No Enemy of God

Jews were forbidden from entering Samaritan territory. When the Assyrians invaded northern Israel in 721 BCE and exiled the Israelites, they brought in foreigners to repopulate the abandoned lands. The descendants of these foreigners who married the remaining Israelites were later called Samaritans.

To the Jews, Samaritans were usurpers of portions of the Promised Land. To step into their towns defiled them. Nonetheless, Jesus instead of walking around their villages wilfully entered them.

Jesus further scandalized his disciples by conversing with a woman by the well. A woman was prohibited from being seen in public with a man, except her husband, brother or father. Jesus disregarded such restrictive norms and initiated a conversation with a woman who was by herself.

Moreover, Jesus confounded his followers by asking for water from the Samaritan woman.

The purity laws of Israel dictated that since the Samaritans were enemies of God, drinking water from their wells contaminated them. Nonetheless, Jesus drank from their well, defiling himself interiorly.

Then Jesus speaks of the living water that he alone offers, “whoever drinks of the water I shall give will never thirst” (Jn. 4:15). The Samaritan woman misunderstands him, thinking that the living water he was referring to was a stream of running waters.

During the dry months, the village wells run dry. The women thus searched for streams from which they could draw clean, running water, which they called living water.

But the living water Jesus offered was the water of salvation which quenched all thirsts. Jesus himself is the water of salvation and to accept the water he offers is to place one’s faith in him.

Jesus sees into the woman’s troubled heart, informing her that she has had five husbands and was not married to her current partner (Jn. 4:19). The woman immediately realizes he is a prophet, is converted and shares with her neighbors the renewal she experiences through her encounter with Jesus.

As we commemorate the Third Sunday of Lent, we name the troubles of our hearts, the disquiet due to our dysfunctions. We come to Jesus who does not distinguish between Jew or Samaritan, virtuous or sinner, man or woman and express to him our yearning for the living waters that satiates all our longings.

As the Samaritan woman encountered God’s inclusive, merciful love in Jesus, we pray we also encounter God’s unconditional love in Christ crucified for whom no one is an enemy of God. We pray that the water that flows from his body be living waters that renew and reconcile us with God and one another.

— Fr. Manoling V. Francisco, SJ

Pastoral Catechesis for the Year of Ecumenism, Interreligious Dialogue, and Indigenous People

Ruptures and Initiatives in Christian Unity

— Fr. James H. Kroeger, MM

A brief glance at the two millennia of Christian history is helpful in appreciating our current reality. In the year 313 the Christian faith and the Church became legally recognized under the Roman Emperor Constantine I. Then, in 380 Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire.

In 1054, the first great division occurred and the Church separated into the Orthodox Church in the East and the Roman Catholic Church in the West. Then in the sixteenth century the Protestant Reformation brought the next great division. Protestantism emerged with several strands: Lutherans, Calvinists, Anglicans, Baptists and numerous other denominations.

Several significant efforts have been made to mitigate and heal these divisions. In 1960 Saint Pope John XXIII established in Rome the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity. On January 6, 1964 Saint Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras of the Orthodox Church met on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem; they prayed together and exchanged the kiss of peace. On October 31, 2016, almost 500 years after Martin Luther’s protest, Pope Francis traveled to Sweden, met with prominent Lutherans, and urged atonement and Christian reconciliation. These are significant steps on the long road to Christian Unity.
THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon
[CF. Ps 25 (24): 15-16]
(Recited when there is no opening song.)

My eyes are always on the Lord, for he rescues my feet from the snare. Turn to me and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor.

Greeting
(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P — The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
All — And with your spirit.

Introduction
(These [or similar] words may be used to address the assembly.)

P — We know from life how precious water is. When we are thirsty, there is nothing like a drink of fresh water. In today’s Gospel, Jesus uses the image of bubbling water to illustrate the eternal life that he is offering us. Jesus alone can satisfy our thirst for meaning, for the divine. May our Eucharistic celebration be a prelude to our participation in the banquet of eternal life.

Penitential Act

P — Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.
(Pause)

All — I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, (strike your breast) through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

P — May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.
All — Amen.

P — Lord, have mercy.
All — Lord, have mercy.

P — Christ, have mercy.
All — Christ, have mercy.

P — Lord, have mercy.
All — Lord, have mercy.

(The Gloria is omitted.)

Collect

P — Let us pray. (Pause)
O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness, who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving have shown us a remedy for sin, look graciously on this confession of our lowliness, that we, who are bowed down by our conscience, may always be lifted up by your mercy.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
All — Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading (Ex 17:3-7) (Sit)
The Lord’s gift of water reminds us of the life-giving water that Jesus speaks of in the Gospel.

A reading from the Book of Exodus

IN THOSE DAYS, in their thirst for water, the people grumbled against Moses, saying, “Why did you ever make us leave Egypt? Was it just to have us die here of thirst with our children and our livestock?” So Moses cried out to the Lord, “What shall I do with this people? A little more and they will stone me!” The Lord answered Moses, “Go over there in front of the people, along with some of the elders of Israel, holding in your hand, as you go, the staff with which you struck the river. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock in Horeb. Strike the rock, and the water will flow from it for the people to drink.” This Moses did, in the presence of the elders of Israel. The place was called Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarrled there and tested the Lord, saying, “Is the Lord in our midst or not?” — The word of the Lord.
All — Thanks be to God.

R — If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Ps. Octubre

Dm

P. Octubre

Dm

1. Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation. Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us joyfully sing psalms to him. (R)

2. Come, let us bow down in worship; let us kneel before the Lord who made us. For he is our God, and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides. (R)

3. Oh, that today you would hear his voice! “Harden not your hearts as at Meribah, in the day of Massah in the desert, where your fathers tempted me; they tested me though they had seen my works.” (R)

Second Reading (Rom 5:1-2, 5-8)
Through Jesus, God pours into our hearts what we thirst for: faith, hope, and the Spirit—the Giver of life.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

BROTHERS and sisters: Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God.

And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the
Holy Spirit who has been given to 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, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.

— The word of the Lord.
All — Thanks be to God.

Verse Before the Gospel
[ Cf. Jn 4:42, 15 ] (Stand)

All — Lord, you are truly the Savior of the world; give me living water, that I may never thirst again.

Gospel (Short form)
(Jn 4:5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-42)

P — A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.
All — Glory to you, O Lord.

JESUS came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon.

A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, “How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?” — For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans. — Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself with his children and his flocks?” Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but 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.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain; but you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem.” Jesus said to her, “Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You people worship what you do not understand; we worship what we understand, because salvation is from the Jews. 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. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth.” The woman said to him, “I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Christ; when he comes, he will tell us everything.” Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking with you.”

Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in him. When the Samaritans came to him, they invited him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. Many more began to believe in him because of his word, and they said to the woman, “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.”

— The Gospel of the Lord.
All — Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (SB)

Profession of Faith (Stand)

All — I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

(At the words that follow, up to and including and became man, all bow.)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P — Let us pray to the Father that our Eucharistic celebration may help us to experience Jesus as the living water. With confidence, we pray:

R — Father, hear us.

C — That our liturgy may be led to acts of loving service, let us pray to the Lord: (R)

C — That people who are searching for meaning in life may find in Jesus, the living water, let us pray to the Lord: (R)

C — That the leaders of the Church may consider doing the will of the Father as their “food” and long to announce the Gospel to the people, let us pray to the Lord: (R)

C — That the faithful departed may enjoy the peace of God’s Kingdom, let us pray to the Lord: (R)
C — Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (pause). We pray. (R)

P — Father, hear the prayers of your people. Send your Spirit and awaken in our hearts adoration, prayer, and thanksgiving.

Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Presentation of the Gifts (Stand)

P — Pray, brethren...

All — May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P — Be pleased, O Lord, with these sacrificial offerings, and grant that we who beseech pardon for our own sins, may take care to forgive our neighbor.

Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

Preface: The Samaritan Woman

P — The Lord be with you.

All — And with your spirit.

P — Lift up your hearts.

All — We lift them up to the Lord.

P — Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All — It is right and just.

P — It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For when he asked the Samaritan woman for water to drink, he had already created the gift of faith within her and so ardently did he thirst for her faith, that he kindled in her the fire of divine love.

And so we, too, give you thanks and with the Angels praise your mighty deeds, as we acclaim:

All — Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. (Kneel)

Acclamation (Stand)

All — We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord’s Prayer

All — Our Father...

P — Deliver us, Lord...

All — For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever.

Invocation to Peace

Invitation to Communion (Kneel)

P — Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All — Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon (Jn 4:13-14)

For anyone who drinks it, says the Lord, the water I shall give will become in him a spring welling up to eternal life.

Prayer after Communion (Stand)

P — Let us pray. (Pause)

As we receive the pledge of things yet hidden in heaven and are nourished while still on earth with the Bread that comes from on high, we humbly entreat you, O Lord, that what is being brought about in us in mystery may come to true completion.

Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P — The Lord be with you.

All — And with your spirit.

Prayer over the People

P — Bow down for the blessing. (Pause)

Direct, O Lord, we pray, the hearts of your faithful, and in your kindness grant your servants this grace: that, abiding in the love of you and in their neighbor, they may fulfill the whole of your commands.

Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

P — And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (+) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All — Amen.

Dismissal

P — Go in peace.

All — Thanks be to God.