

Homily

3rd Sunday of Lent

14-15 march 2020

In these days when there is so much of concern for us, and at least for me a certain amount of confusion, it is all the more important that we look deep into our convictions to find the necessary wisdom and faith so that we stay calm and reasonable.

When it comes to going into the depths the idea of a well is extremely significant. Of course a well is not so significant now in our way of living, but to be alive in the time of Jesus, a well was extremely important. Much of the terrain of first century Palestine was extremely dry and arid, and so a well in the countryside could be a matter of life and death.

The well we hear about today is no ordinary well. It is Jacob's well, and it is in a Samaritan town. If we are familiar with the story of Jacob we will remember that he deceived his father to make him believe that he was his eldest son in preference to Esau. He struggles with an angel and wins. He dreams of a ladder to heaven up which angels climb up and down. He is reconciled with Esau near Sychar. Here in this story from scripture we have a character who experiences his sinfulness, his struggle with the forces of holiness and the redemptive forgiveness. All this takes place at a Samaritan town, again highlighting the separateness we can feel from god. In many ways Jacob is everyman. He is a mixture of goodness and sinfulness.

Here we have a well which marks a place where there is great depth between Jesus and the woman he met. Jesus tells the woman to lower her bucket into this deep well to find the water of life.

When are faced with challenges and may be anxieties it is not the time to dwell on our weakness and sinfulness, but rather to reach down and draw out the water of life. Water plays a large role in scripture as for example when Jesus tells his followers to put out into the deep, and they consequently draw in a great catch of fish.

As I have said before we tend to live our lives on the surface and consequently we are unaware of what lives below the surface of our character. We are often much deeper people than we realise and at certain times in our lives we may draw from our depths, just as the woman was told to draw water from the well.

