

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Gospel this weekend speaks to us about **thirst**. This story of the Samaritan woman at the well speaks of natural thirst, a deeper thirst, and supernatural thirst.

This beautiful story shows us how human Jesus is. His thirst for water on a hot, dry day, united Him with this woman, who shared this very natural thirst. Almighty God decided to humble Himself so much as to be *thirsty*! Have you ever pondered how profound this mystery is?! God, who created everything, who has no need in Himself, chose to become small enough to need water, to need to drink! Jesus uses this very natural thirst to have something in common with this woman. In our sin, we sometimes think that God wants nothing to do with us, that He is watching us “from a distance”. I have heard that many times, “God must be sick of me.” Really, He reaches down, using any opportunity He can, to show us that He **WANTS** to be with us, He **WANTS** to be united to us. He loves us, and *longs* to be with us. This common thirst breaks down barriers, and gives Him a beautiful way, humbly to enter into dialogue with the woman. She doesn’t see Him lording power over her, but rather in *His* need, *she* can be the one to help, “**Give me a drink**” (John 4:7).

This Gospel also speaks of deeper thirst. As the conversation between Jesus and this woman deepens (Jesus has already stirred desire in her for “living water” – “**Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water**” John 4:15), Jesus then touches a deeper thirst in this woman’s life – a thirst for love. “**Go call your husband...**” (John 4:16), he says. This woman has been married five times and is in another relationship right now. I can almost hear her heart desperately crying out for love. Each man held a promise for her: the promise that the ache in her heart – the deep *thirst* in everyone’s heart – would finally be satiated. She longed to be loved for who she was, to experience this love ... and each one left her unfulfilled. Each man failed at this, for no human can fill the hole in us that was made for God alone. This deep thirst is in each of us. Some of us handle it better than others, but to ignore the thirst is to let it become a monster; a monster which eventually cannot be contained! We can try to kill the thirst for love, but that will leave us dead inside. We can go after every promise of water, but that will have us drinking mud (to continue with the analogy). As St. Augustine said, “*He who is lost in his passion is less lost than he who has lost his passion.*” It is better to be lost in our thirst than to ignore it or kill it, but even here, we are still lost.

The only way to quench our thirst is to go to the source, the **living water** (John 4:14). Listen to what happens to the woman at the well – when she finally realizes who Jesus is, it says, “**The woman left her water jar**” (John 4:28). She no longer needed her water jar. Why not? Jesus had given her the living water, so she no longer needed it. *He quenched her thirst!* Notice, too, the marital imagery here. In the Old Testament, so many marriage relationships began at a well. This woman had six (the imperfect Biblical number) relationships which did not fulfill her. Jesus was the seventh – the perfect Biblical number, the number of completion. She had finally found the “husband” she had always been looking for, the one who would love her for her, who wouldn’t use her, who would bring her to fulfilment.

We each thirst for love. We are thirsting to be loved for who we are, not what we can do or give to another. Almighty God is the One – the Only One – who **CAN** fulfill this deepest longing in our souls. Every time – EVERY TIME – we go elsewhere to fill it, we end up lacking, empty, searching for more! Only by going to Jesus will this deepest thirst within us be satisfied... and satisfied for *eternity!*

We spoke about natural thirst, which God used to draw us to Him, and the deeper thirst for love. What about supernatural thirst? This is God’s thirst for us! Jesus’ first words to this woman are, “**Give me a drink**” (John 4:7). The saints of the Church tell us that as much as Jesus thirsted for water, His deeper thirst, what brought Him to this well in the first place, was HIS thirst for her love! God thirsts for our love! From the Cross, Jesus cries out, “**I Thirst**” (John 19:28). He longs for us; He pines for us. As I’ve said before, God want to marry us! Any longing for love we have in this world, any pining or yearning we may have experienced, any desire is but a *shadow* of the love, the pining, the yearning, the desire *God has for us!* He doesn’t want us because He is incomplete, but He loves us for **OUR OWN SAKE**. He creates this desire in us, so that we can be drawn to Him and quench His thirst for our love. St. Teresa of Calcutta recognized the thirst God has for love and for souls, and spent her whole life trying to quench it! This is the secret of the saints – they recognize their desire, they direct it in the right direction (toward God), and they spend themselves quenching His thirst for love. May we do this, too!