

*Ambassadors of a*  
**WORLDWIDE BROTHERHOOD**

**MEDITATION 4 (August 9, 2011)**

**Today it is about water again. Psalm 1 spoke about roots in streams of living water. Sunday we heard about the storm on the lake and the waters that listen to Jesus. Yesterday we meditated at the springs of Elim. Today we may sit at the well of Jacob. Thus water evokes a strong melody of recognition. It reminds us of our own thirst, physical and spiritual. It reminds us of our own baptism. And of the radical call: 'let your life be a reflection of your baptism'.**

- **Lectio: John 4**

- 1 Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John
- 2 (although Jesus himself was not baptizing, just his disciples),
- 3 he left Judea and returned to Galilee.
- 4 He had to pass through Samaria.
- 5 So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.
- 6 Jacob's well was there. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon.
- 7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink."
- 8 His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.
- 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" (For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.)
- 10 Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."
- 11 (The woman) said to him, "Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water?"
- 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself with his children and his flocks?"
- 13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again;
- 14 but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."
- 15 The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."
- 16 Jesus said to her, "Go call your husband and come back."
- 17 The woman answered and said to him, "I do not have a husband." Jesus answered her, "You are right in saying, 'I do not have a husband.'"
- 18 For you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true."
- 19 The woman said to him, "Sir, I can see that you are a prophet.
- 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain; but you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem."
- 21 Jesus said to her, "Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.
- 22 You people worship what you do not understand; we worship what we understand, because salvation is from the Jews.
- 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him.

24 God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth."  
 25 The woman said to him, "I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Anointed; when he comes, he will tell us everything."  
 26 Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking with you."  
 27 At that moment his disciples returned, and were amazed that he was talking with a woman, but still no one said, "What are you looking for?" or "Why are you talking with her?"  
 28 The woman left her water jar and went into the town and said to the people,  
 29 "Come see a man who told me everything I have done. Could he possibly be the Messiah?"  
 30 They went out of the town and came to him.  
 31 Meanwhile, the disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat."  
 32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know."  
 33 So the disciples said to one another, "Could someone have brought him something to eat?"  
 34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work.  
 35 Do you not say, 'In four months the harvest will be here'? I tell you, look up and see the fields ripe for the harvest.  
 36 The reaper is already receiving his payment and gathering crops for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together.  
 37 For here the saying is verified that 'One sows and another reaps.'  
 38 I sent you to reap what you have not worked for; others have done the work, and you are sharing the fruits of their work."  
 39 Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me everything I have done."  
 40 When the Samaritans came to him, they invited him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days.  
 41 Many more began to believe in him because of his word,  
 42 and they said to the woman, "We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the saviour of the world."

- **Meditatio**

We are going to listen to the Gospel according to St. John; we will be hearing the second long conversation Jesus had. After Jesus' talk with Nicodemus in the course of the night, we now hear His talk with a Samaritan woman in the midst of the day. The topic of this conversation is once again water. After the Baptism by John and the water/wine miracle at the wedding of Cana, Jesus spoke with Nicodemus about being re-born through Spirit and water. Later on, the topic became the baptisms by John and by Jesus' disciples. Today we are going to hear Jesus talk in a new manner about water. The text gets more compact and more concentrated.

We are sitting near a well. An old well, probably already more than 1100 years old, from the time Jesus was sitting there. This is the well of Jacob. Jacob is the grandchild of Abraham, and the last one of the three patriarchs belonging to the people of Israel. In the same manner as his father Isaac and also Abraham, he too dug a well. The text takes us along to one of the primeval sources of Israel. Israel is the second name of Jacob. Thus, we are guided by the text to the beginning, in order to once again obtain water from that source.

Next to Jesus, the main person is a woman. They had a private conversation. It is striking that the woman is not given a name. Furthermore, it is quite remarkable that Jesus starts talking with her, contrary to all norms of those days. In addition, the woman is a Samaritan. Jews and Samaritans did not mingle, the text observes. Similar to so many people who avoid each other because they belong to a different nation, a different town, a different island, etc. etc. Discrimination is always close. Also the position of the woman is questionable: Why is she there? What brings her to the well? What is she looking for as far as Jesus is concerned? Surely, we are getting the impression of seeing a strong woman. A woman who dares to retort Jesus. Similar to Jesus, she is not blocked by the walls which did separate Samaritans and Jews. The very fact that she dared to speak with Jesus shows still something else. Jesus is not looking for people who do not have a mind of their own. What matters is that they come to faith through their own conviction. People who are aware of opposite opinions,

and then decide to follow Jesus. Only in this way can there come about a group of people who get thoroughly acquainted with Jesus. People who try to understand Jesus fully: who is He? But also people who can go beyond that: What does He want?; what does He want me to do? The conversation with the Samaritan woman shows three central points: (1) the source of living water, (2) true religion, and (3) acknowledging who Jesus is. It all starts with common water from a well. With normal everyday thirst. Similar to the guests at the wedding, and similar to Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman does not understand Jesus' answer. Just like that, Jesus jumps from common drinking water to living water. The woman does not get it, and she carries on along the material meaning of the word water. Jesus, however, moves the conversation to a spiritual level. He is talking about the source within the human being as such. The words 'the source of living water' are an indirect reference to the Elim story. The source of living water within oneself is the Torah (the Law) and all of Scripture. The Scriptures pour streams of living water. This woman is so well acquainted with the Scriptures that she recognizes the metaphor. By way of asking who her husband is, the story continues for another step. The woman sees a prophet in Jesus. And she asks: Where is God really to be honoured? Jesus points out to her that this is not a matter of a specific place; what does matter is how a human being honours God. You also adore God by the way you are. The body of every faithful person is God's temple. That is real religion: to adore God in all truth with your whole heart, your whole mind and all your strength.

Then the woman confesses that she is aware that the Messiah will come. Thus the story once again passes to a new level. Where the story first was all about what Jesus can give, now the topic is Jesus' identity. And Jesus proclaims his first I-am-word: I am the Messiah. (The other I-am-words are: the Bread; the Light; the Door; the true Shepherd; the Resurrection and the Life; the Way, the Truth and the Life; the true Vine.)

What comes now is quite interesting. The woman goes back to the town, and she is going to get her neighbours. Thus she becomes a witness on behalf of Jesus. Meanwhile Jesus is instructing his disciples. They too are sent on their way. They are allowed to bring in the harvest He did sow. We are granted to harvest what is alive in terms of brother- and sisterhood in the world. And as a conclusion we hear a new testimony and this even from the Samaritans. And on top of it, with a new title for Jesus. He is the saviour of the world. They go beyond what Jesus meant thus far. Salvation comes from the Jews, Jesus Himself says. But – the Samaritans add – that salvation is for the whole world. Jesus is not merely of consequence for the Jews, but for all humankind. A definitive breakthrough with regard to all distinctions.

- **Contemplatio**

*After each item, there is to be a moment of silence; at the end there is a period of silence for 10 minutes, ending with instrumental music.*

1. Make your life a mirror of your baptism. What does it mean to you that you have been baptized? How does that become concrete in the decisions you make? In your lifestyle or in way you live?
2. The Samaritan woman is called to account regarding her behaviour. Do you recognize yourself in her? Or in your own life? In what way 'yes'/'no'?
3. Jesus is a prophet, the Messiah, the saviour of the world. Who is Jesus for you? How are you rooted in Him?
4. Jesus sends us on our way to witness on His behalf. He commissions us to gather the harvest. What do you think Jesus sowed in your heart? What is your answer to his call?
5. How do you witness to worldwide brotherhood? Which signs of worldwide brotherhood do you see in the world around you?

- **Collatio (sharing)**

1. What did this meditation do to each one of you? What question would you like to discuss concretely?

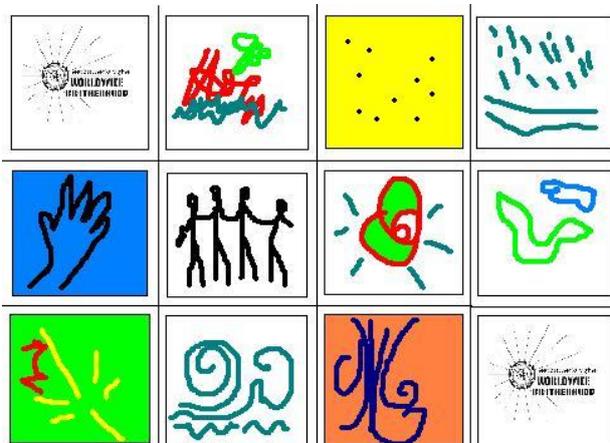
2. Also you have been baptized in the name of Jesus. What does that signify to you? How is that mirrored in your everyday concrete life?
3. The theme 'Being rooted in Jesus' is the theme of the World Youth Days. Do share with each other about Jesus, and what He means to you. And also how you respond to what He did give.

- **Oratio (praying)**

What prayer wells up in you when you shared about the source of life, Baptism, Jesus' identity, and the mission?

- **Creatio (creative processing)**

We are going to make flags, with which we will show the world what worldwide brotherhood means to us. E.g., let yourself be inspired by the concepts of the actual theme of the worldwide brotherhood: *Jesus, our compass, our way to compassion*. Also other central themes can be used such as baptism, brotherhood and oasis. Agree with your group who will create what theme.



Nine groups of each about 10 or 11 persons (ambassadors of different countries together). Everyone gets a piece of white fabric. With textile paint / textile markers you paint or draw your image.

In order to make it easier to draw, paste your painting with tape on a piece of cardboard. Then the surface underneath is protected against the paint.

Later on these 10 or 11 pieces will be joined together into one single canvas (with once or twice the logo). Be careful that you keep about 4 cm white at the edges, for they still need to be hemmed.