

Week 4 of Lent / the Great Lent

1. Gathering & Prayer

- Take a few moments to recall the previous session. What particularly touched you? What new insight about the human struggle, or divine grace, did you receive?
- Opening Prayer, giving thanks for one another and asking that our hearts may remain open to returning more fully to God.

2. Coptic Orthodox Gospel

Theme: The Samaritan Woman

Gospel: John 4:1-42



Reflection:

Christ is ready to offer “the living water”, the gift of God to the thirsty soul that misses the mark in seeking her joy and rest.

- What aspects of the Samaritan Woman’s encounter with Jesus particularly stand out for you:
 - Confrontation?
 - Confusion?
 - Clarification?
- How would you compare your encounters with the presence of Jesus with the Samaritan Woman’s encounter?
- How have you responded to the offer of living water?

Reflections on the Coptic Orthodox Gospel from a Protestant perspective

One can hardly imagine that going about one’s daily business, drawing water from a well, in a way that would minimise the chance of an encounter with others, in the midday sun, would lead to an encounter that would be a crossroad experience, an experience that would involve confrontation, confusion and clarification. The confrontation is totally unexpected as Jesus breaks the social conventions of the day and speaks to not only a Samaritan, not only a Samaritan woman, but a Samaritan woman who is living a lifestyle at odds with the Mosaic Law! Clearly the Samaritan woman is uncomfortable and as we read, we can just empathise with her as she tries to end this encounter.

In doing this, the conversations becomes confused with the woman focussing on the everyday physical meaning of Jesus’ words in an attempt, maybe a deliberate attempt to avoid facing the spiritual issues about which Jesus is speaking.

And yet we get the impression that Jesus’ insight into this woman’s life and his persistence is both convincing and convicting.

At this stage, the Samaritan woman gains clarification of her reality and responds, not just in the way that the prodigal son responded, but with gratitude and witnessing to the presence of the Messiah, and the reality of his provision of “living water” that is both satisfying and eternal.

3. Closing Prayer

In silence, choose one feature from the time together and pray from it. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something that God thinks is particularly important.

This may involve a feeling—encouraging or discouraging. It may be a word or gesture that has significance for you. Or it may be something that is emerging that seemed at the time rather insignificant. Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether of intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.

Some people may choose to share a word, or an insight, or a prayer: others may prefer to remain silent.

Say Together

God of new life, through the waters of Baptism each and every one of us is called to be a minister of the Church. Renew our call so that with passion, new vision and zeal we may together journey towards growth as your Church. May we your faithful people be:— brave enough to proclaim the Good News, enthused enough to share our story, loving enough to only see the good in others, and kind enough that our actions reflect the light and hope of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In all we are and in all we do, let us give glory to the Father, Son and Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.

You may wish to offer one other a sign of peace as this time draws to a close.