

ZE08022404 - 2008-02-24

Permalink: <http://www.zenit.org/article-21877?l=english>

# On the Samaritan Woman

## "God Thirsts for Our Faith and Our Love"

VATICAN CITY, FEB. 24, 2008 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Here is a translation of the address Benedict XVI delivered today before reciting the midday Angelus with several thousand people gathered in St. Peter's Square.

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On this Third Sunday of Lent the liturgy this year proposes one of the most beautiful and profound texts of the Bible: the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman (cf. John 4:5-42). St. Augustine, about whom I am saying a great deal in the Wednesday catecheses, was rightly fascinated by this story, and he gave a memorable commentary on it. It is impossible for a brief explanation of this passage of the Gospel to bring out its richness: It is necessary to read and meditate on it personally, identifying oneself with that woman, who, one day, like many others, went to draw water from the well, and found Jesus there, seated by it, "tired from the trip," in the noonday heat.

"Give me to drink," he said to her, surprising her: It was, in fact, entirely unusual for a Jew to speak to a Samaritan woman, especially a woman who was a stranger. But the woman's wonder was destined to grow: Jesus spoke of a "living water" able to quench thirst completely and become "a spring of water welling up to eternal life" in her; furthermore, he showed her that he knew about her personal life; he revealed that the hour had come to worship the one true God in spirit and in truth; and in the end he confided to her -- something incredibly rare -- that he was the Messiah.

All of this happened, beginning from the real and sensible experience of thirst. The theme of thirst runs through the whole of John's Gospel: from the meeting with the Samaritan woman, to the great prophecy during the feast of the Tabernacles (John 7:37-38), to the cross, when Jesus before he dies says, to fulfill Scripture: "I thirst" (John 19:28).

The thirst of Christ is an entranceway into the mystery of God, who made himself thirsty to refresh us, as he made himself poor to enrich us (cf. 2 Corinthians 8:9). Yes, God thirsts for our faith and our love. Like a good and merciful father he desires for us all possible good and this good is God himself. For her part the Samaritan woman represents the existential unhappiness of those who have not found what they are looking for: She had "five husbands" and is now living with a man; her coming and going to the well represents a repetitive and resigned life.

But everything changes for her that day, on account of her conversation with the Lord Jesus, who shakes her up so much that she leaves the water jar and runs to tell the people of the village: "Come and see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ" (John 4:28-29)?

Dear brothers and sisters, let us too open our hearts to the confident hearing of the word of God to meet, like

the Samaritan woman, Jesus, who reveals his love to us and says to us: The Messiah, your Savior, "It is I, who speak to you" (John 4:26). May Mary, first and perfect disciple of Christ, obtain this gift for us.

[After the Angelus, the Pope said the following in Italian:]

Recent floods have devastated large areas of the coast of Ecuador, causing very grave damage, which adds to the damage caused by the eruption of Tungurahua. As I entrust the victims of this calamity to the Lord, I express my personal nearness to those who are experiencing times of anxiety and tribulation and I invite all to a fraternal solidarity, so that the people of these areas can return as soon as possible to the normalcy of daily life.

Next Saturday, March 1, at 5 p.m., in the Paul VI Hall, I will preside at the Marian vigil of the university students of Rome. Students of other European and American countries will participate in it by radio and television links. We will invoke the intercession of Mary Seat of Wisdom for Christian hope to support the building of a civilization of love on these two continents and in the whole world. My dear university student friends, I expect to see many of you!

[Translation by Joseph G. Trabbic]

[The Holy Father said in English:]

I would like to extend a cordial invitation to Catholics throughout the world to support, by their prayers and their presence, the 49th International Eucharistic Congress to be celebrated in Quebec City from 15-22 June 2008.

I welcome all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors present at today's Angelus. As we continue our Lenten journey may our resolve to follow closely the path of Jesus be strengthened through prayer, forgiveness, fasting and assistance to those in need. I trust your visit to Rome will increase your understanding of the faith and deepen your love of the universal Church. Upon all of you and your dear ones, I gladly invoke the strength and peace of Christ the Lord.

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