

*The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink from me, a woman of Samaria.”*

There’s a psychological condition common among law students called “Imposter Syndrome.” We spend so much time around insanely intelligent people who seem to constantly be able to balance work, school, a social life, healthy eating, volunteering...while we’re struggling to get by. In an environment like that, it’s easy for us to wonder if we really belong in law school at all. I know I’ve had my share of “I’m an imposter” moments.

At the beginning of this year, I attended a panel discussion with law professors on mental health run by a club in the faculty. It was here that I learned the secret to overcoming “Imposter Syndrome” – remembering that everyone has it, and everyone is faking it just as much as I am. We all struggle through it together, and no one is immune.

In church, I think its also very easy to experience imposter syndrome. We’re surrounded by good examples of Christianity in the Saints, the Gospel, and in each other. It’s very for us to focus on our shortcomings, on the things we’ve done wrong this week, that we fail to

see the good. Often, we may wonder if we're worthy of being called "Christians" or whether we're worthy of our relationship with Christ.

In today's Gospel, Jesus is sending us a message: we are worthy. Today, he reaches out to a poor, Samaritan woman, who has had five husbands, and is living with a man who is not her husband. By biblical standards, this woman is unworthy. Her gender, culture, and sinful behaviour make her, in the eyes of her peers and, more importantly, in her own eyes, unworthy of the relationship Jesus is calling her to have with him. Yet, Jesus chooses her to begin his ministry in Sychar.

Moreover, in the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans, St. Paul tells us that "God's love has been poured into our hearts...For while we were still weak...Christ died for the ungodly...Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die...God proved his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us."

Why?

If we look through the Gospels, we might understand why. Virtually everyone Jesus reaches out to is someone we might otherwise think to be

unworthy, surely the disciples felt that way. He reached out to tax collectors, adulterers, the infirmed, children – people who, like us, are flawed, and often feel unworthy, but have a true desire to live in the kind of love that Christ preached.

I would postulate that, not only does Christ reach out to us *despite* our failures, but rather, reaches out to us *because* of our failures, for it is in our failures that we relate to one another. It is in our failures that we can begin to build with one another the kingdom of God on earth. Jesus doesn't need us to be perfect, indeed he reaches out to us *because* we need him – we wouldn't need him if we were perfect.

Indeed, we, like the woman at the well, are worthy.

So, what are we gonna do about it?

I think, in this story, everyone here is both the woman, and Jesus. We are the woman in that we often feel that we are unworthy of our calling, and need to be reached out to. But, we are also Christ, in that we are called to reach out to each other, like he did, to lift each other up and remind each other of our collective journey. To remind each other that, like law students, we're all faking too.

*And Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink."*