

Sunday Message

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

THE WORD

Year A • 12 March 2023 • Colour: Violet • Psalter Week 3



TREATED WITH RESPECT

JN 4:5-42

In today's Gospel, Jesus meets an unaccompanied Samaritan woman in Samaria. Everyone knows that Jews and Samaritans don't associate with one another. Unmarried men and women don't associate with one another either, at least not unsupervised.

Jesus is tired from travelling and needs a drink. The Samaritan woman comes to the well at the hottest time of the day so as not to be bothered by anyone else. She has a checkered past, to say the least.

Jesus does the unthinkable. He speaks to her. He is aware of her past but doesn't let it get in the way. He looks at her and sees the good in her. He doesn't see her as different or unworthy, or inferior.

He asks her to give him a drink. She replies, "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" She is astonished that he would speak to her, of all people.

Then they start to talk about religion, and Jesus reveals himself as the Messiah. Rather than dismiss his claim, the woman returns to her people to tell them about Jesus. She bears witness to Jesus. This outcast of a woman brings people to faith. She becomes a true disciple.

All because Jesus treated her with love and respect. Just like he treated every woman and man he encountered. ■

DO

Look at your life. Where do you turn to find the nourishment that is truly refreshing and life-giving?

How effective an apostle are you? How eagerly do you tell people the Good News about Jesus?

SAY

"Lord, you alone can satisfy my deepest thirst. Help me to seek all that I need in you. Amen."

PRAY

Today's Gospel is a story of how a woman and her townspeople come to faith. Think about the gift of faith which you have received. Pray for a deepening of your faith.

LEARN

Water is a central image of today's Gospel. It teaches us that Jesus is the living water that leads us to eternal life.

God's gift of faith is given to us to be shared.

REFLECT

A lot has changed since the time of Jesus, yet a lot has remained the same. During Jesus' time, women were seen as second-class citizens, defined chiefly through their roles of wife or mother. In a male-dominated society, they lacked rights and were seen as the property of their father or husband. Though there were always exceptions, a woman's place was in the home.

This was the worldview Jesus was born into. It's also one that he challenged. Remember the group of men who were ready to stone the woman caught in adultery? Speaking against the sexual double-standard of the day, Jesus told "those without sin to cast the first stone."

Jesus recognised the dignity of women and allowed them to join his band of disciples. Think of Mary of Magdala. Going against the practice of her time, which said that only men could be disciples, Mary became a follower of Jesus, accompanying him during his ministry. When Jesus' closest male disciples hid for fear of their lives during his passion and death, she stuck with him.

Even more significant, Mary was the first person to witness the resurrected Christ. It wasn't Peter or John or any of the male disciples that Jesus appeared to. It was Mary of Magdala. It's why she's called the "Apostle to the Apostles."

Jesus' treatment of the woman in today's Gospel offers lessons for us, as individuals, as a society, and as a church. About how we treat women, about how we treat each other.

First, as individuals. Do I treat those closest to me with profound love and respect? I am a priest, a bachelor in my 60s, living in a house full of men, but I'm lucky in that both my parents lived into deep old age. And I could see how my father related to my mother, and my mother related to my father – as equal partners, soul mates, utterly dependent on each other. My mother once complained that my father had "gone to the bad" hugging her. Every time he passed her by, she said, he hugged her—a beautiful statement of love, affection, respect.

We know that domestic violence is a problem and that many people, especially women, are caught in controlling, violent

relationships, made worse by the Covid-19 lockdown. As individuals and families, how do we treat those closest to us?

As a society, greater equality exists between the sexes than in the past, but much remains to be done. The glass ceiling remains. Women continue to be objectified sexually, and internet porn has made it worse, doing tremendous damage to how young boys see women and how young women see themselves. What do we need to do to create a society where women feel safe and equal?

As a church, it is clear that much needs to be done to advance the role of women. Women comprise more than half the church's members, yet they have little say in decision-making. Imagine our church's new life and authority if women had a full and equal voice. It is one of the major issues the upcoming Synod in Rome will consider.

Jesus was extraordinarily ahead of his time. He showed, by his actions and words, that he respected and valued women, that he respected and valued everyone. So also must we. ■

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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12th March 2023

3rd Sunday of Lent

Weekend masses

Sat 6:00pm Dechomet 7:30pm Leitrim
Sun 9:00am Gargory 11:00am Dromara

Weekday masses

Mon 9:00am Leitrim 7:30pm Dechomet
Tues 9:00am Dromara
Wed 7:30pm Leitrim

St Patrick's Day Masses

Thur 16th 7:00pm Dromara
8:00pm Leitrim
Fri 17th 10:00am Gargory
7:30pm Dechomet

Continuing the legacy of St Patrick, a group of Christians will gather at 5:45am at his grave on St Patrick's morning. We will pray *The Our Father/ The Lord's Prayer*, 100 times for peace and unity in Christ among our peoples. Everyone welcome.

Recently deceased Dympna O'Hare, Holywood

Anniversaries

Dechomet

Sat 11th Brian, Colm and Sr Josephine Rooney

Leitrim

Sat 11th Cahal Ward
Mon 13th Susan and Patrick Rice
Wed 15th Margaret McCrickard
Anne Bannon and Denis Bannon
Malachy Savage

Thur 16th Nolene Hardy

Gargory

Sun 19th Deceased Members of McAlerney
Family (Backaderry)

Dromara

Sun 19th Teresa Reavey (MM)
Mary Hughes (Derry)
Pearl McEvoy

SVDP: Drom 07738838191/Drumg 07825419067

Safeguarding Contact: P Carville 07789917741

SMA Dromantine (Tel: (028) 30821964)

Lenten Reflection Day - Sat 25th Mar 9:30am-5:00pm

This day provides time and space to reflect and pray on themes of Lent and to prepare our hearts and minds to celebrate Holy Week and Easter. Cost (including lunch) £35/€40 **Led by Fr Des Corrigan SMA**

Collections Parish	Dromara £	Drumgooland £1130
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New envelopes begin on 9th Apr (Easter Sunday). The boxes will be available for distribution on 25th/26th March. If anyone wishes to have a box, or pay by direct debit, please speak to Fr Peter or email the parish.

Earthquake Appeal Thank you to all who gave so generously last week. Over **£2,500** has come in so far. This money will be forwarded to Trócaire by the end of this month so it can go to the charities working on the ground in Syria and Turkey.

First Confessions

Tues 14th 7:30pm St Matthew's, Gargory

Spring Events at Peter Morgan's Cottage

Tues 14th Mar at 8pm - Local History Talk on "Seven Townlands of Dromara Parish" by Trevor Martin (Tea/Coffee: Donations Welcome).

Everyone Welcome!

Fri 24th Mar from 7:30pm - Traditional Music & Social Evening. Come along for a bowl of Stew and the Craic!

Newcastle Comhaltas ☘ St.Patrick's Day Coffee Morning

Fri 17th Mar 10:30am - 12:30pm
Come along and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee with a tasty treat while listening to our young members play a few tunes and sing a song or two - audience participation is most welcome!
The Lodge, Castlewellan.

SMA Dromantine (Tel: (028) 30821964)

Dance of Life Retreat - Fri 17th Mar - Sun 19th

In this retreat the opportunity to dance may bring a renewed awareness in your sense of self, connection with others and connection with God. Cost £220/€250. **Led by Sr Mary Taylor OLA and Fr Damian Bresnahan SMA**
email: admin@dromantineconference.com

St Joseph's Young Priests Society, Ballynahinch. One-Day Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine Sat 24th Jun. Coach transfer and evening meal. If you would be interested contact Aine Savage 074 45595027. Geraldine McCullough 075 35585352.