

Prayerful preparation for Third Sunday of Lent : Year A

Set aside a prayer time and begin by relaxing and coming to stillness. Read the Gospel, preferably aloud and slowly, paying attention to any words that stand out for you. Stay with those words for a few minutes and wait to see if God is present to you.

Jn 4:5-16, 19-26, 39-42. A spring of water welling up to eternal life.

Jesus said to the Samaritan woman: 'If you only knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you 'give me a drink', you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water.' ...

'Whoever drinks this water will get thirsty again; but anyone who drinks the water that I shall give will never be thirsty again: the water that I shall give will turn into a spring inside them, welling up to eternal life.'

Jesus said: 'Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know: for salvation comes from the Jews. But the hour will come – in fact it is here already – when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth: that is the kind of worshipper the Father wants. God is spirit, and those who worship must worship in spirit and truth.'

The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah – that is, Christ – is coming; and when he comes, he will tell us everything.' Jesus said, 'I who am speaking to you; I am he.'

The Samaritans of the town said to the woman, 'Now we no longer believe because of what you told us; we have heard him ourselves and we know that he really is the saviour of the world.'

A brief guide to *Lectio Divina*

Lectio Divina is translated as *sacred reading*.

It can be only that, but using reading as the first step can lead to a deeper form of prayer with four steps: *reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation*.

A rural minister in a southern state in the US, when asked how he prayed, replied: “I reads myself full; I thinks myself clear; I prays myself hot; I lets myself cool.” An individual description of the four stages.

Whatever language we use, the four stages have remained the same since the 5th century. The four Latin equivalents are: *lectio, meditatio, oratio, and contemplatio*.

Read to find God’s truth in the Sacred Scriptures.

Meditate to allow God’s truth to take on a personal meaning for you and your life. How does the reading apply to your situation and needs?

Pray: we talk to God about our personal reaction to the truth we have just encountered. We may want to express adoration, contrition, thanksgiving, or intercession.

Contemplation: we rest in peace and silence, stilling ourselves to be alone with God.

Adapted from, *Prayer and Temperament*, by C.P. Michael and M.C. Norrisey.

Reflection on John 4:5-42

You can find the full text in your Bible or on Universalis.com, or in the Mass book at church.

Whichever you use, begin your prayer by asking God to make his presence known to you in this prayer time.

Quieten yourself, ready to listen to what God may be saying to you in this time of prayer, and listen to what rises up in your heart.

The woman was not prepared for her meeting with Jesus. As a Samaritan woman she expected to be ignored and for him, a Jew, to be hostile.

What are your expectations of Jesus?

Can you imagine meeting Him?

How would he respond to you?

Jesus asks her for a favour. He wants something from her. What does Jesus want from *you* this Lent?

He asks little of her, but he has a very precious gift to give her if she wants it.

An ordinary encounter turns into an event that changes her.

She hurries to share with others her marvellous experience at the well.

She has received that living water as we too have done.

What is our response to receiving the living water of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us?