

St Thomas More – Parish Newsletter

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Sunday 12th March 2023, Third Sunday in Lent (Year A)

A reading for Lent from Pope Francis' Angelus Address (back in March 2014)

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Today's Gospel presents Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman in Sicar, near an old well where the woman went to draw water daily. That day, she found Jesus seated, "*wearied as he was with his journey*" (Jn 4:6). He immediately says to her: "*Give me a drink*" (v. 7). In this way he overcomes the barriers of hostility that existed between Jews and Samaritans and breaks the mould of prejudice against women. This simple request from Jesus is the start of a frank dialogue, through which he enters with great delicacy into the interior world of a person to whom, according to social norms, he should not have spoken. But Jesus does! Jesus is not afraid. When Jesus sees a person he goes ahead, because he loves. He loves us all. He never hesitates before a person out of prejudice. Jesus sets her own situation before her, not by judging her but by making her feel worthy, acknowledged, and thus arousing in her the desire to go beyond the daily routine.

Jesus' thirst was not so much for water, but for the encounter with a parched soul. Jesus needed to encounter the Samaritan woman in order to open her

heart: he asks for a drink so as to bring to light her own thirst. The woman is moved by this encounter: she asks Jesus several profound questions that we all carry within but often ignore. We, too, have many questions to ask, but we don't have the courage to ask Jesus! Lent, dear brothers and sisters, is the opportune time to look within ourselves, to understand our truest spiritual needs, and to ask the Lord's help in prayer. The example of the Samaritan woman invites us to exclaim: "Jesus, give me a drink that will quench my thirst forever".

The Gospel says that the disciples marvelled that their Master was speaking to this woman. But the Lord is greater than prejudice, which is why he was not afraid to address the Samaritan woman: mercy is greater than prejudice. We must learn this well! Mercy is greater than prejudice, and Jesus is so very merciful, very! The outcome of that encounter by the well was the woman's transformation: "*the woman left her water jar*" (v. 28), with which she had come to draw water, and ran to the city to tell people about her extraordinary experience. "*I found a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?*" She was excited. She had gone to draw water from the well, but she found another kind of water, the living water of mercy from which gushes forth eternal life. She found the water she had always sought! She runs to the village, that village which had judged her, condemned her and rejected her, and she announces that she has met the Messiah: the one who has changed her

life. Because every encounter with Jesus changes our lives, always. It is a step forward, a step closer to God. And thus every encounter with Jesus changes our life. It is always, always this way.

In this Gospel passage we likewise find the impetus to “leave behind our water jar”, the symbol of everything that is seemingly important, but loses all its value before the “love of God”. We all have one, or more than one! I ask you, and myself: “What is your interior water jar, the one that weighs you down, that distances you from God?”. Let us set it aside a little and with our hearts; let us hear the voice of Jesus offering us another kind of water, another water that brings us close to the Lord. We are called to rediscover the importance and the sense of our Christian life, initiated in Baptism and, like the Samaritan woman, to witness to our brothers. A witness of what? Joy! To witness to the joy of the encounter with Jesus; for, as I said, every encounter with Jesus changes our life, and every encounter with Jesus also fills us with joy, the joy that comes from within. And the Lord is like this. And so we must tell of the marvellous things the Lord can do in our hearts when we have the courage to set aside our own water jar.

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Seniors' Coffee Morning

The next coffee morning will be on Tuesday 14th March after the 10am Mass. Please sign up on the list in the Narthex.

Repository

Items from the repository relating to Lent and Easter will be on sale in the Narthex again after the morning Masses on Sunday 12th March. Devotional objects for sale are then visible to everyone as they leave church through the main entrance.

Magnificat — March and Lent

The March Magnificat (£5) and Holy Week companion (£2) are available to buy. Please ask Maggie, or one of the priests for copies.

Lenten Stations of the Cross

Stations of the Cross will take place in the church every Friday of Lent at 6pm.

Film Club

On Thursday 16th March after the 10am Mass, the Film Club will show a film entitled *I have never been happier* about the life of Pedro Ballester, a young member of Opus Dei who died in January 2018, described as a student with a gift of friendship and love for God. Please sign the list in the Narthex if you would like to attend.

Gift Aid and Planned Giving

We are currently preparing the new boxes of envelopes for the next tax year starting on 9th April. If there has been any change in your situation (new address, change in tax status, change of name), please kindly contact our Finance Officer, Yolaine, at: swisscottagefin@rcdow.org.uk as soon as possible.

If you are a UK Income or Capital Gains Taxpayer, please sign a Gift Aid Declaration and support our parish in this free, easy way (donating either via online transfers to the parish bank account, standing order, weekly envelopes or using the Contactless devices). Gift Aid means our parish can claim an extra 25p for every £1 you donate, at no extra cost to you. Thank you!

Young Adults Group

A group of young adults (between 21 and 30 years of age) have started a monthly social meeting with informal discussions about philosophical, anthropological and sociological questions related to the faith. These will take place monthly in the Parish Hall after the 6pm Sunday Please contact Fr Alvaro for further details:

(alvaro.tintore@netherhall.org.uk)

The Cardinal's Lenten Appeal

Funds raised this year will be shared between Marriage and Family Life, Youth and Evangelization, the Education Service and Caritas Westminster. As well as

initiatives run by parishes around the diocese. See the poster in the Narthex. We will use the collection box below the candles in the St Thomas Chapel for this purpose during Lent.

Mini Retreat for Women

Please note this month it will take place on the third Tuesday, 21st March after 10am Mass to 12.40pm.

Early Christian Writings

From St John Chrysostom's Homilies on the Gospel of St John, in particular some considerations about this Sunday's Gospel: Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman

(from Homily 31)

If now a woman of Samaria is so earnest to learn something profitable, if she abides by Christ though not as yet knowing Him, what pardon shall we obtain, who both knowing Him, and being not by a well, nor in a desert place, nor at noon-day, nor beneath the scorching sunbeams, but at morning-tide, and beneath a roof like this, enjoying shade and comfort, yet cannot endure to hear anything that is said, but are wearied by it. Not such was that woman; so occupied was she by Jesus' words, that she even called others to hear them. (...) Let us then imitate this woman of Samaria; let us commune with Christ. For even now He stands in the midst of us, speaking to us by the Prophets and Disciples; let us hear and obey. How long shall we live uselessly and in vain?

(From Homily 32) And observe, I pray you, the wisdom of Christ, how gently He leads on the woman; (...) Wherefore also He, having heard, "*Are you greater than our father Jacob,*" leaves Jacob, and speaks concerning the water, saying, "*Whosoever shall drink of this water, shall thirst again*"; and He makes His comparison, not by depreciating one, but by showing the excellence of the other; for He says not, that "this water is naught," nor "that it is inferior and contemptible," but what even nature testifies that He says: "*Whosoever shall drink of this water shall thirst again; but*

whosoever shall drink of the Water which I shall give him, shall never thirst." The woman before this had heard of "living Water" (John 4:10), but had not known its meaning. Since because that water is called "living" which is perennial and bubbles up unceasingly from uninterrupted springs, she thought that this was the water meant. Wherefore He points out this more clearly by speaking thus, and establishing by a comparison the superiority (of the water which He would give). What then says He? "*Whosoever shall drink of the Water that I shall give him, shall never thirst.*" This and what was said next especially showed the superiority, for material water possesses none of these qualities. And what is it that follows? "*It shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*" For as one that has a well within him could never be seized by thirst, so neither can he that has this Water.

The woman straightway believed, showing herself much wiser than Nicodemus, (...) For he when he heard ten thousand such things neither invited any others to this hearing, nor himself spoke forth openly; but she exhibited the actions of an Apostle, preaching the Gospel to all, and calling them to Jesus, and drawing a whole city forth to Him. Nicodemus when he had heard said, "How can these things be?" And when Christ set before him a clear illustration, that of "the wind," he did not even so receive the Word. But the woman not so; at first she doubted, but afterwards receiving the Word not by any regular demonstration, but in the form of an assertion, she straightway hastened to embrace it. For when Christ said, "*It shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting Life,*" immediately the woman says: "*Give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.*" (John 4:15)

St John Chrysostom is one of the four great Fathers of the Eastern Church. He was born in Antioch around 350AD. After becoming a priest he preached in the main church of Antioch before being appointed Patriarch of Constantinople. His zeal led to a clash with the Imperial Court, he was banished from Constantinople and died in exile in 407AD.

ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Third Sunday in Lent

12th March – 18th March 2023

Tel: 020 7435 1388; <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/swisscottage/>

	MASS	OTHER ACTIVITIES
SUN 12th March Third Sunday in Lent (Readings. Year A)	9.30am People of the Parish 11am Mass Carl Aboua (RIP) 6pm Mass For vocations to the Priesthood	The Church opens at 9.15am 10.30am Confessions 5.30pm Confessions
MON 13th March Lent feria	7am Mass Holy Souls 10am Mass Persecuted Christians	The Church opens at 6.50am (Monday to Friday)
TUE 14th March Lent feria	7am Mass For Peace in Ukraine 10am Mass Ike Osakwe (in thanksgiving)	10.45am Seniors' Coffee Morning
WED 15th March Lent feria	7am Mass Carmine Albano (intentions) 10am Mass For all those sick in the Parish	
THU 16th March Lent feria	7am Mass For the victims of the Turkish/Syrian earthquakes 10am Mass Janet Quek (intentions)	10.45am Film Club – "I have never been happier." Life of Pedro Ballester
FRI 17th March ST PATRICK, Bishop, Patron of Ireland Friday abstinence	7am Mass For the Church in Ireland 10am Mass Patricia Herbert (intentions)	10am – 12pm Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 6pm Stations of the Cross
SAT 18th March Lent feria (St Cyril of Jerusalem, Bishop & Doctor)	10am Mass Jim and Hildegard Charles (intentions)	The Church opens at 9.30am

Prayer Intentions:

Recently deceased: Michael Crook; Pope Benedict XVI; Angela Carpos; John Stopplecamp; Wendy Bellas; Irene O'Sullivan; Peter Glenn; Joseph Power; Ghislaine Williams

Anniversary: Elizabeth Covenden; Maria Fernanda; Simon Ulcickas; Nick Aldridge; Mabel Bull; Sofia Vukusic; Maroun Ramia; Irene Cole; Iris Nally

Confessions:

Monday to Friday (before and after 10am Mass)
Saturday: before and after 10am Mass
Sunday: 10.30am and 5.30pm (before Mass)

Forthcoming Events:

20th March: ST JOSEPH, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary
25th March: THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD