

## ***“Yearning for Living Water”***

May 2010

Hymn “Living Christ, bring us love” VU 599

Scripture *John 4: 7-15 (The Message)*

A woman, a Samaritan, came to draw water. Jesus said, “Would you give me a drink of water?” (His disciples had gone to the village to buy food for lunch.)

The Samaritan woman, taken aback, asked, “How come you, a Jew, are asking me a Samaritan woman for a drink?” (Jews in those days wouldn’t be caught dead talking to Samaritans.)

Jesus answered, “If you knew the generosity of God and who I am, you would be asking me for a drink, and I would give you fresh, living water.”

The woman said, “Sir, you don’t even have a bucket to draw with, and this well is deep. So how are you going to get this ‘living water’? Are you a better man than our ancestor Jacob, who dug this well and drank from it, he and his sons and livestock, and passed it down to us?”

Jesus said, “Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again and again. Anyone who drinks the water I give will never thirst – not ever. The water I give will be an artesian spring within, gushing fountains of endless life.”

The woman said, “Sir, give me this water so I won’t ever get thirsty, won’t ever have to come back to this well again!”

Prayer Let us pray – We are thirsty, God. Our lives are dry. Give rest to our bodies, peace to our souls, and water to refresh our spirits. We need living water to nourish us with hope and love. Amen.

Lesson In these supposedly secular times there is a deep yearning for the sacred. Bookstores are full of books on spirituality, such as the best-sellers *Care for the Soul* by Thomas Moore, *The Road Less Travelled* by Scott Peck, and books by authors such as Deepak Chopra, James Redfield, John Shelby Spong and the Dalai Lama. The spiritual thirst that is at the heart of our age is found both inside and outside traditional church communities. People want, not to just talk about God, but to experience the sacred in the midst of frequently chaotic, rapidly changing lives.

There are rivers mentioned in scripture from Genesis to Revelation. Some are powerful images of the river of life that flows for the very beginning to the very end. Some are images of hope and promise. Others are images of God’s promise in terms of water and river.

In the land of Israel, there are two lakes. One, which is completely void of vitality, is the Dead Sea. Here, there are no trees or shrubs or even blades of grass. There is no sound of birds singing or insects chirping. The second lake is known as the Sea of Galilee. It is surrounded by lush forests, fields of grain, masses of flowers and the air is teeming with birds and insects.

The difference between the two seas is living water. The Dead Sea is so salty that nothing can survive. The Sea of Galilee contains fresh water and it teems with life.

Jesus probably spent time near the Dead Sea and would have seen and felt the heat and lack of life in that scene. But he also stood beside the Sea of Galilee and saw

and felt the vitality of a land that had fresh running streams. In that land, as in many today, the difference between life and death is living water.

At the well in Samaria, Jesus gave the woman living water. An old song goes:

*Jesus gave her water that was not from a well.*

*She went away singing*

*And came back bringing*

*Others to the water that was not from a well.*

It was living water, the water of life, and it changed her life. She came as a lone figure, isolated from her neighbours, and left as a life-giving influence on others.

We too are called to drink of the life-giving water and then to act. We drink from the well and new life germinates within us. We respond to that energy and we act, move, risk, and grow in faith. Every step we take, every stage in our faith journey is a starting point for new growth. We drink living water and we begin to live, open to the wisdom and power of God. We share what we have learned, and become for others a spring of living water.

Discussion    What comes to mind when you think of a river?

When you think of “living water”?

Describe your life today in terms of a river – what kind of a river? – how are you flowing?

Can you think of ways to bring others to the water that is not from a well?

Prayer        Let us pray – Creator God, as you moved over the waters and life came into being, we would ask you to move in us and create new life among us. Give us the water of life that we may thirst no more. Fill us with your spirit and enable us to become springs of water, places of refreshment and hope for the thirsty. Amen.