



Please Give Generously to the
Pontifical Good Friday Holy Land Collection

Third Sunday of Lent: Have Courage and Drink Deeply!

This week's Gospel story from the fourth chapter of John features a woman – and even more surprisingly – a Samaritan woman. In Jesus' time, there was much enmity between the Hebrew people and those from Samaria and they did not associate with one another. But, this encounter between the Samaritan woman and Jesus dissolved that barrier between them in a most remarkable way.

This Samaritan woman was an outcast, a sinner; but she showed courage. She does not run away when a stranger, that she recognizes is a Jew, asked her for a drink. She stayed and what unfolded was an amazing encounter with the living God. When Jesus offers her living water, she is initially confused, but intrigued. In response to her kindness and courage, Jesus, in turn, reveals Himself to her as the Mess-



Traffic back-up at a checkpoint in the separation wall in the West Bank

ah and she joyfully brings that message to her neighbors. Again, she demonstrates her courage – a sinner and an outcast, and a woman - ready to risk her neighbors' anger and disdain to share the Good News.

The location of this Gospel story is Jacob's well, which in Jesus' time was in Samaria. Historic Samaria, which is located in the West Bank, is difficult to get to today, because it is in Palestinian territory that is occupied by the Israeli government. In order for a pilgrim in the Holy Land to enter the village of Nablus and visit Jacob's well and the Greek Orthodox Church built over it, the tour bus must go through checkpoints in the separation wall that stretches hundreds of miles through Palestinian lands. This area of the West Bank is very tightly controlled. The Palestinian Christians there, like their Muslim neighbors, have little freedom to travel anywhere. Like the Samaritan woman, they need to have great courage to face the many obstacles to human freedom and

dignity in their daily lives. They do not have free access to their work, their schools, their hospitals or their families. They must file through long lines at these Israeli checkpoints and are totally at the whim of security personnel whether they are permitted to pass through or not. They, like the Samaritan woman, risk being targets of bigoted anger and disdain as they attempt to simply live and survive each day.

Have you demonstrated the courage of the Samaritan woman to meet and recognize an encounter with Christ and to drink of the living water that He offers to you during this Lenten season? Are you ready to ask Jesus for the courage to stand up for your neighbors that are targets of anger, disdain and violence from others? One way to be courageous and drink of God's living water is to pray for our Christian brothers and sisters in the Holy Land and to support them through giving alms to the Pontifical Good Friday Collection this Lent.

Help For Holy Land Christians

Franciscan Good Friday Collection:

www.myfranciscan.org

Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem:

www.holysepulchre.net

Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem:

www.lpj.org