

SERMON
Sunday of the Samaritan Woman (John 4:5-42)
(10 May 2026)

A very remarkable episode is preserved for us by the Apostle and Evangelist John, and it is indeed unique and rich in meaning—not only because of the event itself and the lofty and profound truths the Lord reveals, but also because of the circumstances under which the events of today's Gospel take place.

At the outset, Christ meets a woman alone at midday by a well and even begins a conversation with her. If we think about it, according to the customs of that time, this was unacceptable. The social environment regarded women as inferior, and consequently, it was unacceptable for a man to treat her as an equal interlocutor. Even more scandalous is the fact that Jesus, being a Jew, speaks with a woman from Samaria. This too was forbidden by the norms of the time, since the two peoples were divided by deep-rooted hostility. The reasons were both national and religious, and without analysing them in detail, the important point is that any association between members of these two groups was not permitted.

There is also a third element revealed by Christ Himself, who as God knows all things: the moral state of the Samaritan woman. She was a woman whose moral life was not blameless; she had had five husbands and was now living with a man to whom she was not married. The Fathers do not hesitate to note that she lived an immoral life—something that would certainly have been known in her surroundings and would have provoked disapproval and condemnation.

Yet none of the above—a social convention, a religious or national restriction, or even a condition of moral degradation—prevents Christ from drawing His creation toward salvation. And He does this in a truly striking way. Let us not overlook this small but significant detail: He asks the woman to give Him water to drink—not, of course, because He needed it, for He was God and could do all things, but in order to give her dignity and thus gradually bring her closer to Himself.

In the dialogue that follows, something astonishing occurs: this woman, who is in such spiritual and moral decline, expresses profound and important theological questions, and Christ does not hesitate to reveal to her—this foreign woman of questionable morality—truths that He had not even revealed to His own disciples. This shows that sin had not hardened her heart; deep within her being, despite outward appearances, there was a thirst for the true God. That is why she asks how God ought to be worshipped. Her insatiable and unfulfilled carnal desire was, in reality, a deep existential thirst for God. And as soon as she realises that Christ is sent from God, she makes a great leap: she leaves everything, returns to her village, and proclaims that the Messiah has come and is among us.

We must not, my brothers and sisters, be quick to judge others—rather, we should not judge at all, because we do not know their inner world. Judgment belongs only to God, and His plan for each person is mysterious and beyond the grasp of our

limited understanding and reasoning. Today's Gospel teaches us that within the heart of a person whom we may see as sinful, there may be hidden true treasures. Let us not become moralists who condemn others. Christ did not focus on the Samaritan woman's morality; what He saw—just as in many other cases—was the magnitude of love. A love that may at times go astray and turn toward earthly things, yet, when there is good intention, always finds its way. So let us also turn toward the Lord with love, and not remain trapped in our carnal selves. It is this love that will save us—not our supposed moral purity. Amen!