

Overflowing



Jesus, living water – cleanse, refresh and heal me. Fill my heart with love and joy that bubbles up and overflows. And may your Church be awash with your life, worshipping you in spirit and in truth. Amen.

Some more things you might not know about Lent

by Caroline Hodgson

In the early Church, fasting during Lent meant eating one meal a day, after sunset, with no meat, dairy or fish. In Eastern Orthodox traditions the Lenten fast was much stricter – in addition to eschewing meat, dairy, eggs and fish, wine and olive oil were also forbidden. In parts of medieval Europe almond milk was used instead of dairy during Lent. In parts of France and Germany, bishops would sell special “butter permits”, allowing it to be eaten during Lent – for a fee!

Many cultures still have unique Lenten foods. For example, in Italy, you might find *zeppole* (fried pastries) eaten before Lent starts. Meanwhile in Mexico, Lenten dishes such as *capirotada* (a type of bread pudding) are traditional, particularly on Good Friday. In Eastern Europe, people often eat pierogi dumplings without the meat filling during Lent. Lastly, did you know pretzels were invented for Lent? The shape (representing arms crossed in prayer) and the simple ingredients (flour, salt and water) made them ideal for fast days. 🍴

Georgina Byrne *reflects on* John 4:5-42

It is no accident that a passage about living water is, in itself, one of the most refreshing discussions in scripture. Living water is the free-flowing water of a natural stream – unboundaried and uncontrollable. It contrasts with the water of the well, which is tamed and contained. What we have here is a conversation that bubbles with life as it splashes back and forth. Jesus breaks out from the cultural boundaries by speaking to a woman who is also a Samaritan. She, refreshingly, banters back. The two of them then share such a profound exchange that, when the disciples return (and are duly astonished that Jesus is even speaking with her) the woman abandons her water jar in order to go and tell others about it.

This conversation is tremendously rich and layered, but it can serve simply to remind us that Jesus Christ, the living water, knows no limitations when he meets us. We cannot contain the living God in an ordered, Sunday-shaped well. Jesus can meet us at any time, in any situation – even in ordinary domestic moments. The challenge is: are we, like the Samaritan woman, ready to be drawn into a deeper faith, even if it isn't neat or convenient? And are we, even at the risk of ridicule, ready to tell others about Jesus, with the joy of the living water overflowing from us? 🍷

People of the New Testament

Priscilla

by Caroline Fletcher

Acts 18:1-4, 18, 24-28; Romans 16:3-4; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19

Priscilla was a close friend of Paul and played a key role in establishing churches in Rome, Corinth and Ephesus. She was married to a Jewish man called Aquila, who came from the Roman province of Pontus on the Black Sea coast, in modern-day Turkey.

They were a well-travelled, cosmopolitan couple, who spent

time living in three different parts of the Roman Empire – Italy, Greece and Asia Minor – serving the Lord wherever they went and using their assets to further God's purposes by hosting churches in their homes. In this way they helped Paul in his missionary endeavours, supported and encouraged the apostle in difficult times and even “risked their necks” for him (Romans 16:4).

Priscilla's story offers us an insight into why Christianity was able to spread around the Roman Empire, how the first churches began and the important role women played in them. 🍷

“Lent comes providentially to awaken us, to shake us from our lethargy.”

Pope Francis (1936-2025)