



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS *ANGELUS* Library of the Vatican Apostolic Palace

Sunday, 15 March 2020 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good Morning!

At this moment the Mass for the sick, doctors, nurses and volunteers, that is being celebrated by the Archbishop [Mario Delpini] in Milan's *Policlinico* (hospital) is coming to an end. The Archbishop is close to his people and also close to God in prayer. Last week's photograph of him alone on the roof of the Duomo, praying to Our Lady comes to mind. I would also like to thank all the priests, the creativity of priests. A lot of news of this creativity has been reaching me from the Region of Lombardy. It is true that Lombardy has been highly affected. There are priests who think of thousands of ways to be close to the people, so that the people do not feel abandoned; priests with apostolic zeal, who have fully understood that during this time of pandemic, one must not be like "Don Abbondio" (character from *The Betrothed*). Many thanks to you priests.

The Gospel passage from today, the Third Sunday of Lent, tells us of Jesus' meeting with a Samaritan woman (cf. Jn 4:5-42). He is on a journey with his disciples and takes a break near a well in Samaria. The Samaritans were considered heretics by the Jews, and were very much despised as second-class citizens. Jesus is tired, thirsty. A woman arrives to draw water and he says to her: "Give me a drink" (v. 7). Breaking every barrier, he begins a dialogue in which he reveals to the woman *the mystery of living water*, that is, of the Holy Spirit, God's gift. Indeed, in response to the woman's surprised reaction, Jesus says: "If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink', you would have asked him and he would have given you living water" (v. 10).

Water is the focus of this dialogue. On the one hand, water is an essential element that slakes the body's thirst and sustains life. On the other, water is a symbol of divine grace that gives eternal life. In the biblical tradition God is the source of living water: as it says in Psalms and in the Prophets: distancing oneself from God, the source of living water, and from his Law, leads to the worst drought. This is the experience of the People of Israel in the desert. During their long journey to freedom, as they were dying of thirst, they cried out against Moses and against God because

there was no water. Thus, God willed Moses to make water flow from a rock, as a sign of the Providence of God, accompanying his people and giving them life (cf. Ex 17:1-7).

The Apostle Paul, too, interprets that rock as a symbol of Christ. He says: “And that rock was Christ” (cf. 1 Cor 10:4). It is the mysterious figure of his presence in the midst of the People of God on their journey. Christ, in fact, is the Temple from which, according to the prophets, flows the Holy Spirit, the living water which purifies and gives life. Whoever thirsts for salvation can draw freely from Jesus, and the Spirit will become a wellspring of full and eternal life in him/her. The promise of living water that Jesus made to the Samaritan woman becomes a reality in his Passion: from his pierced side flowed “blood and water” (Jn 19:34). Christ, the Lamb, immolated and risen, is the wellspring from which flows the Holy Spirit who remits sins and regenerates new life.

This gift is also the source of witness. Like the Samaritan woman, whoever personally encounters the living Jesus feels the need to talk about him to others, so that everyone might reach the point of proclaiming that Jesus “is truly the saviour of the world” (Jn 4:42), as the woman’s fellow townspeople later said. Generated to new life through Baptism, we too are called to witness the life and hope that are within us. If our quest and our thirst are thoroughly quenched in Christ, we will manifest that salvation is not found in the “things” of this world, which ultimately produce drought, but in he who has loved us and will always love us: Jesus, our Saviour, in the living water, that he offers us.

May Mary, Most Holy, help us nourish a desire for Christ, font of living water, the only one who can satisfy the thirst for life and love that we bear in our hearts.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, Saint Peter’s Square is closed during these days. Therefore, my greetings go directly to you who are connected through the means of communications. In this time of pandemic in which we find ourselves living more or less isolated, we are invited to rediscover and deepen the value of communion that unites all members of the Church. United to Christ we are never alone, but rather, we form one sole Body, with he as the head. It is a union that is nourished by prayer and by spiritual communion in the Eucharist, a practice that is highly recommended when it is not possible to receive the Sacrament. I say this to everyone, especially to those who live alone.

I renew my closeness to all the sick and those caring for them. This extends to all the caregivers and volunteers who help those who cannot leave their homes, and those who are meeting the needs of the poorest and the homeless.

Thank you so much for all the effort that each of you is making to help during this difficult time.

May the Lord bless you. May Our Lady keep you; and please do not forget to pray for me. Have a nice Sunday. Enjoy your lunch! Thank you.