

Homily. 3rd Sunday in Lent. Year.A. 14/15 March 2020.

Some people are asking if the current pandemic will change us for the better, making us more caring, respectful and helpful towards one another. As much as I'd wish for this, I believe that we already know the answer to this question. Sure, some will be motivated to go above and beyond sacrificing themselves to help others during this crisis, while others will move deeper into themselves becoming more selfish, cynical and lonely. Meanwhile, most of us will find ourselves somewhere between these two, caring for the needs of those who become sick and isolated while at the same time protecting ourselves and our loved ones with all that we've got and for all that we're worth. This is an important matter because 3,500 Queenslanders are now sick and isolated, with this number growing exponentially every day.

As Christians, we first look to Jesus for our guidance and inspiration, placing our trust in His Living Spirit welling up inside of us. John says that Jesus was making a journey from Judaea to Galilee via the Samaritan lands stuck between these two provinces. Tired from the heat and demands of the journey He sat straight down beside the well of Jacob at Sychar. A Samaritan woman came by to draw up water, so Jesus asked her for a drink. This seems innocent enough to us, but already Jesus has acted in ways that went against the rules and expectations of His time.

He'd come to a Samaritan town, a place we know the Jews didn't enter, and talked with a Samaritan women, thought I those days to be the lowest of the low. John is letting us know that Jesus stretched the separation taboo's of His culture, adding that Jews, in fact, did not associate with

Samaritans. Further on we hear that the disciples were surprised (read shocked) to find Jesus talking to a woman. This was certainly risky and unusual behaviour for a Jewish man of that era.

Putting aside the obvious issues about the depth of the ancient well and Jesus lack of His own a bucket, the conversation quickly moved to more important matters of spirit and truth. The woman told her truth to Jesus and in exchange, He offered her His truth and Life as the way to quench her real thirst for meaning and companionship in this world. This, not surprisingly, is what we're all seeking; hope, friendship and loving care, made more urgent for us in this present time of crisis. Jesus acceptance of the woman motivated her to go and tell the others in her town all about Him. In the end, Jesus stayed a few days with these untouchables leading them by His care and courage to recognise that he truly was and is the Saviour of the World.

More than a few of us are going to become unwell because of this virus, being isolated, and some will end in hospital facing death. Socially and economically were at the beginning of what promises to be a very rough time indeed. All of us are part of this, and we're all in it together. Without fear of favour, we have look after one another by looking after our health as best we are able, and by helping others to do the same. Most importantly, let's make sure that we use every means we have to stay in touch with one another, contacting and supporting those who are most affected. This, from now onwards, is our part to play in bringing salvation and Christ-like solidarity to others who are cut-off over coming months.