

FIFTH SUNDAY OF PASCHA – SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN
- Icon of Jesus and the Samaritan Woman



Water Gushing Up to Eternal Life

The woman who came to the well represents the Church, not as already made upright but as still needing redemption. She comes in ignorance and finds Christ. It is part of the pre-figuration that she should come of an alien people, for the Church would be drawn from nations that were strangers to Israel. Let us recognize ourselves in this woman and, through her, thank God in our own behalf. For she was a shadow, not reality, or, rather, she herself passed from shadow to reality when she believed in Christ and showed us the way.

The woman had brought her own water jar with her and was surprised therefore at Christ's request, for Jews did not use the utensils of foreigners. But he who asked for a drink was really thirsting for the woman's faith.

Christ thus asks for water and promises water. He is in need and wants to receive; he is rich and wants to quench the thirst of others. "If you only knew God's gift," he says. God's gift is the Holy Spirit. But Christ is still speaking in a veiled fashion and only gradually makes his way into the woman's heart. He is teaching her, but how gently and kindly! "If you only knew God's gift and realized who asks you for a drink, you would perhaps be asking him instead, and he would be giving you living water." What water is this but the water the psalmist speaks of: "in you is the fountain of life?" Christ was promising therefore the quenching of thirst which the Holy Spirit brings.

From the Commentary on St. John by St. Augustine