basis of Pauline Theology,” [the Catholic Biblical Quarterly](#), Vol. 65, No. 4 (October 2003) 566.

⁶ Brendan Byrne, S.J., “The Problem of Νομος and the Relationship with Judaism in Romans,” [the Catholic Biblical Quarterly](#), Vol. 62, No. 2 (April 2000) 294-295.

⁷ Alan C. Mitchell, S.J., “The Use of *πρεπειν* and Rhetorical Propriety in Hebrews 2:10,” [the Catholic Biblical Quarterly](#), Vol. 54, No. 4 (October 1992) 691.

⁸ Jeremy Corley, “The Pauline Authorship of 1 Corinthians 13,” [the Catholic Biblical Quarterly](#), Vol. 66, No. 2 (April 2004) 261, 271.

Psalm 95:2, coming *into his presence with thanksgiving* implies some things about water found in the omitted verses, 3-5. First, before getting to the water, Psalm 95 was composed during the monarchial period, in praise of the earthly king. With other psalms, Psalm 95 identifies enemies of the king with the primeval enemies of God, God who brought order out of the waters of chaos (cf. Pss 46:3-7; 48:68; Isa 17:12-13). The authority of God rests on creative power over the whole universe, rather than on what he is doing for the psalmist. The throne of God rests upon the subdued waters of chaos (Pss 29:10; 93:1-4).⁹

Scholars argue over whether the Faithful are saved through the Faith Jesus had, or by incorporating into themselves that same Faith. *We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ* (Romans 5:1) is the verse in question. Before that, Romans proclaims, *we have been justified by faith* (Romans 5:1). This verse rests at the basis of the Protestant Revolt, begun by Martin Luther.

Romans means that the worthiness to worship God comes as a gift of grace. *While we were still sinners, Christ died for us* (Romans 5:8). The difficulty is that righteousness in its human dimension risks self-righteousness rather than the righteousness of God.¹⁰

The story of the woman at the well means that the Samaritans were among the first Christians. In a manner similar to John the Baptist, the Samaritan woman announced Jesus, the Christ, to her town, even if by womanly *chatter* as the Greek implies.¹¹ Archaeological evidence indicates that Christian Samaritans built or renovated two synagogues, dating from the Sixth Century. Anything else about early Samaritan theology or lifestyles rests on shaky speculation.¹²

⁹ J. J. M. Roberts, "The Enthronement of Yhwh and David: The Abiding Theological Significance of the Kingship Language of the Psalms," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 4 (October 2002) 677, 679-680.

¹⁰ Vincent M. Smiles, "The Concept of 'Zeal' in Second-Temple Judaism and Paul's 'Critique of It in Romans 10:2,'" the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 64, No. 2 (April 2002) 299.

¹¹ Loren L. Johns and Douglas B. Miller, "The Signs as Witnesses in the Fourth Gospel: Reexamining the Evidence," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 56, No. 3 (July 1994) 523.

¹² Reinhard Pummer, "New Evidence for Samaritan Christianity?" the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 41, No. 1 (January 1979) 117.

The question, who is worthy enough to worship God? must deal with the Samaritans and those like them. The rebellious Israelites and their rebellious kings highlight the need for Spirit and truth, available not only to the Israelites, but to the world as well. The primordial waters of chaos, out of which the Messiah Christ brings the order of Baptismal grace, inspire prayer for Faithful worthiness to worship the Creator.

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Scriptural references to the Lectionary follow. Since the main purpose of these Notes is annotating the scriptural references in the index at www.western-civilization.com, references pertinent, but not fitting the flow imposed above, are included below. I do not assume that the reader is following the readings cited either in the Lectionary or in the Bible. Like the footnotes, the citations are for reference purposes for anyone interested. The large, bold letters facilitate locating exactly what the Lectionary presents for these Notes.

Exodus 17:3-7

A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry (1930-1965) brings a Black dimension to these readings. In the play, the wilderness experience reflects Exodus 15:22—19:3: despair, loss, disbelief, anguish and horror.¹³

Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

The Lectionary uses Psalm 95 at four Sunday liturgies.

Readings	Page in <u>Lectionary</u>	Verses used	Particular Sunday
28A	172	1-2, 6-7, 8-9 (8)	Lent 3 Today
71B	537	1-2, 6-7, 7 -9 (8)	Ordinary 4
127A	813	1-2, 6-7, 8-9 (8)	Ordinary 23
141C	884	1-2, 6-7, 8-9 (8)	Ordinary 27

Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

Romans 5:1-21 softens some of the harshness between there and the other bookend of grace, 8:18-39.¹⁴

¹³ Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan, "Let My People Go! Threads of Exodus in African American Narratives," 137 in Yet with a Steady Beat: Contemporary U.S. Afrocentric Biblical Interpretation, Randall C. Bailey, ed., (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003) 126.

¹⁴ Robert A. J. Gagnon, "Why the 'Weak' at Rome Cannot Be Non-Christian Jews," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 62, No. 1 (January 2000) 73.

Cf. John 4:42, 15

John 4:5-42

Verse 6

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	Jacob's well was there ... at the well
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	ibi fons iacob ... super fontem
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	Jacob's well was there ... on the well
<u>King James</u> (1611):	Jacob's well was there ... on the well
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	Jacob's well is there ... by the well
<u>New American</u> (1970):	Jacob's well was there ... at the well
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	Jacob's well was there ... by the well

Translators may have feared that *on the well* would be taken as *on top of the well*.

Verses 8, 28-30, 39.

Verse 8 may be about the work of women, carrying water. More importantly, the role of women in the ministry of Jesus supplied the financial needs of the disciples (Luke 8:3). Women disciples probably had more disposable income, since male disciples had family obligations.¹⁵

There is nothing improper about the way in which the Samaritan woman spread the news of Jesus at the well.¹⁶

Verse 10

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	living water
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	aquam vivam
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	living water
<u>King James</u> (1611):	living water
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	living water
<u>New American</u> (1970):	living water
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	living water

¹⁵ Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 114.

¹⁶ Richard Bauckham, Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) 292.

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The difference is that cistern water did not move. I was looking for *move* in any translation.

Verse 14

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	a spring of water welling up
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	fons aquae salientis
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	a fountain of water, springing up
<u>King James</u> (1611):	a well of water springing up
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	a spring inside him, welling up
<u>New American</u> (1970):	a spring of water welling up
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	a spring of water welling up

This is a reference to the internal effects of the grace of Baptism, that the Jerusalem translation brings out.

For more on sources see the Appendix file.