

Today I want to focus on the gospel we just heard, the story of the woman at the well. But first I want to ask you a question. Where did you meet Jesus this week?

Last week Fr Robert told us a story about his encounter with Jesus in the guise of an old woman wearing a black coat, using a walker and needing assistance to get across the street and board a bus.

Then he asked us to pay attention to the times we met Jesus this week.

Where did you meet Jesus this week?

I met Jesus at the Supper Table on Wednesday evening. A new guest arrived with multiple bags. I asked him to leave them in the foyer as there wasn't room in the dining area. This caused him a bit of concern and he started talking with me. And he talked and he talked and he talked. Then he went to have his meal. After he ate, he came back to the conversation. It was almost time to close, and I was keen to send him on his way. And he talked and he talked. He eventually left with his bags and a smile and by then I was smiling, too. He invited me into a conversation, into a casual encounter. I hope he comes again this Wednesday.

John 4.5-42 – the story of the woman at the well – the gospel we just heard a few moments ago, invites us into relationship, a relationship with Jesus and with one another. We all need to show up; we only know Jesus and are able to live the gospels in community. We need community so we can hear Jesus and be challenged to live the way we are called to live.

Susannah Wesley, the mother of John and Charles Wesley, often considered the mother of the Methodist Church said, "There are two things to do about the Gospel: believe it and behave it."

When Jesus meets the woman at the well, he says, 'GIVE ME A DRINK!' How would you react if someone talked to you like this? Well, she reacted like many of us might. She asks how he, a **Jew**, would ask for a drink from her, a Samaritan – a Samaritan woman at that. The Jews and the Samaritans had nothing to do with one another and a man would not speak with a woman. She calls him out for his inappropriate behavior.

They continue to almost bicker back and forth. And Jesus tells her that he would give her living water if she knew who he was **and** if she asked him. The next time she speaks, she calls him '**sir**'.

Their conversation continues and she says that she sees he is a **prophet**. And that she knows that the Messiah is coming. Jesus says, 'I AM HE'.

About then the disciples come along and are surprised that Jesus is speaking with her, and the woman leaves.

However, when she gets back into town she starts telling the people of her experience with Jesus. And her question is, “He can’t be the **Messiah**, can he?” This intrigues the people, and they go out to meet Jesus and ask him to stay with them and he does.

And then the community says, “it is **no longer** because of what **you said** that we believe, for we have **heard** for **ourselves**, and we know that this is truly the **Saviour** of the world.

Where do we find ourselves in this gospel? How do we relate to Jesus?

Given we are here today with this community of believers, not many of us would consider chiding Jesus for his inappropriate behavior. Though, we might if a prayer isn’t answered the way we’d like it to be answered.

Do we see Jesus as someone we admire and might address as ‘sir’? Again, is he someone we ask things of, trying to engage in some sort of reciprocal relationship?

Or, is Jesus a prophet - someone who truly worships God, cares for the poor and models the coming of justice? Does our belief in Jesus demand that we worship God, care for the poor and act justly?

Do we see Jesus as the Messiah, the Savior of the World? The one who unites us with God and with one another?

Each of these relationships with Jesus draws us deeper into the love and mystery of God and the community of believers.

Megan McKenna, who offered a 4-day Lenten mission this past week to members of our parish and 3 sister parishes, said that ‘A Christian alone is no Christian’. We need one another to listen and reflect on the Scriptures together and to hold one another accountable.

This gospel reminds us that Jesus is available, wants to talk with us and that we need to be part of a community to fully hear him and to be accountable for our thoughts, words and deeds once we’ve heard him.

The homework for this week is when you meet Jesus, tell someone about it.