

3rd Sunday of Lent: March 23rd, 2025.

Where do you gather to encounter Jesus?

This question is from the Parish Life Commission; “Where do you gather to encounter Jesus?” Some of the responses on the board, from our dynamic disciples are:

At children’s ministry class. Cum Christo small group at City Brew. Deep in the woods in God’s creation. Everywhere. At daily Mass. At Morning coffee with others. In the mountains. At the Youth group. Home, Church, people. At the church, or on the wrestling mat.

Visit to St Vincent De Paul facility: Last week I visited **St Vincent De Paul facility here in Billings,** and had a great encounter with Jesus in the many friends there. This is a unique encounter. I also had a tour of the amazing facility.

Preface Week III of Lent, this prayer reads; “It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, Holy Father, Almighty and eternal God. ***For you will that our self-denial should give you thanks, humble our sinful pride, contribute to the feeding of the poor, and so help us imitate you in your kindness.*** And so we glorify you with countless Angels, as with one voice of praise we acclaim: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts”. Friends let us continue to PRAY, FAST and GIVE intentionally.

On the Last Judgment: “Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’
“The King will reply, ***Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.***’ (Matt 25: 34-4. New International Version)

Fr. Martin Ezeihuaku, MSP. 3rd Sunday of Lent: March 23rd, 2025.

Sunday Gospel - John 4:5-42. (New International Version)

The Samaritan woman in John's gospel encountered Jesus at the community well (Jacob's well).

What is a well? A well is a hole drilled into the ground to access groundwater. The most common is the dug or driven wells. Drilled (this is a modern style) wells use drilling equipment and can reach greater depths. A pipe and a pump are used to extract water from the ground, and a screen filters out unwanted particles that could clog the pipe. This has been a major source of water for many homes and communities in many developing countries. My daily morning duties growing up as a young boy were to sweep the compound, fetch water from the stream (5 miles away), warm meal for myself, and then prepare for school.

"I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." The woman said, "*I know that Messiah (called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.*" Then Jesus declared, "***I, the one speaking to you—I am he.***"²⁷ Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman"

The woman went to fetch water and not only encountered Jesus Christ at the community well (Jacob's well), but she also eventually invited her own community back to the same well to encounter Jesus. "So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world." (John 4:40-42)

Gospel reflections: This reveals the reality of Christ's humanity; He was tired and hungry. Jesus breaks down the barriers of hatred and prejudice. For the strict Jewish Rabbis, Jesus' action would have been unacceptable - not only was she a woman, but she was also a woman of notorious character. No decent man, let alone a rabbi, would have been seen in her company or
Fr. Martin Ezeihuaku, MSP. 3rd Sunday of Lent: March 23rd, 2025.

talking to her, and yet Jesus had a long conversation with her. ***“This woman had a life-time encounter with Jesus right there at well. This is amazing. Here is the Son of God, tired, and weary and thirsty. Here was the holiest of men, listening with understanding to a sorry story. Here was Jesus breaking through the barriers of nationality and orthodox Jewish custom. Here is God so loving the world, not in theory, but in action”.***

Water is life: Both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, throughout ancient history and today, there is a deep longing in the human soul, a thirst for life-giving, a thirst for eternity, a thirst for God. There is a deep thirst in all of us, which only Jesus Christ can satisfy.

True worshippers must worship Jesus Christ: “The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” Then Jesus declared, ***“I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”*** (John 4: 25-26).

God is Spirit: God is present everywhere, and He can be worshipped anywhere, at any time. Where we worship is not what counts but how we worship. Is your worship of God genuine and true? Let us pray that the Holy Spirit will help us worship GOD properly that is, in ‘Spirit and truth.’

Having discovered Jesus the Savior, this woman was compelled to share her story with others. ***The Christian life is based on two pillars of discovery and communication.*** No discovery is complete until the desire to share it feels out hearts. We can communicate Christ to others only if we have discovered Him for ourselves. First to find, then, to tell, are the two great steps of dynamic Christian life. Please remember to pray for our candidates and catechumens who are preparing for Baptism, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation this Easter.

Where do you gather to encounter Jesus Christ?

Wishing you all a blessed Lenten week.

God bless you.

Fr. Martin Ezeihuaku, MSP.

Fr. Martin Ezeihuaku, MSP. 3rd Sunday of Lent: March 23rd, 2025.

