

Dear Brothers and Sisters



A woman comes to draw water at the well.

It is burdensome to go to a well, once the novelty wears off.

As a child we spent a few summer holidays in Ireland, at Delaney's farm, friends of my parents in Wexford. As small children we would go to the woods each morning with a bucket, filling it up with drinking water to bring back to the farmhouse.

At first, we thought this was wonderful, but after about three days it soon got old, and none of us wanted to go. It's heavy work, and the water doesn't last long, sometimes needing two or three trips a day, depending how much you can carry, and how much is consumed. The woman in the Gospel goes to the well at midday, perhaps because she had already been at least once before that morning.

Today we don't have that problem; our homes have faucets and our water is packaged by Dasani or Poland Spring. Or so we may think.

The Gospel asks us "Where do I go to seek refreshment? Which is the well from which I am drawing today?" To draw water is an analogy for seeking life. There can be many wells in our life, places we go to draw water. There is an inner thirst which no faucet or bottled water is able to quench.

There is the well of health.

There is the well of ambition, or career, or possessions.

There is the well of affections, of family, or friends.

There is the well of sports, of basketball, baseball, volleyball.

There is the well food, or video games, or TV and the internet.

All of these wells give water, but none of them are able to satisfy the deepest thirst within.

Jesus never asks for anything in the Gospel, except once, in the Gospel we hear at Mass today. He asks the woman at the well for a drink. He will repeat the same words on the Cross: "I thirst." He asks for a drink of water, but it is he himself who offers living water: "Whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst again, the water I give will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Jesus thirsts to satisfy the longing of the human heart.

His thirst is to satisfy the need in that person who, no matter how much they have, or how many friends they are surrounded by, or how successful they become, are lacking something.

There is a thirst within each of us, and it can only be satisfied by Christ. He invites us to drink the water which he provides, and we can receive this water in the Liturgy today. This water becomes a well within us, a source of life and of peace. We are offered a well that never runs dry, no matter what happens in our life, whether in school or work, with family or friends, on the ball field or at home.

Fr. Sean