University of Malta
Faculty of Theology

Discovering
Christian Identity and Memory
Through the Meeting of Jesus
with
the Samaritan Woman

(Jn 4:1-42)

Dissertation presented
in part fulfilment of the requirements
for the Master of Arts in Spirituality
(General)

Cynthia Grech Sammut
May 2017
University of Malta Library – Electronic Thesis & Dissertations (ETD) Repository

The copyright of this thesis/dissertation belongs to the author. The author’s rights in respect of this work are as defined by the Copyright Act (Chapter 415) of the Laws of Malta or as modified by any successive legislation.

Users may access this full-text thesis/dissertation and can make use of the information contained in accordance with the Copyright Act provided that the author must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the prior permission of the copyright holder.
DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY FOR MASTER’S STUDENTS

Student’s I.D. / Code: 230770 (M)

Student’s Name & Surname: Cynthia Grech Sammut

Course: Master of Arts in Spirituality (General)

Title of Dissertation

Discovering Christian Identity and Memory Through the Meeting of Jesus with the Samaritan Woman (Jn 4:1-42)

I hereby declare that I am the legitimate author of this Dissertation and that it is my original work.

No portion of this work has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or institution of higher education.

I hold the University of Malta harmless against any third party claims with regard to copyright violation, breach of confidentiality, defamation and any other third party right infringement.

As a Master’s student, as per Regulation 58 of the General Regulations for University Postgraduate Awards, I accept that should my dissertation be awarded a Grade A, it will be made publicly available on the University of Malta Institutional Repository.

__________________________________________________________
Signature of Student

__________________________________________________________
Date
Abstract

In a climate of secularisation and breakdown of geographical barriers the Christian faith is being challenged in new ways.\(^1\) Ecumenical and interreligious dialogue have improved as the confrontation of faith is no longer only between those of different beliefs but with a society which is questioning its values and roots. Yet the past and history cannot be ignored.

The meeting point for all divergent opinions (on faith) remains the human person. Neurotheology\(^2\) provides a neutral space where the relationship between the human person and God can be explored. However, whilst studying the effect on the person in relation to God, this science does not necessarily reflect the identity gained through the relationship – what makes a Christian a Christian? This dissertation will try to discover what characteristics are significant to the Christian identity. The scene near Jacob’s well provides a variety of examples of persons who believe in Jesus Christ. Past and present are reconciled when the Samaritan woman encounters Jesus. A new future is created with the Samaritans who invite Jesus to stay and proclaim him Saviour of the world (Jn 4:42). And Jesus engages his faithful disciples further in their mission.

With characteristics of Christian identity discovered through this biblical background, liturgy is proposed as a space where the ‘spirit and truth’ can meet in worship to nourish and maintain the Christian identity whilst reliving the memorial of the history of salvation: Jesus carrying out the will of God the Father and proposing the gift of living water in the Holy Spirit.

---


\(^2\) Neurotheology is an emerging neuroscience which studies the effects of religious/spiritual experiences through the use of neuroimaging (brain scans). Andrew B Newberg describes it as “the field studying the intersection between brain and religion”. Neurotheology – Matters of the Mind or Matters that Mind? https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov › NCBI › Literature › PubMed Central (PMC); Andrew B. Newberg, *Principles of Neurotheology*, Ashgate Science and Religion Series (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), preface ix.
To all
who are misunderstood
in their
search
for
the Truth
With gratitude to
all my family and friends
who supported me in various ways
especially to Daniel and Alan
who shared with me
the highs and lows of writing

Special thanks to
Rev. Dr Paul Sciberras
for his considerate and holistic support
as supervisor throughout this journey

I would also like to thank
Anna Stivala for her invaluable comments and suggestions
which made this writing experience one of growth in language and in spirit
and Joseph and Jean
who helped to bring words onto paper
# Table of Contents

Declaration of Authenticity ............................................................................................................. ii
Abstract ........................................................................................................................................ iii
Dedication ......................................................................................................................................... iv
Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................................... v
Table of Contents ............................................................................................................................ vi

Introduction ..................................................................................................................................... 1
  0.1 The Context ............................................................................................................................. 1
  0.2 The Aim .................................................................................................................................. 2
  0.3 The Chapters ........................................................................................................................... 3
  0.4 Limitations ............................................................................................................................... 4
  0.5 Methodology ........................................................................................................................... 5

Chapter 1 Definitions ......................................................................................................................... 7
  1.1 Definition of Memory ............................................................................................................... 7
  1.2 Definition of Identity ............................................................................................................... 13
  1.3 Definition of Christian ............................................................................................................ 16

Chapter 2 Living Water ....................................................................................................................... 20
  2.1 Meeting Jesus - Source of Eternal Life .................................................................................. 20
    2.1.1 Time of Meeting ............................................................................................................... 20
    2.1.2 Place of meeting – Jacob’s well ...................................................................................... 23
    2.1.3 Person – Nicodemus and the Samaritan Woman ............................................................. 27
    2.1.3.1 Comparisons and Contrasts in their Meeting with Jesus ............................................ 27
    2.1.3.2 Different Faith Responses ............................................................................................ 29
  2.2 From Sir to Prophet to Messiah .............................................................................................. 33
    2.2.1 Engagement in Dialogue ................................................................................................. 33
    2.2.2 Revelation of the Woman’s True Self .............................................................................. 35
    2.2.3 Revelation of Jesus Christ ............................................................................................... 37
  2.3 Living Water – Welling up to Eternal Life .............................................................................. 41
    2.3.1 From Isolation to Communion ......................................................................................... 41
    2.3.2 Jesus Overcomes All Barriers ......................................................................................... 42
    2.3.3 A New Identity – Discipleship Through Faith ................................................................. 44

Chapter 3 Nourishing Discipleship .................................................................................................. 46
  3.1 Identity of Christ and of His Disciples – Carrying out the Divine Will .................................. 47
  3.2 The sower and the reaper – relationship and characteristics ............................................... 48
  3.3 Time – Past, Present and Future .............................................................................................. 51
Introduction

0.1 The Context

This dissertation was conceived at a time when in Malta divorce had been legalised, abortion and euthanasia were on the horizon and changes in the laws on embryo freezing and the Morning-after pill were being discussed. In this context, many previously unquestioned Christian values and beliefs were being challenged. Different reactions were stirred within families and across generations. In this climate, the questions arose: What values and beliefs underlie the identity of the Christian? Which teachings of the Catholic Church are amenable to change? Which characteristics in the Christian identity remain sacrosanct?

On a global level, similar reactions unfolded across the Catholic Church during and after the synod on the family. Roots were being shaken and for some this meant a weakening in the foundations of the Church. Others saw an opportunity for renewal: for discernment to approach the realities of faith as they need to be lived authentically in the world today.

---


0.2 The Aim

The objective of this dissertation is to discover characteristics which are fundamental to the Christian identity. One also aspires to discover how the Christian can relate to the past and its memories in a way in which it is integrated with the present and nourishes the future. A biblical text was chosen as the basis of this study: Sacred Scriptures provide a source of spiritual nourishment for the Christian to reconnect to the original revelation of their identity in Christ. The importance of including memory in this study was felt because it defines identity and relates it to the past. No matter how much society insists that certain values rooted in faith belong to the past, it is only by looking to the past that the relevance of these values can find fulfilment and make sense in the present. In Scriptures identity and memory are found in relation to the history of salvation narrated through the books of the Old Testament, the New Testament and especially in the post-resurrection period. They span the history of salvation while still ‘speaking’ to the Christian today.

The biblical pericope of John 4:1-42 was chosen because it contains elements which bring various characteristics of the Christian identity together. Symbolically, on a vertical dimension one sees Jacob’s well – a cistern – which contains water lying deep and requiring repeated human effort to be accessed (Jn 4:11,13). On coming up to the surface of the well, one meets Jesus who is offering living water which wells up to eternal life (Jn 4:14). On a horizontal dimension one finds Jesus, a Jew and the Samaritan woman. They meet at Jacob’s well, an ancestor common to both. Jesus transforms a situation of ‘thirst’ into one of life. He gives the woman more than she had asked for (Jn 4:15). He reveals himself and reconciles her with herself and with her fellow townspeople.

The meeting does not stop at the individual but extends to include the disciples and the Samaritan people who are both invited to grow in their faith: the latter to believe in Jesus as Saviour of the world (Jn 4:42), the former to deepen their relationship with God through Christ and become participants in the history of salvation. Thus, the communitarian aspect of Christian faith is also presented in this text.

---

7 All bible references and citations were taken from the online Revised Standard Version (RSV) of the Bible: Bible Gateway, https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+4&version=RSV.

8 Refer to appendix A for a diagrammatic representation of this description of the text.
The elements of water and food (nourishment) which are basic to life and sustenance, are used by Jesus in the dialogues. In John’s gospel, they are used to refer to spiritual life.

Thus, this text was seen to encompass elements which can answer the question posed: what constitutes the identity of the Christian today, their relationship with the past and tradition of their faith, and what can maintain and nourish the identity today? Central to this scene and also to Christian faith is the encounter with Jesus Christ which perhaps is being missed in today’s world when the emphasis is on the self.

0.3 The Chapters

The first chapter will deal with definitions of the key terms: Memory, Identity and Christian. These three terms are widely used, so defining them was considered essential to clarify their use in this dissertation. In the second chapter the first scene in which the Samaritan woman meets with Jesus (Jn 4:1-26) will be explored. The context of the meeting will be discussed in the first section through the study of the time and place of meeting. The response of the Samaritan woman will be compared to Nicodemus featuring in the previous chapter of John’s gospel. In the second section the progress in the Samaritan woman’s faith response will be discussed. The third section will deal with the living water and the effects of Jesus’ revelation by looking at the formation of communion, overcoming of barriers and the new identity gained through faith.

In the third chapter the second scene (Jn 4:27-42) will be discussed. Here the predominant element is food – nourishment and harvest. The presence of Jesus’ disciples changes the level of commitment demanded by Jesus and introduces another element in the development of the Christian identity: that of doing the will of God. This will be discussed in the first section. In the second section the relationship of the Christian with God and changes brought about by the presence of Jesus Christ will be considered. In the last section of this chapter, the relationship of the Christian with the past, present and future will be examined. This chapter brings out the communitarian aspect of the Christian identity within the Church, in the present time but also in relation to the past through tradition and history, and in the future with realised eschatology.
The fourth chapter is an attempt to relate all of the above with a tangible way of expressing and nourishing the identity of the Christian in the world today. Through Romano Guardini’s *The Spirit of the Liturgy* the link was made to liturgy as being a potential space where the Christian can receive the living water and nourish oneself. In the first section one explores what is required for this space to become a meeting place where the Christian can encounter God and receive that which gives identity and life. The second section looks at Sacred Scriptures as the revelation of the Word (*logos*; λόγος) for the Christian today. In accepting and embracing this Word, the Christian may proclaim as the Samaritans did, that Jesus is the Saviour of the world (Jn 4:42). In the last section, the Eucharistic liturgy will be presented as bringing together memory and identity for the Christian through the celebration of the paschal mystery as being the peak of expression of Jesus’ identity as Christ and Son of God. During the Eucharistic liturgy, the Christian not only relives but also partakes in this act of salvation so that the Eucharist becomes the nourishment needed to fulfil their lives in Christ.

0.4 Limitations

This dissertation is not a comprehensive study of the relationship of the Christian with their memory and identity. One is aware that the characteristics extracted through the study of this biblical text are limited to the text itself and reflect the Johannine way of presenting the Christian. The latter is related to the context and time in which the gospel was written and takes in consideration the audience being addressed. This context however is valuable for the Christian today, because the challenges which the Christians were facing then are similar to those of today – animosity between Jews and Christians, and differences between the Christians themselves as the faith spread to different communities each with their particular circumstances and space. The challenge for the Christian remains to keep their identity and faith rooted in ‘spirit and truth’ (Jn 4: 23,24).

A more detailed description of the way memory is viewed in neurotheology was not possible due to restrictions in the length of the dissertation. A view of how the identity

---

of the human person is currently defined was also not possible due to the same constraint.\textsuperscript{10} It would have been interesting to compare this with the identity of the Christian especially since one speaks of the latter as being related to the very beginnings of creation – ‘man’ being created in the true image and likeness of God\textsuperscript{11}. For the Christian, an identity rooted in this belief, could provide the direction of choice and debate when faith and science meet in issues such as abortion, euthanasia and embryo freezing.

The exploration of liturgy as a space where the Christian can discover and nourish one’s memories and identity was also limited due to space constraints. The discussion was limited to the points elicited in the study of the biblical text. The focus taken was to compare the liturgy to the well, as meeting place and source of water in the biblical scene. The characteristics of the Christian identity and relationship with memory were then considered in relation to Sacred Scriptures and the Eucharistic liturgy. Rather than taking a wide view of the liturgy in its different forms, this chapter starts from the premise that liturgy is “the animating center of the church, the very center of Christian life.”\textsuperscript{12}

One final constraint in this dissertation was the need to rely on biblical commentaries to study the text due to minimal knowledge of the Greek language.

0.5 Methodology

This dissertation is a study of the biblical text based on biblical commentaries and other writings pertaining to spirituality. The approach was to engage in the spirituality of the biblical text within the context of the Christian faith as lived today. Due to the limited knowledge of the Greek language, the study relied considerably on the observations and


\textsuperscript{11} Discussed in section 1.2

spirituality elicited by biblical exegetes and biblical theologians. However, an effort was made to reflect upon these and to relate them to current situations with the deductions being relevant to the experience of the present-day Christian.
Chapter 1 Definitions

This dissertation led to an exploration of three key terms in the thesis statement: ‘memory’, ‘identity’ and ‘Christian’. It became clear that these terms, although commonly used with good communicative value, are not easily defined and carry with them a variety of facets and perspectives which in themselves would merit a dissertation each.

The purpose of this chapter is, therefore, not to give a comprehensive discussion of these words, but rather to offer a brief background on their meaning, and a clarification on their use in relation to this dissertation. Although these clarifications have their limitations, the intention is that they will allow one to focus on the main task which is that of studying the biblical text chosen (Jn 4:1-42) and deriving a practical concept which is relevant to the Christian today.

1.1 Definition of Memory

In attempting to define memory, one embarks on a journey across several fields of study, especially since this dissertation considers the subject within three disciplines – biblical study, spirituality and neurotheology – which, whilst standing in their own right, overlap.13

The Cambridge dictionary defines memory as “the ability to remember information, experiences and people”14 with the verb ‘to remember’ being defined as “to be able to bring back a piece of information into your mind, or to keep a piece of information in your memory.”15 This definition seems to rely on a primary understanding of the meaning of the word ‘remember’ which then leads one back to the word ‘memory.’

13 The point of meeting in these three fields of study remains the human person and their spiritual experience, thus other fields of study related to the human person, such as medicine, psychology, philosophy were also briefly explored in the study of these terms and their definitions.


15 The definition of ‘memory’ as found in an English dictionary was chosen in order to provide a starting point which is “descriptive and neutral” yet “rooted in the natural use of words”. Quotes from John R. Taylor, The Oxford Handbook of the Word, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 37.
Thus, it highlights the difficulty which arises from trying to define something which in itself is intangible but can be expressed, is known first and foremost through experience but has an impact which is perceptible. Memory seems to lie at the interface of the material and immaterial. Moreover, it is influenced by and influences human relationships and behaviour. These qualities are in common with spirituality, and in Christianity, memory has been subject to study and reflection since the first centuries of Christian faith.¹⁶

The subject of memory is still relevant for Christians today. In fact, the last three popes have dealt with this theme from different points of view. John Paul II was interested in the healing of memories and in memory as a background to nations and culture.¹⁷ Benedict XVI highlighted the philosophical and cultural memory of Europe, rooted in Christian values.¹⁸ Francis has referred to memory on many occasions, in relation to the experience of the Christian faith.¹⁹

Different fields of study explore different facets of ‘memory’ depending on the emphasis. Medicine and neuroscience focus on the structures and biochemical processes involved in memory.²⁰ Psychology and philosophy study the different types of memory, processes of memory formation and retrieval, and its impact on human

---


²⁰ Newberg, *Principles of Neurotheology*, 73.
behaviour and growth. Some dictionaries explore the term from the action of ‘memorisation’ or from the absence of memory - ‘amnesia.’

In the history of Christianity, memory has always held an important place. In the Old Testament reference is constantly made to the recollection of covenants made and broken, to the faithfulness of God to his people and to the history of the nation itself narrating its story in becoming God’s people. The history of salvation continues in the New Testament, with new memories being formed in relation to God’s incarnation in Jesus Christ. For the Christian today, the Sacred Scriptures themselves are a compendium of memories highlighting the roots of faith and recalling God’s continuing faithfulness in his salvific action, bringing past, present and future together in faith. In this light a scriptural text was taken as a basis for this dissertation in attempting to discover memory and identity for the Christian today.

Memory is important both as a capacity for the individual as well as a collective faculty. In the text chosen (Jn 4:1-42) both types of memories are referred to: The Samaritan woman is made to recall her marital history (Jn 4:16-18), whilst reference to Jacob as the father common to both Jews and Samaritans (Jn 4:12) and the disputes between Samaritans and Jews (Jn 4:9,20) recall collective memories which still impacted on the scene presented. Jesus’ presence heals both the Samaritan woman’s memory and the rift between his disciples and the woman’s fellow citizens, creating a new ‘memory’ as the Samaritans ask him to stay (Jn 4:40).

---

25 Ibid.
26 The relevance of ‘patria’ is discussed in Section 2.1.2.
27 Incidences recorded in the Old Testament which are related to the locations near Jacob’s well are described in further detail in section 2.1.2.
28 The formation and importance of a communion is discussed in section 2.3.1 and section 4.3.
Within the Church the concept and function of memory have been debated and explored over the centuries. Augustine (354-430) and other Fathers of the Church spoke about the memory of the actions of God and Christ, and the memory of God’s graces and mercy. Augustine was particularly influential in the study of memory in Christianity. He related the memory of the individual to the original source of the spirit, wherein the image of God lay. By going past the memories which accumulate throughout life, the person can link to the original identity as created by God, rediscovering his true self in the process. The Samaritan woman in John 4 too is brought in touch with herself first by looking through the memories of her life.29 In keeping in touch with this true self, the person can then remain in touch with the light, keeping out of darkness.30

Hugues de Rouen (d. 730) considered memory as a faculty which made it possible for the Christian to meditate on God’s work in the history of salvation. This view is similar to the relation and role of memory to the history of salvation narrated in the Sacred Scriptures, but in this case memory becomes the subject facilitating the action rather than the object of meditation.31

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) downplayed the Augustinian view relating memory to the spirit, focussing more on whether memory formed part of the intellect. However, his contemporary Bonaventure (1221-1274) maintained the Augustinian view connecting memory to the spirit. For Bonaventure, when God became the object of the memory, the person could glorify and proclaim him as it became filled with God’s presence and salvific actions.32

St. John of the Cross (1542-1591) also related memory to the spirit and the developing relationship with God. He spoke about the union which develops as the memory

29 This point is discussed in sections 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.2.
31 Hugues de Rouen speaks of memory thus: “Elle est la clé de la science, qui dresse l’escelle de Jacob de la terre jusqu’au ciel, car le généraux voyageur avance avec courage et marche d’un pas assure.” - It is the key of science which sets up Jacob’s ladder from earth up to heaven because the generous traveller advances courageously and walks confidently (my translation) quoted by Solignac, Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, Vol. 10, 1001.
32 Solignac, Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, Vol. 10, 1000. In section 3.3 the effect of God’s presence on the person is discussed in relation to the biblical text.
becomes purified from that which separates the soul from God. Through this poverty of spirit, and in being filled with hope, the soul detaches itself from earthly goods to attain glory, in union with God. In the chosen text, an analogy to this is found in the Samaritan woman leaving her water jar behind and going to the city (Jn 4:28). Although the effect of Jesus’ revelation to the woman as bringing her to ‘union with God’ is debated, the transformation brought about by the revelation is visibly described. The discussion on the place of worship (Jn 4:20-23) also indicates a transformation from a concern for earthly needs – water to quench her thirst – to an uncovering of the woman’s spiritual thirst for everlasting life.

Finally, memory is intimately related to time and tradition. It relates the past with the present, and commits the present to the past. Preservation and recollection of memories also have an impact on the individual, in the re-reading of history and in the making of the future. Memories are also influenced by, and influence society, behaviour, and relationships. In this respect memories expressed through tradition allow the transmission of faith and of the memory of salvation through Christian history. In the text chosen, the setting of the scene forms a backdrop in which tradition and history outline the discourse of Jesus with the Samaritan woman. The history associated with the area around Jacob’s well will be discussed in more detail in Section 2.1.2. The continuity and transmission of faith is also brought up in the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:12,20, 22,25).


35 The transformation from earthly to spiritual thirst is discussed in section 2.1.2.


Authentic traditions are based on the truth, gained from the original source of the memory. In contrast, inauthentic traditions develop when based on memories which are distorted in perception or recollection. Thus, in relating to memory, the Christian is called to constantly search for the truth, discarding inauthentic traditions which mislead from true faith. In Section 2.1.1 it will be seen how Jesus meets the Samaritan woman in her time and space, helps her recollect both her personal memories (Jn 4:16-19) and memories related to worship and other religious traditions (Jn 4:12,20,22,25), and then leads her to a new revelation based on the truth which is Christ himself (Jn 4:26). The importance of a disposition to search for the truth is discussed in Section 2.1.3.1. In Section 2.1.3.2 the different relationship to tradition and religious views between the Samaritan woman and Nicodemus (John chapter 3), and the effect on their responses to Jesus’ revelation, will be discussed. The importance for the Christian to be able to let go of old structures will be discussed in section 2.1.3.2.

Empirical research has discovered an element of plasticity in the formation and recollection of memories. Memories can be reinterpreted and reframed according to the context in which they are recalled. This new understanding of memory has brought a challenge for Christians; a feeling of fluidity with regards to the interpretation of Scriptures and truths of faith which were previously held to be secure. This fluidity, however, may also lead to a deeper search for the true source of faith and revelation. The concept of time has also developed from a cyclical, to a linear and more recently to a ‘chaotic’ model. All three concepts can be related to Christian spirituality but ‘chaotic’ time poses a risk of losing the true focus in faith because it places the human person at the centre. As will be seen in section 2.1.3.1, the presence of Jesus as being central for the Christian is paramount. And with Jesus Christ as centre, time itself is superseded. This theme will be discussed in section 3.3 of this dissertation.

40 See section 2.1.2 for De La Potterie’s exposition of Christ as the Truth.
42 Cf. footnote 20.
43 Cyclical themes of time are seen in the narrative of creation (Gen 1:1-30) and also in the celebrations and commemorations common to both Christians and Jews. The linear model of time was reinforced in the Christian tradition through the event of the incarnation. Time as a “chaotic flux” was reinforced by Albert Einstein’s work. In this model time is considered to be dependent on the observer’s standpoint. Philip Sheldrake, “Time” in The New SCM Dictionary of Spirituality, ed. Philip Sheldrake (London: SCM, 2005), 620.
As memories and traditions come into question, Christians are being challenged to discover once again what defines their identity. And as boundaries of culture, geographical space and time crumble or become blurred, Christians are also being led to discover which memories will nourish and sustain them in their faith. It is a risky process as roots are being severed and new ones formed. This process, however may become beneficial if it serves to recall the true memory of the history of salvation and uncovers the deeper truth and spirit, whilst removing accretions to the Christian identity developed through culture and distorted tradition.

1.2 Definition of Identity

Identity, like memory, is another theme which lies at the interface of the material and immaterial. It is expressed in tangible or perceptible ways but its qualities are not always easily defined. In the Cambridge dictionary ‘identity’ is defined as “who a person is, or the qualities of a person or group that make them different from others.” This definition refers to the identity of the individual person as well as to the group identity. However, it does not qualify what characteristics make up the identity, nor that one particular identity may include qualities which are also found in other persons or groups. In this section, the definition of identity will be explored from a Christian spiritual perspective, since the aim is to relate it to the Christian person.

In the text chosen for this dissertation a number of identities are referred to or revealed. These identities will be specified to help identify the term as used in its various forms. The first identity described clearly in the text is that of the Samaritan woman, encompassing her gender, race and religious characteristics. As the dialogue progresses a more personal aspect of her identity is revealed and Jesus exposes her social status. The identity of a group is also described when referring to the Samaritans: their country and city (Jn 4:4), their relationship with the Jews (Jn 4:9), and worship (Jn 4:20). The religious identity is also implied in the reference to Jacob, the setting in which the encounter occurs, and the discussion on worship (Jn 4:20-24). This will be discussed in detail in section 2.1.2. Another identity in this text is the national identity. The differences in the identities of Jews and Samaritans are highlighted, but their common identity, rooted within Israel with Jacob as their “father” (Jn 4:12), is also made present as the encounter occurs near Jacob’s well.
John Paul II, in his book *Memory and Identity*, relates the national identity to history and culture.\(^{44}\) He states that for the believer the origins of history and culture, and therefore also of their identity, are found in the book of Genesis.\(^{45}\) In John chapter 4, the presence of Jesus and the revelation of his identity (Jn 4:26,34) define this universal identity: “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth” (Jn 4:24).

The Christian, whose identity develops in relation to and with Christ,\(^ {46}\) can find the origins of this identity in the first chapters of Genesis, when God himself “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being” (Gen 2:7). John Paul II speaks about the creation of the human person as being different from that of the rest of creation. Whereas for the rest of creation God says “Let there be…” in the creation of man God says: “Let us make man…” (Gen 1:26). It involves a “Trinitarian consultation” he says.\(^ {47}\) For the believer, the roots of their identity lie in the relationship between the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, a relationship which God desires to share. In the text chosen for this dissertation the sharing of this life-giving relationship is revealed in the gift of living water\(^ {48}\) which brings “everlasting life”,\(^ {49}\) the ‘food’ which is doing the Father’s will,\(^ {50}\) and the ‘harvest,’ for which “sower and reaper rejoice together.”\(^ {51}\)

The identity of the Christian can also be revealed when one seeks to know God, in whose image and likeness they were created.\(^ {52}\) Paul Lamarche speaks of the two truths

\(^{44}\) John Paul II, *Memory and Identity*, 89-99.

\(^{45}\) Gen 1:26-27.


\(^{47}\) John Paul II, *Memory and Identity*, 89.

\(^{48}\) Jn 4:10.

\(^{49}\) Jn 4:14.

\(^{50}\) Jn 4:34.

\(^{51}\) Jn 4:38; Cf. Psalm 126:6.

\(^{52}\) Gen 1:26.
which this theme can reveal about the person’s identity.\(^{53}\) In recognising that one is created in the image and likeness of God the person comes to realise the qualities which give the Christian the identity of ‘sons of God’: a ‘direct link’ with God which affords immortality. Because of this ‘link’ there is a spiritual aspect in a person’s identity which calls the Christian to transcend earthly matters and look towards the eschaton. In chapter 4 of John’s gospel the invitation to discover one’s spiritual identity is seen when Jesus shifts the conversation to ‘living water’ and ‘spiritual food’.\(^{54}\) On the other hand, the limitations which separate God and the human person are also revealed when humanity comes face to face with God and the reality of having originally been created in his image and likeness. In the dialogue with the Samaritan woman, the first revelation she receives, after asking for the gift of living water, is about herself. (Jn 4:17). She comes to realise how her present situation lies so far from the truth. Christ lies between these two truths. He unites them both, by throwing Light, showing the truth by being the Truth, and becoming the Way for the Christian to discover their identity in God:\(^{55}\) the identity which gives eternal life.\(^{56}\)

Finally, in the journey to define identity, the process of identification was also encountered and explored. Relevant to this dissertation is that ‘identification’ is used in different schools of psychology to describe two broad forms of processes leading to the formation of an identity.\(^{57}\) One process speaks about a superficial identification with the characteristics of another, which brings about a change in identity that can be seen externally but does not necessarily change the core of the person. The Christian runs the risk of remaining on this level if the shift of relating with God from an earthly to a spiritual perspective is not made, thus blocking oneself from the revelation of God. In section 2.1.3 of this dissertation the meeting of the Samaritan woman will be compared to that of Nicodemus described in John chapter 3 to explore the different faith responses and effect on their identity. In the second process of identification described, the values underlying the external characteristics are assimilated in a way.


\(^{54}\) Jn 4:14, 32.

\(^{55}\) Jn 8:12; Jn 14:6.

\(^{56}\) Jn 4:14; Jn 14:6.

which combine with the characteristics already present. The person is thus transformed and becomes a more integrated being. In Christian mysticism, this process is described as involving a series of purifications and detachments from all that encumber union with God. This process can lead to the transcending of oneself in the discovery of one’s true identity as being created in the image and likeness of God.

1.3 Definition of Christian

According to Hans Urs von Balthasar, the Christian risks becoming “material for statistics.” As religions are being considered more as a ‘faculty’ of the person the focus is shifting to the ‘what’ and ‘why’ of faith rather than on the encounter and experience with God: on the utilitarian aspect of being Christian rather than on the relationship underlying this term. Ethics previously rooted in religion are also being shaken as the human person is taking charge of his world, constructing new realities which were previously unattainable. Issues as are abortion, assisted conception and euthanasia, have become more finely debated as the discussions are not only on the level of which scientific methods can be used, but more so on which ethics underlie such decisions. If God was previously seen as governing life, scientific and technological developments have placed the person more in control of their life. This ‘coming of age’ for the human being in today’s world has rendered the relationship with divinity seemingly redundant. The person is encouraged to take responsibility and charge of one’s health, lifestyle, beliefs, and of the environment. Worship, prayer and faith are sometimes done more out of a sense of duty towards God, rather than being

---


60 Ibid., 11.

61 Ibid., 13.


64 Ibid., 12.
considered vital for the person in relating with God.\(^{65}\) With globalisation, religion and faith are becoming more challenged as people from different religions live side by side, facing each other’s beliefs and values in daily life. Even people practising the same religion face cultural differences as human mobility has increased in the recent years.\(^{66}\)

For the Christian, this situation is expounded further since denominations differ on points of theology, dogmas and other issues of faith. This dissertation will be based on the Catholic perspective and experience. In choosing the title the question of which term to use was considered: whether it was the Christian or Catholic identity being discovered. The term ‘Christian’ was chosen because one hopes to go to the roots of this identity – that which links the believer with Christ as source of faith.\(^{67}\) In studying a biblical text, one also hopes to discover the journey and what lies at the heart of the decision to follow Christ. So, the term ‘Christian’ in this dissertation is taken primarily to refer to those who choose to follow Jesus and believe in his teachings after having come to know him through the apostles.\(^{68}\) In the gospel of John the term ‘disciple’ \((\mu\alpha\theta\etaπιης, Jn 4:33)\) is also used to refer to the Christian or the Christian community.\(^{69}\) In this dissertation ‘disciple’ will be used in the same way.

The text chosen affords a variety of examples of persons who believe in Jesus Christ. The Samaritan woman is presented first as she engages in dialogue then reacts to Jesus’ invitation and revelation. This is followed by the response of her fellow townspeople. These portray the initial call and response to become Christian. In the second section of the biblical text chosen (Jn 4:27-38), the disciples of Christ represent the disciple who is already following Christ and is being invited to deepen one’s response.

As Christianity developed across the centuries the term ‘Christian’ developed to encompass a body of faithful who followed not only Christ, but the teachings, traditions


\(^{66}\) In Relatio Synodi these issues are described in relation to their effect on the family. Relatio Synodi, 5,7.

\(^{67}\) Balthasar, Who is a Christian?, 59.

\(^{68}\) “... and in Antioch the disciples were for the first time called Christians.” Acts 11:26; C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, (London: Collins, 1952), Preface xv.

and practices of the Church instituted by Christ. Although there are many paths to being a Christian, the centre remains rooted in the incarnation, passion, death and resurrection of Christ. Christ’s lived experience gives hope for the Christian in this life and in the world to come. John Bowden portrays the Christian as “seeing the invisible in faith” and mentions St. Paul as an example of a Christian who “evidently sees and hears something that is quite beyond our range of observation and measure of thought.”

However, the essence of being Christian was always to be lived and applied in the present, and in daily life. To be Christian implies believing in particular theological principles and dogmas but also living a life based on the cardinal and theological virtues and other practices such as the corporal works of mercy. It implies living within a community and celebrating together in acts of worship which unite all with God, as a Church. As described in the Letter to Diognetus: “To sum up all in one word - what the soul is in the body, that are Christians in the world. The soul is dispersed through all the members of the body, and Christians are scattered through all the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body, yet is not of the body; and Christians dwell in the world, yet are not of the world.”

Christians are a varied group of individuals who retain their particular character and diverse cultural and social ways. What unites them is the encounter with God through Christ: an encounter which takes one from the material to the spiritual realm. In the text studied for this dissertation, the Samaritan woman and the disciples are called to see beyond what is earthly and enter into the spiritual realm to discover the gift of “living water” and the nourishment of doing God’s will. In doing so they become open to

---


75 Jn 4:10.

76 Jn 4:34.
the revelation of the identity of Christ as Saviour.\textsuperscript{77} And thus they come face to face with their own identity as active participants in the history of salvation.\textsuperscript{78}

\textsuperscript{77} Jn 4:26.

\textsuperscript{78} Jn 4:28, 38.
Chapter 2   Living Water

This chapter will focus mainly on the first part of the text (Jn 4:1-30). The theme of thirst and water is particularly evident in this part, in contrast with that of food and harvest in the second part of the text (Jn 31-42). This chapter will also deal with the revelation of Jesus' identity which is more explicitly described in the first part of the text.

2.1   Meeting Jesus - Source of Eternal Life

2.1.1   Time of Meeting

The theme of light and darkness is marked in the Gospel of John. The meeting with the Samaritan woman takes place at the height of day, when the sun is overhead, dispelling all shadows,\(^79\) in contrast to the meeting of Jesus with Nicodemus in the previous chapter, who came to meet Jesus by night (Jn 3:1-2).\(^80\) The reference to the time of day, symbolically representing the more open faith of the Samaritans when compared to the Jews in Jerusalem (Jn 2:23-25),\(^81\) sets the scene for a meeting with a more positive ending than in the previous chapter.\(^82\) Nicodemus as “part of the Judean religious elite”\(^83\) is closer to Jesus, being a fellow Jew. Yet it is the Samaritan woman who is open to the Spirit of God. She meets Jesus in the broad light of day.\(^84\)


\(^80\) Beirne, *Women and Men*, 70.


\(^84\) Ibid.
The spiritual implication of time in which these encounters occur is highlighted in the dialogues which follow. In a typical Johannine misunderstanding, Nicodemus understands Jesus’ reply on a literal level and is not able to see the spiritual meaning (Jn 3:4-9). Although he initially starts by acknowledging Jesus as ‘Rabbi…a teacher who comes from God’ (Jn 3:2) he fails to move on in his discipleship at this stage of the gospel.

As if anticipating the next encounter, the passage with Nicodemus ends: “…the man who lives by the truth comes out into the light…” (Jn 3:21).

The Samaritan woman starts from a seemingly marginalised space – a woman, a Samaritan, coming for water in the heat of the day to avoid the crowds. But as she goes to meet Jesus in the light of day, he who is Light (Jn 8:12; 9:5) meets her in truth. And her openness to the Truth, testifies to her being ‘in the light’. As Jesus exposes her past, bringing it into the light (Jn 4:16-18), she moves from recognising Jesus as “Sir” (Kyrie Jn 4:15) to acknowledging him as “prophet” (Jn 4:19). The dialogue then shifts from the physical elements of thirst and water, and human relationships, to a spiritual speech on worship. This passage shows the woman to be open in her encounter with Jesus: an openness which necessarily forms part of the identity of the Christian. An openness to encounter Christ as the Light of our lives who, as the Truth (Jn 14:6), reveals himself and our own selves to us. This openness to encounter Christ was a memorable exhortation by John Paul II. He encouraged Christians to put aside fear and open wide the doors to Christ.

The symbolic meaning of the meeting taking place at the height of day has positive implications. However, the reason given for which the woman is at the well at that time arises from a negative motive. Schnackenburg describes it as: “Her coming at midday is generally explained by her desire, as a notorious sinner, not to have to meet other

---


women.”

Jesus comes to meet her “wearied as he was” (Jn 4:6). The hottest and driest hour of the day is transformed by Christ into one which gives life: “… the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (Jn 4:14). The faith encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman reflects a calling to the Christian which goes beyond personal merit. What is required is for the Christian to step into the light, a light which uncovers the truth and the past, and leads one to further revelation, truth and light.

In the encounter with Jesus, the Samaritan woman’s ‘shady’ past and present are brought to light, and as the shadows are dispelled, a new truth emerges. Jesus confronts her with her own thirst. Paul Diel sees no symbolism in Jesus’ asking to drink. He explains it as merely a way by which Jesus approaches the woman to break down barriers.

Stephen D. Moore, however, has a beautiful exposition of these encounters of ‘thirst’: “What Jesus longs for from this woman . . . is that she long for the living water that he longs to give her. Jesus thirsts to arouse her thirst” (Jn 14:14). Jesus thirsts that the woman recognises her true thirst.

The reason underlying the woman’s being at the well at noon is thus met and transformed by Jesus Christ. If she came to the well at that hour to avoid the other women, after her meeting with Christ she went back “into the city” (Jn 4:28). A negative past is no obstacle to Christ or to becoming a Christian. Jesus meets the person wherever one is— in each individual’s time and space. This, together with the readiness to dialogue with Jesus, bestows upon the person a new identity in which the past is superseded, and old structures are transformed into new, life-giving sources. The Christian identity thus, builds on what is already present but transforms it into that which gives life to self and to others.

---

2.1.2 Place of meeting – Jacob’s well

The site where Jesus meets the Samaritan woman is imbued with history. Although almost all the manuscripts name the town where Jacob’s well was as Sychar,¹Jerome identified Sychar with Shechem, and a Syriac witness mentions the city of Shechem. (Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 169.), although Schnackenburg considers it to be a copyist’s mistake (Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St John*, Vol. 1, 423.) both are close to Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal. These mountains are relevant in this discussion because of their connection to worship and to the conflict between Jews and Samaritans.²After the Jews’ return from the Babylonian exile, Samaritans had impeded Jews from rebuilding the Temple at Jerusalem, whilst in 128 BC the Jewish high priest John Hyrcanus, had burned the Samaritan temple at Gerizim. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 170; Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 87, footnote 8; Schnackenburg *The Gospel According to St John*, Vol. 1, 425.

These mountains are relevant in this discussion because of their connection to worship and to the conflict between Jews and Samaritans.³Schnackenburg, Lindars, Carson and Barrett identify Sychar with Askar a modern-day village situated close to the site believed to be Jacob’s well. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 91 footnote 22.

This setting links the history of Israel and the background common to both Samaritans and Jews, whilst also bringing to the fore that past which divided them (Jn 4:9, 20, 22). This history can shed light on the stages of development of these peoples’ relationship with God, their identities as God’s people, promises, covenants, and their worship. In this section, these stages will be compared to the development of the Christian relationship and identity, whilst exploring what changed with the coming of Christ.

The area where the Samaritan woman meets Jesus is the area where God appears to Abraham at the Oak of Moreh and promises a land to Abraham and his descendants (Gen 12:6-7). Mary Coloe, in her thesis on Temple symbolism in John’s Gospel, discusses how the relationship between gods and the land was one of the aspects of Canaanite religion which was assimilated into Yahwism: “Within the mythology of Canaan, the land which the god possessed as his abode was given over to the god’s worshippers as their inheritance.”⁴With God’s promise to Abraham at the Oak of Moreh comes the identity of Abraham’s descendants as God’s people and the

---


³ Schnackenburg, Lindars, Carson and Barrett identify Sychar with Askar a modern-day village situated close to the site believed to be Jacob’s well. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 91 footnote 22.


⁵ Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 38.

---
nourishment which the products of the land bring. By worshipping God, Abraham’s descendants would secure the land God promised together with his blessings of fertility. This first stage in the relationship with God was one of acknowledging him as their only God, and receiving their identity – being ‘born’ – as a nation whilst being provided with the material support to enable them to live.

Another stage in the development of the relationship of Israel as God’s people which is represented in this setting relates to the law given to them; the law which, if observed, would form their social and moral identity. In Deuteronomy 11:29-32 Mt Gerizim, Mt Ebal and the Oak of Moreh are mentioned in relation to God’s covenant and the possession of the land and also to this law. The blessings and curses to be incurred are described in detail in Deuteronomy 27:4 - 28:69. This covenant was renewed at Shechem, with Joshua (Jos 24:25-28).

Finally, Jacob’s well, as the focus of the meeting place for Jesus and the Samaritan woman also carries with it implications of another stage of Israel’s relationship with God. In the Old Testament wells were linked with marriage covenants.96 This reflects a theme which recurs in the Old Testament, that of God as the bridegroom or husband, and Israel as the bride. This type of relationship implies one which is more mature and intimate, whereby Israel is no longer called to only follow God’s law and worship him as a dependent child but, while still dependent on him, become a more active participant in the relationship: to worship and be loyal to their God with freedom of choice rather than absolute need as a child would do.97 The theme of marriage also brings with it the idea of a union which can procreate and give new life. Thus, with the identity of the Christian comes the promise of a new life, in Christ.98 And just as the Samaritan woman met Jesus in person - incarnate, the Christian is also invited to meet him in the real form in the Eucharist today.

---

97 The progression in the relationship is also seen from chapter 3 to chapter 4 in John’s gospel. From the subjunctive mood, whereby the action - to be “born anew” (Jn 3:3) - though expected is not considered an objective fact, the author changes to the indicative in chapter 4 - “If you knew the gift of God, . . . you would have asked him. . .” (Jn 4:10) whereby Jesus states it as an existing fact.
98 2 Cor 5:17.
The presence of Christ in John 4 introduces a new relationship in this backdrop of Israel’s history; a relationship which goes beyond land and law to one based on a personal encounter in spirit and truth.\(^99\) This shift, which occurred from the Old Testament to the New with the coming of Christ, is still relevant for the Christian today whose identity is tied to the faith and belief that Christ is still living ‘among us’. And just as the Samaritans believed because they had experienced his presence (Jn 4:42), the identity of the Christian today is also tied to a personal experience of Christ who remains in one’s life. Jesus only remained with the Samaritans for two days (Jn 4:40). The evangelist does not elaborate on the long-term effect of this encounter, although the implications are that this text recounts the conversion of Samaritans to discipleship.\(^100\)

For the Christian today, the initial encounter with Christ may be dramatic and life changing, but there may be days when he seems to have ‘left’. Pope Francis exhorts Christians to keep the memory of the initial encounter alive as sustenance for times when the presence of Christ is not felt.\(^101\)

Jacob’s well is also referred to as a source of nourishment and life for family, livestock and subsequent generations (Jn 4:12). In the text, Jacob is referred to as ‘father’ (πατήρ) to both Samaritans and Jews (Jn 4:12). John Paul II relates the concept of ‘father’ (pater) to ‘fatherland’ (patria) which, he says, “refers to the land, the territory, but more importantly, the concept of patria includes the values and the spiritual content that go to make up the culture of a given nation.”\(^102\) Despite the animosity between Samaritans and Jews expressed in the beginning of the encounter (Jn 4:9), Jacob’s well offers a meeting point through a common ‘father’, a source which gives life (Jn 4:12).

In the meeting with the Samaritan woman Jesus takes the themes discussed above to another level. He offers a water which “will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (Jn 4:14). The father he refers to is no longer Jacob but God himself (Jn 4:21,23). And worship is no longer related to the place of worship, but to disposition

\(^99\) Cf. Matt 5:17.

\(^100\) For a discussion on the historical plausibility and whether this scene is an account of conversion of Samaritans see Brown, The Gospel According to John, 175.


\(^102\) Pope John Paul II, Memory and Identity, 66.
and spirit (Jn 4:24).\textsuperscript{103} The identity of the worshipper changes from one tied to land, law and material nourishment, to one of being - being God-like – “God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth” (Jn 4:24). The Christian is called to recover his true image and likeness of God and draw sustenance from that which is no longer limited to earthly needs but gives “eternal life” (Jn 4:14). This recalls Augustine’s view of the relationship of the Christian with the initial memory of the human person, created in the image and likeness of God, which keeps them on the ‘right path’ (see section 1.1).\textsuperscript{104} It is also the original identity for the believer referred to by John Paul II, as found in the account of Creation in the book of Genesis.\textsuperscript{105}

Through Jesus, the relationship with God becomes more direct and intimate. The response of the woman, representing the Christian disciple, is open to move from the material realm to the spiritual. The “spirit and truth” (Jn 4:24) then define the true space of worship giving identity to the Christian. De La Potterie speaks of the “truth” in John as referring to the revelation of the divine plan of salvation, through the revelation of Jesus’ presence and identity as Son of God.\textsuperscript{106} Thus, this text encompasses the process by which Jesus approaches the making of a new disciple: a process of revelation starting from the roots, moving to the truth about the person and ending with the revelation of Jesus Christ himself, and leading to an intimate relationship with God.

In the second part of the text (Jn 4:27-42), this intimate relationship develops further as the dialogue changes from water to nourishment, when Jesus’ disciples return with food. Rudolf Schnackenburg, speaking on the nourishment (βρῶσις) mentioned in Jn 4:32, describes it as a metaphor used by Jesus to denote his readiness to do God’s will. He says that here the nourishment is not a gift from God, or a source of ‘food’ which comes from the Father, but rather an inner impetus of being who he was meant to be: “... to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work.” This statement, which defines the identity of Jesus, reflects the identity of the Christian disciple.

\textsuperscript{103} Most exegetes now agree that the term ‘spirit’ refers to the spirit of God and not to the spirit of man. So, the term ‘disposition’ used here is not referring to internal worship against external worship, but to a disposition which is open to the spirit of God in worship. Brown, The Gospel According to John, 180.

\textsuperscript{104} Refer to Section 1.1.

\textsuperscript{105} See section 1.3 for a more detailed exposition of this identity.

\textsuperscript{106} De La Potterie, The Hour of Jesus, 69.
Just as Jesus receives his ‘nourishment’ – impetus to live – by doing the will of the
Father, in receiving the revelation of Christ as Messiah the Christian also becomes
transformed by a new source of ‘nourishment’, that of doing God’s will. The Samaritan
woman, on receiving the revelation of Christ and acknowledging him as Messiah “left
her water jar and went into the city” (Jn 4:28). The Christian revelation leads to a
transformation. That which is material – clay jar and well-water – is replaced by that
which is spiritual whereby the person/body herself becomes the ‘container’ (temple) of
the spiritual source of everlasting water, which flows over to reach others: “Come, see a
man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” They went out of the city
and were coming to him” (Jn 4:29-30). The identity of the Christian becomes one with
that of Christ in doing the will of God. Hence, in the Eucharistic celebration, eating the
‘body of Christ’ makes the Christian one in partaking in his mission of doing the will of
the Father,107 just as the Samaritan woman, in meeting Jesus and sharing in his
revelation was transformed and brought the other Samaritans too.

2.1.3 Person – Nicodemus and the Samaritan Woman

In this section, Jesus’ meeting with the Samaritan woman will be viewed alongside that
of Nicodemus (John chapter 3) to bring out similarities and contrasts in their meetings,
with the aim of discovering characteristics in the identity of the Christian disciple. The
two accounts present two faith-encounters with Jesus.108 Both are called to discipleship
and yet the outcomes of these encounters differ. The course taken in each encounter,
even in relation to respective memories and traditions, will be explored.

2.1.3.1 Comparisons and Contrasts in their Meeting with Jesus

In the gospel of John, Jesus as Christ is presented as the centre. As Culpepper puts it, he
is the “protagonist”109 In these two encounters, Jesus is present first on the scene.110
This brings to mind the opening of John’s gospel, proclaiming that “In the beginning

---

107 This topic is elaborated upon in section 4.3.
108 A detailed discussion of the criteria which make these two encounters complementary are
found in Beirne, Women and Men, 67-68.
109 Mc. Gann Journeying Within Transcendence, citing Alan Culpepper in The Anatomy of
110 Beirne, Women and Men, 73.
was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (Jn 1:1). Jesus Christ is at the core of the Christian identity.

Nicodemus “goes” (οὗτος ἠλθεν) deliberately to meet Jesus (Jn 3:2). Raymond E. Brown mentions that in ancient times this encounter of Nicodemus with Jesus was interpreted as part of a trap set out by the Pharisees. Exegetes however now regard Nicodemus as genuinely seeking answers to spiritual questions. The Samaritan woman meets Jesus unexpectedly as she goes (ἔρχεται) (Jn 4:7) to the well. She goes to the well to satisfy a material need. Jesus is there for both Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman. Both are searching. Both have questions. Nicodemus’ spiritual questions are in the foreground. The Samaritan woman’s spiritual questions are awakened during the dialogue with Jesus.

Nicodemus goes to Jesus because he recognises in him “a teacher come from God” (Jn 3:2). His ‘faith’ in Jesus is based on signs (Jn 3:2). As an educated authority and religious elite his questions and discussion are based on what he had been taught. He is seeking, but as Diarmuid Mc Gann describes it, it is a “seeking of knowledge that is quantifiable, that is accessible to reason”. On the other hand, the Samaritan woman goes to the well to draw water. Jesus is there to meet her. Initially she sees in Jesus a Jew in need; a person seemingly desperate enough to break social norms and historical barriers to ask her for a drink. (Jn 4:9). The woman’s knowledge of Jesus’ identity develops during the dialogue. Jesus, in turn, brings to light the woman’s identity before revealing his own (Jn 4:26). Raymond Brown describes this scene

---

113 Raymond E. Brown compares the necessity implied in verse Jn 4:4 – “had to pass” (ἔδει) – to that in Jn 3:14 and says that this implies Jesus following God’s will or plan. Further implying that Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman was intended by God, and that Jesus had passed through that route and stopped by the well to meet her. Brown, The Gospel According to John, 169.
116 Mc Gann, Journeying Within Transcendence, 46.
as “the drama of a soul struggling to rise from the things of this world to belief in Jesus.”\textsuperscript{119} Similarly Rudolph Schnackenburg describes the Nicodemus scene thus: “The difficulties which even a man of good will among the ruling classes experiences in coming to believe are presented clearly.”\textsuperscript{120} In both encounters the struggle to believe is evident.

The process involved in the making of the Christian disciple starts with the presence of Jesus as necessary and central. These two encounters also indicate the search and struggle involved in the process. The universal nature of the call to Christian discipleship is another aspect presented through these encounters.\textsuperscript{121} Christian identity is not dependent on race, gender, social standing or religious knowledge\textsuperscript{122} but on an openness to the revelation of Christ and to the gift of faith.

2.1.3.2 Different Faith Responses

In the previous section, the context and the call to Christian discipleship were discussed. In this section, the different faith responses will be explored in relation to the memory and historical background of Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman in the light of Christ’s revelation. The differences in responses demonstrate how the Christian’s identity encompasses the responsibility of the individual’s response to God’s call and gift of faith. The encounter with Christ necessitates the individual’s response to his call: the freedom of the individual is preserved and the process of discipleship varies according to the individual. The Samaritan woman’s conversion is described within one scene whereas Nicodemus’ demonstrates a slower progress in faith.\textsuperscript{123}

In this encounter with Jesus, Nicodemus fails to move on in his faith. As the dialogue progresses theologically, he fades out of it. His Jewish background, knowledge and


\textsuperscript{122} Beirne, \textit{Women and Men}, 75.

\textsuperscript{123} Nicodemus appears three times in John’s gospel (Jn 3; 7:50; 19:39). He, who initially appears to fail to proceed in faith in his first encounter with Jesus (Jn 3), speaks up for him in front of the Sanhedrin (Jn 7:50) and then participates actively in his burial (Jn 19:39). The burial sheets provided by him also serve as signs of Jesus’ resurrection to the Beloved Disciple and to Peter. Schnackenburg, \textit{The Gospel According to St John}, Vol. 1, 365.
authority as “a teacher of Israel” (Jn 3:10) do not confer any advantage. Rather, they seem to hinder more than help in his belief (Jn 3:10-12). Conversely, despite her religious differences and compromised background, the Samaritan woman proceeds to engage with Jesus in an increasingly theological dialogue. From her initial ironic comment: “Are you greater than our father Jacob?” (Jn 4:12) she moves to recognising Jesus first as a prophet and then as Messiah. Her religious background, though differing from that of Jesus, provides a spring board from which she can relate to Jesus. Like Nicodemus, she relates to Jesus through her past experience and knowledge. But her openness to revelation, leads to the ultimate revelation of Jesus’ identity to her: “I am” (ἐγώ εἰμι) (Jn 4:26).

After this revelation, there is a marked shift in the scene as the disciples return. The woman exits the scene leaving her water-jar behind. The detail of the water-jar is given different weight by different scholars. Schnackenburg sees it simply as her leaving the jar behind in her hurry to return to her people unencumbered. Brown describes it as “John’s way of emphasising that such a jar would be useless for the type of living water that Jesus has interested her in” hence indicating also the shift which has occurred in the woman’s perception of life; a shift inherent in the taking on of the Christian identity.

The shift in the woman’s activity, from that of going to the well for water avoiding the crowds, to moving back to her community with the good news sheds light on another characteristic in the Christian identity: the transformation, brought about by the revelation of Jesus’ identity as Christ, reveals the identity of the Christian. In encountering Jesus Christ, the Christian rediscovers their identity as child of God. Mc Gann uses Jungian perspective to explain the process by which Jesus brings the woman to face her personal past, and then moves her on to discover the core of her being:

```
Jesus ... activates her memory in the dialogue, leading her out of forgetfulness of her elusive and painful past. He remembers with her
```

---

so that by calling her from forgetfulness he can trigger in her the much deeper memory of who she is before God. He enables her to tie into something larger than either the forgetfulness of her personal past or the painful memory of her personal life. That is why the conversation can end up focused on the future.  

In this respect, the water-jar which was left behind by the Samaritan woman may also symbolise the painful memories being left with Jesus at the well, as new life is received through Jesus’ revelation of himself. Marco Rupnik portrays the Samaritan woman and Jesus with two jars; one made from plain clay from which dirty water is being poured out by the woman into Jesus’ hand, and a second richly adorned jar symbolising the gift of living water, being given by Jesus to the woman.  

The encounter with Jesus leads the Christian to a deeper remembering of one’s identity, given by God when created in his true image (Gen 1:27). This understanding is also in line with Augustine’s view of the processing (healing) of memories which can lead to the true identity of the Christian.  

In letting go of past ways of understanding, and moving on from knowledge and tradition to revelation, the Christian discovers their identity as being saved in and through Christ. And with this revelation comes the call: that of doing God’s will and sharing the good news with others (Jn 4:29).

Pope Francis speaks of memories and the importance of retaining the memory of the first encounter with Christ to “help them [Christians] go forwards with the courage of their faith.” He also speaks of the importance to “always return to the roots.” The roots to which the Christian is made to return lie deeper than those which are earthly. Nicodemus was called to let go of his Jewish understanding and be “born from above” (Jn 3:3). The Samaritan woman had to let go of her ideas of worship for “true worship” in spirit and truth. (Jn 4:23). In both encounters, Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman

---

128 Mc Gann, Journeying Within Transcendence, 56.
129 Mosaic by Marco Rupnik found in the chapel of the Ursuline sisters in Ljubljana, Slovenia
130 Augustine’s view of memory referred to in section 1.1.
131 See section 1.1 for Bonaventure’s vision of the transformation brought about in the person’s actions when God becomes the object of the memory.
are called to let go of old structures and, whilst integrating their personal histories, discover their deeper roots and their identity in Christ.

Pope Francis also speaks of “the system through which they legitimate: the lawyers, theologians who always go the way of casuistry and do not allow the freedom of the Holy Spirit; they do not recognize God’s gift, the gift of the Spirit; and they cage the Spirit, because they do not allow prophecy in hope.”

Nicodemus too seems not to recognize God’s gift. Although exegetes now say that his questions are well-intentioned, he is still concerned with adherence to laws and on the Jewish concern of the human effort required to achieve eternal life.

His faith response is focused on the wisdom offered by the Law of Israel. In contrast, the Samaritan woman’s response is more open to the gift of Jesus and the Spirit, and the dialogue ends by focusing on true worship. The setting of this dialogue by the well also may be taken to imply a new covenant – a new relationship offered by Jesus; one which satisfies deepest needs and gives true life.

The response of Nicodemus shows a faith which is still in its infancy – yet to be born – as the discourse by Jesus implies. The Samaritan woman shows a more mature faith response as she engages and progresses in her faith to revelation. Once again, the faith response is independent of wisdom or knowledge. Schnackenburg suggests that “Nicodemus should abandon his probing and believe” indicating that in front of heavenly wisdom one needs acknowledge one’s human limitations. He further describes him as, “typical of the doctors of the law, whose principles make it hard for them to submit to the new revelation ‘from above’ and bow to this revealer of salvation who claims direct authority from God.”

The Samaritan woman, though spirited in her dialogue demonstrates a ‘poverty of spirit’ which is more receptive to the gift which Jesus makes. This disposition recalls the purification of memory described by St. John of the Cross which allows one to let go of that which hinders perfect union with God and be open to the revelation of God.

---

133 Francis, “Homilies: Pope Francis at Santa Marta: Memory, Prophecy, Hope” Vatican Radio.
136 Ibid., 364.
137 Refer to section 1.1
These two encounters demonstrate the call and different faith responses in the development of the Christian disciple. They also demonstrate that the identity of the Christian disciple is not derived from personal effort or merit (Jn 3:4) but from meeting him “who told me everything that I have done” (Jn 4:29) and acknowledging that “he is in truth the saviour of the world (Jn 4:42).

2.2 From Sir to Prophet to Messiah

In the first part of this chapter it was observed how Jesus waits for and meets the person in the daily occurrences of life as he did with the Samaritan woman. A look was also taken at the different responses which may or may not lead to discipleship. This chapter will deal with the process involved in the development of the Christian’s discipleship and identity, a process which involves a deepening in the recognition of the identity of Jesus as Christ, and subsequently as Messiah in one’s life. In the text this process is exemplified by the woman’s recognition of Jesus progressively; first as Sir, then as Prophet, and finally as Messiah.

2.2.1 Engagement in Dialogue

In the section 2.1.3.1 the universal calling inherent to the Christian identity was discussed through the way Jesus overcomes differences and barriers with the Samaritan woman. In this section, we will see how the woman herself overcomes barriers in her perception of Jesus, hence taking on the characteristic shown by Jesus – a ‘grafting on’ of the identity of Jesus Christ, who came to call all to salvation. The Christian too is called to overcome barriers which may hinder the revelation of Christ, with the development of the Christian identity. This process comes through memory and a revelation of the past, present and future.

138 In the Gospel of John, discipleship and the Christian identity are closely linked. The concept of discipleship is related to those who see/hear and believe. For a more detailed discussion see Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St John, Vol 3 (Kent: Burns and Oates, 1982), 203-217. Sandra Schneiders also relates the faith response, discipleship and identity seen in the Gospel of John: “The absolute use of ‘believe’ in the Fourth Gospel usually suggests primarily an active spiritual state of personal adherence to Jesus the revealer and readiness for whatever he will do.” Schneiders, Written that You May Believe, 209.
In the first instance of the dialogue the woman sees Jesus as a Jew, with all the background and implications brought with it.\(^{139}\) In normal circumstances the encounter would have stopped there (Jn 4:27). Jesus approaches the woman and gradually presents God’s gift to her (Jn 4:10). The first shift occurs here.\(^{140}\) The Samaritan woman engages in dialogue and addresses Jesus with a more respectful ‘Sir’ (Jn 4:11).\(^{141}\) In calling Jesus “Sir” (Kyrie) the woman is not only giving Jesus more respect, but is also placing herself in a humbler space in relation to him.\(^{142}\) A re-ordering of roles within the relationship occurs as it starts to develop, with Jesus being given a more respected space and the woman becoming more mindful and respectful of her reality.\(^{143}\) The woman, who initially seems to be in charge by having access to the well water, starts to depart from this source and becomes interested in Jesus’ offer.\(^{144}\) This interest sparks off two questions; that of the source of the flowing water and of Jesus’ identity.

The origin of Jesus and of his gifts (Jn 4:11-12) is an important question in the Johannine gospel.\(^{145}\) This question, intimately related to Jesus’ identity, reflects the initial inklings of the revelation of Jesus as Christ which are being inadvertently intimated by the Samaritan woman, in typical Johannine irony, as she compares him to Jacob (Jn 4:12). The question of Jesus’ origin also marks the initial ‘steps’ in the development of the Christian identity as one recognises something deeper in him and in

---


\(^{140}\) “There is a masterly transition from the outward situation to the inner confrontation of man with the revealer.” Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St John*, Vol. 1, 426.


\(^{142}\) Words as “spirited”, “mincing and coy” (Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 175), and “dynamic, quick-witted and articulate” (Beirne, *Women and Men*, 99) have been used to describe the Samaritan woman.

\(^{143}\) “As he [Jesus] speaks there is a gradual unveiling of who he is. As she speaks there is a gradual acceptance of who she is. This acceptance of who she is corresponds to an expansion of vision, and the interesting fact is that as she accepts herself more she comes to see him more and more in his own uniqueness.” Mc Gann, *Journeying Within Transcendence*, 55.

\(^{144}\) This dualism of earthly and heavenly things, is a theme which recurs in John’s gospel. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 180.

\(^{145}\) The question: “Where can you have the living water from” (Jn 4:11) echoes the “where” it came from queried in the miracle of Cana (Jn 2:9) and in the dialogue with Nicodemus (Jn 3:8).” Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St John*, Vol 1, 428.
his ‘offer’. From this question, other questions arise which lead to engagement and further searching (Jn 4:15).

The engagement of the woman, as she becomes interested in the living water, is followed by a second request\(^{146}\) from Jesus to “Go, call your husband, and come here” (Jn 4:16). This bidding leads to a revelation about the woman’s personal life with two effects. On the one hand, it leads to the woman’s recognition of her true state (Jn 4:17). On the other, this revelation brings about a deeper revelation of Jesus’ identity (Jn 4:19).

2.2.2 **Revelation of the Woman’s True Self**

The revelation of the woman’s true self is the centre of Mc Gann’s discussion of this chapter in his reflection on the gospel of John through a Jungian perspective.\(^ {147}\) He describes how Jesus “activates her [Samaritan woman] memory” with “respect, caution and clarity” and leads her to and through a distasteful past, to a deeper memory of her identity before God.\(^{148}\) This aspect of revelation of the person has been discussed in section 2.1.3.2

Schnackenburg also mentions the existential interpretation of this revelation. However, he argues that the emphasis of the process is not the revelation of the woman’s past and core identity in itself, but rather to bring her to believe in Jesus as the revealer.\(^ {149}\) Jesus’ knowledge of her life discloses his identity as revealer in the gospel of John. This identity of Jesus as having divine knowledge is first encountered in Chapter 1 (Jn 1:48) when Jesus’ knowledge of Nathanael leads the latter to proclaim that Jesus is the Son of God and King of Israel. (Jn 1:49).\(^ {150}\) Jesus’ intimate knowledge of man is again mentioned in chapter 2 (Jn 2:25).\(^ {151}\) In John 4 this revelation of the intimate knowledge

\(^{146}\) The dialogue opens with Jesus’ request for a drink (Jn 4:7). Jesus engages with her on a deeper level with another request (Jn 4:16).

\(^{147}\) Mc Gann, *Journeying Within Transcendence*, 52-60.

\(^{148}\) Ibid., 56,57.


\(^{151}\) “… because he knew all men and needed no one to bear witness of man; for he himself knew what was in man.” (Jn 2:25).
of the person moves the developing relationship a step further: the Samaritan woman recognises Jesus as a prophet (Jn 4:19).\textsuperscript{152} The increasing openness of the woman to revelation leads to further questions about worship (Jn 4:20-24), which culminate in Jesus’ revelation of his identity as Messiah (ἐγὼ εἰμί) (Jn 4:26). It is this faith which then brings change in the woman’s life.\textsuperscript{153}

Inherent in the Christian identity is the change which is brought about in opening oneself to the revelation of Christ. St Paul, in his second letter to the Corinthians, also claims that “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come” (2 Cor 5:17). This dynamic quality in the Christian’s identity is also what gives new life and hope in the future; a future which is both earthly and eschatological. Thus, just as Jesus’ meeting with the Samaritan woman transformed her, first by looking to the past, to then move freely into the future,\textsuperscript{154} even today the Christian is called to recall the past and, in bringing it to Christ, move on anew into the future. Pope Francis, during his visit to Armenia (June 24-26, 2016) spoke of acknowledging memories of the past and that they can be a “source of peace and of the future.”\textsuperscript{155}

The Samaritan woman’s openness to Jesus did not stop with his offer of the gift of living water. In recognising him as prophet, the dialogue moves on to the question of worship. This question shows a shift from the personal needs of the woman – “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw” (Jn 4:15) – to a new focus on God in worship (Jn 4:20).\textsuperscript{156} Jesus’ answer to this question asks for another level of openness, that of change of perspective. This need for the Christian to be open not only

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{152} The term ‘prophet’ (Jn 4:19), although arising from Jesus’ knowledge of the woman’s personal life-history, was used, even in the Synoptics, to indicate “a man of God at work.” Schnackenburg, \textit{The Gospel According to St John}, Vol.1, 434.
\item \textsuperscript{153} Schnackenburg, \textit{The Gospel According to St John}, Vol.1, 432.
\item \textsuperscript{154} Mc Gann, \textit{Journeying Within Transcendence}, 57; Schnackenburg, \textit{The Gospel According to St John}, Vol. 1, 443.
\item \textsuperscript{156} Brown attributes the shift from the woman’s personal life to the question of worship to the way Samaritans viewed prophets as having the authority to settle legal questions. Brown, \textit{The Gospel According to John}, 171.
\end{itemize}
at the initial encounter but also in the development of discipleship and of the Church has also been underscored by Pope Francis.\(^{157}\)

The effect of revelation and the change in the woman reach the climax with Jesus’ revelation as Messiah. The woman leaves behind the water jar and goes back to her people (Jn 4:28). This movement reflects the change in the woman’s spirit: she moves from the still water of Jacob’s well to the flowing water provided by Jesus. She herself becomes ‘living water’ for others.\(^{158}\)

2.2.3 Revelation of Jesus Christ

Revelation of the person and identity of Jesus Christ is a central theme in the gospel of John.\(^ {159}\) It is also fundamental for this dissertation because the identity of the Christian depends on, and is defined by this truth. De La Potterie defines the word ‘truth’ as used in John’s gospel as “the revelation of the divine plan of salvation.”\(^ {160}\) Thus, in the person of Jesus Son of God, the whole truth is revealed in his presence but also in his being which reveals and realizes God’s plan of salvation. In the dialogue with the Samaritan woman, Jesus reveals himself as Saviour (Jn 4:14) but also as God (Jn 4:26).

The phrase “I am” (ἐγώ εἰμί) found in the encounter with the Samaritan woman carries the solemn and sacred implication with which it was used in the Old Testament. Thus, the past gives a background for the revelation of Christ. On the other hand, Jesus seems to choose to reveal his full identity even to those who do not know of him. The encounter is unexpected for the woman, and may also be incidental on the part of


\(^{158}\) Mc Gann, Journeying Within Transcendence, 57.


\(^{160}\) De La Potterie, The Hour of Jesus, 69.
The contrasts between the encounters of Jesus with Nicodemus (Jn 3) and that with the Samaritan woman have already been discussed in section 2.1.3. Nicodemus knew of Jesus and was searching to learn more about and from him. On the contrary, the Samaritan woman was meeting Jesus unexpectedly. This encounter emphasises the universal character of the call to discipleship, but it also brings up the freedom by which Jesus can call all persons to discipleship. It is true that the Samaritan woman was not without religious background and interest, but the initiative of the encounter lay with Jesus: He was the master of the encounter. Pope Francis, in his interview with Antonio Spadaro, describes it so: “You’re looking for him, but he’s the one who finds you first…. He’s the one who meets you first.” He describes his own personal experience thus: “the astonishment of meeting someone who’s waiting for you.”

This may be relevant to Christians today who sometimes put prerequisites for the acquisition of the Christian identity. Even the first Christians faced similar issues. This outlook may lead to reactions of shock similar to that of the disciples (Jn 4:27) when ‘unlikely’ persons encounter Jesus in their lives. The passage in John 4 demonstrates how Jesus initiates the encounter, and the only prerequisite is a disposition to relate to and believe in him.

The first theological revelation in the text is “the gift of God” (Jn 4:10). Schnackenburg points out that the word for gift (δωρεά) was used as “a comprehensive term for everything that God bestows on man for his salvation.” From the chiastic structure of the sentence he concludes that the “gift of God” is the “living water” (Jn 4:10).

---

161 The views on whether the encounter with the Samaritan woman was incidental or intended differ. Brown interprets “had to pass” (Jn 4:4) as an “expression of necessity [that] means that God’s will or plan is involved” (Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 169.) Schnackenburg, however, gives a practical reason. He says that Jesus’ choosing this shorter route indicates “a certain urgency” (Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St John*, Vol. 1, 422.) in which case the encounter with the Samaritan woman would be incidental.

162 Mc Gann, *Journeying Within Transcendence*, 53.


165 Galatians, 5.


167 Ibid.
Brown however mentions how “gift of God” and “living water” were expressions used in Judaism to describe the Torah. In his discussion on the historical plausibility of the scene he says that through this verse the Samaritan woman could have understood that Jesus was presenting himself as replacing the Torah.\textsuperscript{168} Brown agrees with Schnackenburg that the “gift of God” is something that Jesus will give, but he also mentions views of other biblical commentators who suggest that the gift is Jesus himself.\textsuperscript{169} Most authors, however, agree that the gift of God refers to the Holy Spirit or to the Spirit of God which is given by Jesus.

The understanding of the gift as being the Holy Spirit links this revelation to the thirst in the beginning of the dialogue and to the revelation of Christ as saviour. De La Potterie speaks of Jesus’ expression of thirst (Jn 4:7; 19:28) as “a desire for the sending and the coming of the Holy Spirit”.\textsuperscript{170} The dialogue with the Samaritan woman opens with Jesus’ expression of thirst but reveals that it is Jesus who can satiate a person’s deepest ‘thirst’. The same expression of thirst, echoed on the cross,\textsuperscript{171} is followed in the scene of the crucifixion by the blood and water coming out from the pierced side of Christ as he gives up his spirit/Spirit. And as the mission of the historical Jesus ends on the cross, the history of salvation continues with the coming of the Holy Spirit who continues to enliven the Church after Christ’s death.\textsuperscript{172} Père H. de Lubac was quoted as saying: “There are two ways, both fatal, of separating Christ from his Spirit: one is to dream of a kingdom of the Spirit which would lead beyond Christ; the other is to have a picture of Christ which would always lead to a degrading of the Spirit.”\textsuperscript{173}

In the dialogue with the Samaritan woman, the elements involved in the history of salvation are all present. Jesus’ expression of thirst is followed by his revelation of the gift of God and of the living water which gives everlasting life. This revelation becomes

\textsuperscript{169} Ibid., 170.
\textsuperscript{170} De La Potterie, \textit{The Hour of Jesus}, 129.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., Introduction xiii.
\textsuperscript{172} As De La Potterie puts it: “The Spirit clarifies the words of Christ from within, makes them take root, so that they may produce fruit for the church and for the whole world.” De La Potterie, \textit{The Hour of Jesus}, 130.
central for the Christian identity as it delineates the full plan of salvation from Jesus Christ’s mission until the end of time.

As the dialogue unfolds, the revelation shifts to the identity of Jesus, first as prophet through the knowledge which he exhibits of the woman’s personal life, then as Messiah. Brown notes the difference between the perception of the messiah for the Jews as an anointed king from the house of David; a king would restore to the Jews the national identity related to earthly matters. The messiah for the Samaritans was more of a Moses-like prophet, who would lead his people to the ‘promised land’ through adherence to the law of God. Brown comments, Jesus seems to ascribe to himself the definition of messiah more easily when given by a Samaritan woman. This becomes relevant for the discussion regarding the Christian’s identity as it reflects and further qualifies the identity of Christ, on which the identity of the Christian is based. Just as the Samaritan woman was called to discipleship through her encounter with Jesus and his revelation as messiah, or saviour in her life, the Christian identity encompasses the revelation of Jesus as saviour, not solely on a physical plane, but more so on a spiritual level. It is this spiritual conversion which allows the Christian disciple to worship freely in “spirit and truth” – “neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem” (Jn 4:23, 21). However, it is interesting to note that the evangelist, whilst freeing the Christian discipleship and identity from earthly forms of worship, does not refute the spiritual heritage of Judaism as he says clearly “salvation is from the Jews” (Jn 4:22). Schnackenburg notes how the role of Israel in the history of salvation is not denied, but rather presented as a stage in the process. John 4:22 is seen as a transition from the announcement of “the hour” (Jn 4:21) to its actualization in the person of Jesus Christ (Jn 4:23).

---

175 Ibid.
2.3 Living Water – Welling up to Eternal Life

In the previous sections the revelation of Jesus Christ as gift and giver was seen in relation to the development of the Christian identity. De La Potterie, while speaking of Jesus as the truth, says that “the living water must be drunk” for it to become “in man a spring welling up to quench his thirst”.179 In this section the effect of ‘drinking’ the living water will be discussed.

2.3.1 From Isolation to Communion

The revelation of Jesus as Messiah (Jn 4:26) is followed by a cascade of events. The Samaritan woman returns to the city. She becomes ‘living water’ for others by sharing her experience and her question: “Can this be the Christ?” (Jn 4:29).180 With this question, the rest of the Samaritans are brought to meet Jesus. Pope Francis speaks of Christians as being persons who start a process181. This openness to process, allowing the others to discover Jesus for themselves, is apparent in this text. However, the author of this process remains Jesus himself. The Samaritan woman acts as a catalyst. She who has received the good news herself, brings it to the city but then allows the city to move to Jesus.

With the start of this process, there is a dual communion being formed, that of the Samaritan woman with her ‘counterparts’ and of the Samaritans with Jesus. The Samaritans then ask Jesus to stay with them (Jn 4:40). Pope Francis speaks of a strong theological value of belonging for the Christian: “There is no full identity without belonging to a people. No one is saved alone, as an isolated individual, but God attracts us looking at the complex web of relationships that take place in the human community.”182 Community and communion become part of the identity of the Christian. The relationship with Jesus leads to an opening up for the others and for life with others. This communion then helps to bring Jesus into the community in a true incarnation of the spirit.

179 De La Potterie, The Hour of Jesus, 71.
180 Mc Gann, Journeying Within Transcendence, 57.
181 Spadaro, My Door is Always Open, 102.
182 Ibid., 49.
Also embedded within the Christian identity is the need to relate,\textsuperscript{183} which starts with the relationship with Jesus as incarnate God, with whom ‘empathy’ is possible. The dialogue of the Samaritan woman opens with Jesus’ expressing his feeling of thirst to the woman who herself has come to draw water to quench her thirst. Their “common need for water”\textsuperscript{184} is where Jesus meets the woman and journeys with her to communion. The Samaritan woman initially meets Jesus’ request for a drink with an element of double exclusiveness: “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (Jn 4:9). Jesus surpasses these boundaries of gender and ethnicity and starts a process which opens new encounters and experiences. The mutual marginalisation between Samaritans and Jews is transcended further as the Samaritans move out of their city to meet Jesus, a Jew, and invite him to stay with them (Jn 4:30, 40). With the gift of living water memories are surpassed and new relationships built.\textsuperscript{185}

As Culpepper says, “In the course of the conversation, all four barriers are crossed and community is created.”\textsuperscript{186}

\textbf{2.3.2 Jesus Overcomes All Barriers}

Neuroscientists Andrew Newberg and Mark Robert Waldman, in their book \textit{How God Changes Your Brain}, quote a study which shows that, when a person meets someone coming from a different racial group, the brain reacts with fear within seconds. This tendency was also found to be present in children. But when children from mixed cultures were placed together and given a project which required everyone’s participation, cooperation developed and hostility diminished. Thus, it seems possible to

\textsuperscript{183} Prayer, which is an essential exercise for the Christian, is defined as “the act of communicating with a deity, especially in the form of a request or a petition for help” in contrast to meditation which is defined as “a contemplative reflection or mental exercise designed to bring about a heightened level of spiritual awareness” with no relation to another person. Andrew Newberg and Mark Robert Waldman, \textit{How God Changes Your Brain}. (New York: Ballantine Books, 2010), 48.

\textsuperscript{184} Culpepper, \textit{The Gospel and Letters of John}, 140.

\textsuperscript{185} See section 2.1.3.2 for Marco Rupnik’s depiction of this scene with two jars. The jar with dirty water may represent memories and barriers which are being ‘poured out’ to Christ whilst the woman is receiving living water instead.

\textsuperscript{186} The four barriers being gender, nationality, race and religion. Culpepper, \textit{The Gospel and Letters of John}, 139.
override the biological prejudicial barrier through conscious acts of tolerance, compassion and co-operation.\textsuperscript{187}

The overcoming of barriers seen in the encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman has already been discussed in previous sections in this chapter. In initiating the dialogue Jesus overcame gender, nationality, racial and religious barriers.\textsuperscript{188} He overcame barriers related to the personal history of the woman\textsuperscript{189} and to the space and time\textsuperscript{190} in which the meeting occurred. This characteristic in the encounter is especially relevant for the Christian today, who is being called more than ever before to overcome barriers. As geographical barriers are being pulled down or built up again, people’s identities are mingling and changing. Religious identities are also being challenged and the call to ecumenism is stronger than ever before. A struggle to keep one’s identity as Christian may be felt as this can no longer remain bound to cultic or pious practices which differ amongst people from different nations and cultures. As different people come together, the Christian is challenged to look deeper into what constitutes the Christian identity. This challenge presents an opportunity for the Christian to embark on a journey of discovering deeper characteristics of their identity.

The Samaritan woman was challenged to look beyond the Jewish exterior of Jesus and beyond the site of worship. The Christian today is also being challenged to put aside external differences and discover the Spirit and Truth. Jesus, already presented as the new temple (Jn 2:41), becomes the site and source of that which unites and defines the Christian.

Pope Francis speaks of the Church thus: “‘We must walk united in our differences...’”,\textsuperscript{191} that which unites being the person of Christ.

\textsuperscript{187} Newberg, \textit{How God Changes Your Brain}, 139.
\textsuperscript{188} Sections 2.1.2; 2.1.3.1; 2.2.3; 2.3.1.
\textsuperscript{189} Discussed in sections 2.1.1; 2.2.2.
\textsuperscript{190} Refer to section 2.1.1.
\textsuperscript{191} Spadaro, \textit{My Door is Always Open}, 6.
2.3.3 A New Identity – Discipleship Through Faith

A lot has been said about the need for faith and openness to the revelation of Christ as a prerequisite for discipleship in the previous sections of this chapter. The person who allows themselves to engage in dialogue with the truth and receive the spirit, as the Samaritan woman did, will be transformed to allow a new life to grow and bear fruit.\(^{192}\)

The believer is one who is ready to ‘put on’ God’s spirit, and in this spirit the meaning of Jesus’ words is revealed. Schnackenburg notes how in the synoptic gospels the meaning of Jesus’ ‘cryptic discourse’ is explained by Jesus himself to his close followers, whilst in the gospel of John this meaning is revealed through the risen Jesus and the Holy Spirit.\(^{193}\) In the meeting with the Samaritan woman, her belief is what allows Jesus to reveal himself to her, and this revelation leads the woman to increase her faith in him.\(^{194}\) His revelation and her faith in him give rise to new disciples (Jn 4:41-42).

The pattern of an encounter of one individual leading to a group of people believing in Jesus is seen in other accounts in John’s gospel.\(^{195}\) What is particular to this encounter of Jesus with the Samaritans however is that, whereas in the other accounts belief follows a miracle, the Samaritans’ belief is based on hearing Jesus’ word and their personal encounter with him. After meeting Jesus personally, the Samaritans no longer believe on account of the Samaritan woman’s words – ‘chatter’ (λαλία) (Jn 4:42) but because of Jesus’ words (λόγος) (Jn 4:41).\(^{196}\) Schnackenburg points out the choice of words by the evangelist to distinguish the “superficial echo in human words of what

---

\(^{192}\) “Thus, when a man welcomes the word, it revives him interiorly, enlightens him and influences his thoughts and deeds. He must allow himself to be influenced and moulded by the light of the truth, the divine word, which will be at work in him like a planted seed, a living water, a sweet-smelling fragrance, to lead him to Christ. All this is progressive development of the life of faith, brought about by the action of the Holy Spirit who makes the new life fructify and grow within a man.” De La Potterie, *The Hour of Jesus*, 71.


\(^{194}\) Refer to sections 2.1.3.1; 2.1.3.2; 2.2.2.

\(^{195}\) The first miracle at Cana led to the disciples’ belief in Jesus (Jn 2:11). In Chapter 4, verse 53 the centurion and his household believed after the son/servant was healed. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 194.

was only really disclosed in the self-revelation of Jesus.”¹⁹⁷ Through encountering Jesus one can meet and hear the transcendent, the holy. Through Christ, who himself is one with the Father (Jn 10:30), the Christian can come to know the Father and take on their identity as child of God. This is encouraging for Christians today, whose belief is rarely based on miracles or tangible signs but can be based on the personal encounter with Christ and the hearing of the ‘word’ through the Sacred Scriptures.

In the scene at the well, two sets of ‘disciples’ are portrayed: the Samaritan woman and her townspeople, and the disciples who were already walking with Jesus. Culpepper makes an interesting remark. He says: “The disciples had brought Jesus lunch, but the woman brought the entire city!”¹⁹⁸ The disciples, who had been walking with Jesus are portrayed by the evangelist as unable to see the spiritual reality even as they accompany the historical Jesus. They too are called to see beyond the exterior events (Jn 4:32-34); to see with the eyes of faith. Jesus proposes a ‘gift’ of water which gives everlasting life to the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:10,13,14). He then speaks about, and offers his disciples his own ‘food’: A food which nourishes the spirit by doing the Father’s will (Jn 4:34-38). This will be discussed further in the next chapter.

The call to see Church tradition and the scriptures through faith is still relevant for the Christian today. C.K. Barret speaks of the prophets as being incomplete in themselves unless seen through faith in Jesus Christ as saviour. Andrew Newberg, researching neurotheology, also speaks of his experience in the field of science as: “faith steps in when understanding falls short.”¹⁹⁹ If faith “steps in” even in empirical science, how much more is faith required in matters of the spirit! Both groups of disciples were called to renew their identity through faith: the ‘new’ Samaritans to believe and bear fruit (Jn 4:41,42), and the ‘old’ disciples to become participant in the harvest (Jn 4:38). Faith remains a necessary characteristic and cornerstone in the Christian identity.

¹⁹⁸ Culpepper, The Gospel and Letters of John, 143.
¹⁹⁹ Newberg, How God Changes Your Brain, 243.
Chapter 3  Nourishing Discipleship

Food: “To do the will of the one who sent me” (Jn 4:34)

The second section of the dialogue with the Samaritan woman is not easily interpreted and is often overlooked. An intriguing theory mentioned by both Brown and Schnackenburg which throws light on this section, interprets John chapter 4 in the context of the conversion of Samaria as narrated in Acts chapter 8. In this mission, Philip was ‘the sower’ of Christian faith (Acts 8:5), whilst Peter and John had gone down to confer the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-16). Philip, who was a Hellenist, presumably opposed worship at the Jerusalem temple whilst some in the church of Jerusalem wanted the Samaritans to shift their loyalty to Jerusalem as part of their embracing the Christian faith. This background would explain the distinction made between the sower and the reaper in John 4:37, and would also include the issue of place of worship mentioned in John 4:19.

The focus of the following discussion however will be on the characteristics relating to the Christian identity which can be discerned in this scene (Jn 4:27-42). Here, the topic of nourishment and food is in contrast to that of thirst and water in the first scene (Jn 4:4-26). A similar misunderstanding occurs between the disciples and Jesus on the topic of food (Jn 4:31-33), as occurs with the Samaritan woman with respect to water (Jn 4:7-15). In both scenes, as is characteristic in the gospel of John, Jesus uses these misunderstandings to shift the topic to one which is spiritual.

In the second scene Jesus is still at the well, when the disciples arrive. These disciples already know and believe in Jesus. They have already been ‘called’ and are following him. This scene therefore has a quality which is different from the first scene. It allows for a deepening in the understanding of the Christian identity and will be

---


203 The evangelist refers to the regular followers of Jesus as ‘disciples’ (μαθηταί) avoiding the term ‘apostle’ which was a term used in the post-resurrectional period. Brown, The Gospel According to John, 98.
explored with a view of discovering that which maintains and nourishes the Christian identity.

3.1 Identity of Christ and of His Disciples – Carrying out the Divine Will

The idea proposed by Jesus in this scene – that his food is doing the will of the one who sent him – shifts the focus for the disciples and the Christian. Just as the Samaritan woman in her encounter with Jesus moves from acquiring water to quench her physical thirst to sharing the revelation which she received, the disciples are invited to shift their focus from material to spiritual nourishment. In section 2.1.2 the impetus given by the desire to do the will of his Father has already been discussed in relation to the Samaritan woman. In this section, this impetus will be seen from another perspective, that of Jesus, who was sent (Jn 4:34), being the one who sends his disciples (Jn 4:38).

The use of the verb ‘sent’ in verse 38 (απέστειλα) has raised a lot of discussion, as has ‘others’ ( ἄλλοι) who have done the hard work.\(^\text{204}\) It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to enter into this discussion. What is of interest for the purpose of this dissertation is the change in identity brought about by ‘being sent’. The disciples who were following Jesus are no longer simply with him in order to be instructed. They become involved in Christ’s mission (Jn 4:38).

The word ‘Messiah’, derived from a Hebrew form ‘māšîah’, was used in the Old Testament to mean ‘anointed’ or ‘anointed one’; the act of anointing indicating God entrusting a mission to a specific person (or people). In verse 26 Jesus accepts the title of Messiah from the Samaritan woman.\(^\text{205}\) In verse 34 he elaborates on the mission implied by the title: “‘My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work.’” In verse 25, the evangelist explains the word ‘messiah’ (māšîah) by the


\(^{205}\) For a more detailed discussion on the different perception of Messiah for Samaritans and Jews see section 2.2.3.
Greek term ‘christos’ (Χριστός). Jesus Messiah, “he who is called Christ” (Jn 4:25), then sends his disciples “to reap that for which you did not labour” (Jn 4:38). Hence the Christian takes on the identity of ‘being sent’ which nourishes their identity as Christian disciples. On choosing to follow Christ, the disciples did not only receive their identities as ‘followers’ but also as partakers in his mission: “to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work” (Jn 4:34). This mission was to become their own ‘food’: source of nourishment and life.

In the second scene, Jesus’ disciples are thus being invited to take their relationship with him to another level, a level which connects them with God the Father. The relationship of the disciples with God, which in section 2.1.2 was already seen as being a creative one, grows through Christ as he shares his mission and identity of doing the will of God with them. The Christian identity develops hence from one of discipleship to one which is apostolic (Jn 4:38).

3.2 The sower and the reaper – relationship and characteristics

In addition to the theme of food, the agricultural metaphor predominates in this part of the text. The theme of harvest anticipates the coming of the Samaritans. Some biblical commentators interpret verse 35 – “lift up your eyes, and see how the fields are already white for harvest” – as a metaphoric description of the Samaritan people who were visibly approaching in their white robes. Brown points out that the first proverb (Jn 4:35-36) reflects the natural interval which exists between sowing and harvesting.

---


207 C. S. Lewis, in his book Mere Christianity, presents a similar view of the Christian. He says: “God designed the human machine to run on Himself. He Himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or food our spirits were designed to feed on.” Lewis, Mere Christianity, 50.


With the coming of Christ this interval is superseded. Verse 35 also reveals the theme of realized eschatology characteristic of the gospel of John.

Two aspects in the above reflection related to this dissertation are the process involved in the development of the Christian identity, and that through Christ time is superseded. The latter will be discussed in Section 3.3.

Just as nature requires a time-lag between sowing and reaping, the identity of a Christian is not acquired in one event, but develops through a process; a journey which involves healing, growth and a change in one’s direction in life. Jesus demands worship in spirit and truth (Jn 4:23). And, although external characteristics may remain unchanged – the evangelist does not say whether the Samaritans became disciples or were converted in their ways – the revelation of Jesus Christ brings about a movement of change: the Samaritans went out of the city to meet him (Jn 4:30), many believed in him through the woman’s testimony and asked him to stay with them (Jn 4:39-40), and many more believed on hearing his word to the point of proclaiming him the Saviour of the world (Jn 4:41-42). The revelation by Jesus (Jn 4:26) brings about a movement and starts a process which climaxes in a proclamation that Jesus is Saviour of the world.

The second saying, “One sows and another reaps” (Jn 4:37) is used in a negative way in the Old Testament, often implying that life is unfair and that the sower may not live to enjoy the harvest (Deut 20:6, 28:30; Job 31:8; Mic 6:15). However, with Jesus Christ this experience is transformed into a positive one whereby the reaper is sent to harvest what he did not sow (Jn 4:38), and sower and reaper rejoice together with the harvest (Jn 4:36). In the presence of Jesus Christ, the relationship between sower and reaper is transformed from one of inequity to one of giving and sharing. It is not clear whether the sower in the text refers to Jesus, God the Father or others who may have prepared the Samaritans before they met Jesus. If it is taken to refer to or include God the Father, it portrays a new relationship of the Christian with God; one which is nourishing and joyful.

---


The theme of joyful living and celebration is being reiterated by Pope Francis. This joy, which arises from living in the spirit of God and through this living in receiving God’s loving embrace, allows the Christian to become a participant in the harvest.

The theme of sower and reaper may also be taken to indicate the different identities/roles that Christians hold within the Church. As already mentioned in the introduction of this chapter Brown refers to the mission in Samaria which involved the apostles in different roles: Philip as ‘sower’ and Peter and John who conferred the Spirit. This recalls St. Paul’s letter to the Corinthians: “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one” (1 Cor 12:4-6) and “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ” (1 Cor 12:12).

Brown also quotes 1 Corinthians 3:6: “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.” This perspective puts the sower and the reaper in relationship to God, and to God’s spirit; a relationship which gives life.

Thus, with the relationship of the sower and the reaper as described by Jesus in this text, a picture of the Church emerges. The identity of the Christian no longer stands alone, describing individuals, but differentiates to form disciples having different roles which complement each other (Rom 12:4-7). This may be compared to the physical body which, starting as one cell divides into cells all containing the same DNA. These cells then differentiate to form organs, each having a unique identity, which same identity finds fulfilment in relation to the whole: the hands having a similar ‘identity’ but differing right from left, are different from the foot whilst being complementary to it. Jesus, in this text, transforms the idea of ‘individual jobs’ presented by the proverb (Jn 4:37), and removes discrimination and divisions which bring inequity in life. He introduces a new order which, whilst preserving the individual identity, goes beyond it


216 Ibid.
to make one whole, united in and through God’s spirit. All parts, united in God, are then called to rejoice as one in celebrating the fruit of the harvest (Jn 4:36).

### 3.3 Time – Past, Present and Future

The topic of time has been introduced in the beginning of section 3.2. The first proverb (Jn 4:35), relating to natural time, is immediately supplanted by Jesus. The eschatological order introduced by Jesus overcomes the natural principle of time and introduces a new form of being for the Christian. John speaks of a realised eschatology in particular. In his comments on this topic Brown refers to Amos’ dreams of the messianic days whereby the ploughman overtakes the reaper (Amos 9:13), and refers to the coming of the Samaritans towards Jesus as “the harvest [which] is ripe on the same day on which the seed has been sown.” He also comments on the shift from the “speed” of the harvest to the joy of harvesting in verse 36.

The ‘picture’ given by the evangelist in this text is one which portrays a wide vision of the Church or Jesus’ followers. Not only is there the inclusion of Samaritans, who were considered to be outside God’s people – Israel – but also in terms of time, Jesus’ disciples and the newly-evangelised Samaritans are brought together on the same scene. Brown writes: “If our story in chapter 4, particularly scene 1, has portrayed the steps by which a soul comes to believe in Jesus, it also portrays the history of the apostolate, for the harvest comes outside of Judea among foreigners.” In this “harvest”, salvation not only breaks down historical, social and religious barriers but also time. Just as natural time is superseded in this text so is it superseded in the history of salvation. Past, present and future become one through and in Christ. The salvation of humankind, which started before the incarnation of Jesus through the people of Israel is present and continues in time through the Church. Jesus who brought salvation to the Samaritans in the text, continues to bring Salvation to those who believe “because of his word” (Jn 4:41).

---


218 Ibid.

219 Ibid., 185.
Time, in this text, is also represented in the historical background linked to the scene. As discussed in section 2.1.2 the evangelist locates this scene in a place which is rich in history. Mt Gerizim and Mt Ebal recall the blessings, curses and covenants of God with his people – a relationship built on the law. Jacob’s well carries the significance of ancestry and patria relating not only to the biological heritage, but also to the spiritual and moral values passed on through the ‘father’. And Jacob’s well water represents an essential source of life for generations (Jn 4:12); quenching not only the people’s thirst, but also that of the livestock, which provides nourishment for the people. Jesus takes the Samaritans and his disciples back to the roots of their faith ‘Israel.’

Schnackenburg, in his discussion on the titles of Christ in the first chapter of John’s gospel, comments on this as “a procedure adopted by the primitive Church, which linked its profession of faith to the narrative of the past, or rather displayed the permanent truths of faith which were immanent to the historical testimony…” and “how faith in Christ could crystallize and become articulate, without departing from its proper and original reality.” The link with the past is seen in this scene, but more importantly Christ transforms the truth and reality of God’s relationship with his people by offering a new life-source – the Holy Spirit – a new relationship with God as Father, and new nourishment in doing the Father’s will.

In this scene, Jesus brings together his disciples with the Samaritans and the past with the future. The point of convergence is Jacob’s well – Jacob being the father and source of faith – where Jesus propels the disciples and Samaritans in their journey of faith recognising God as Father: a journey which leads the Samaritans to declare Jesus “Saviour of the world” (Jn 4:42) and his disciples to become participants in his mission (Jn 4:38). This text shows that the past, biological and historical, is not to be dismissed. Jesus brings in the new, building on what is already present. And just as the Samaritan woman is offered a “spring of water welling up to eternal life” (Jn 4:14), Christians are called to be “living stones” built into “a spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:5): a

---

220 See section 2.1.2 for discussion on ‘patria’.
dynamic Church living through the past, in the present, into the future, with Jesus as the cornerstone uniting all who are called to believe in him. This dynamic of God entering a life, transforming the person and catapulting the believer into a life-giving future can be glimpsed as far back as in the personal history of Abraham, the father of the Jewish people. Abraham’s faith in God and in his promises, leads him to take on a new identity which surpasses his limitations.

Another aspect in this text is the conversion brought about through belief in Christ. In section 2.1.3.2 the change in the Samaritan woman was discussed. In the second scene (Jn 4:27-42) the change is seen on the level of the community. The transformation which started in the woman spread to her people. In her book, Holiness, Donna Orsuto speaks about how this new vision of oneself “affects our distinctive behaviour in the world.” This behaviour spreads the good news (Jn 4:29) leading to more conversions (Jn 4:39). Thus, the Christian identity creates and is lived within a community: the Christians being the ‘living stones’ forming a temple where God has chosen to dwell (cf. Jn 4:40) and where “the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth” (Jn 4:23). This temple goes beyond physical structures or individual merit. It enhances them. It goes beyond space and time. It unites them. It goes beyond social, historical and biological structures. It nourishes them. And in this way true conversion of the world can come about: God can become ‘incarnate’, and that which was started by Jesus’ coming and walking in this world, can be continued by his disciples who can reap what was sown and rejoice together (Jn 4:36).

Several characteristics of the Christian identity have been discovered through analysing this text (Jn 4:1-42). The Christian identity is formed and expressed within a community which is missionary and universal; the individual and community being open to process and change whilst recalling one’s past and one’s roots: the community called to receive a new life through a life-giving spirit and to find nourishment through doing the will of God. In this spirit, Christians can be true worshippers just as the Father seeks to worship him – hence becoming a living temple for God.

---

224 When Abraham welcomed God’s presence in his life his identity became linked to the future: “All families will be blessed in you” (Gen 12:3; 18:18); “You will have a son” (Gen 18:10); “I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies” (Gen 22:17).

225 Orsuto, Holiness, 37.
Chapter 4  Christian Identity and Memory – To Worship in Spirit and Truth

This fourth chapter arose from the characteristic inherent to spirituality to relate what is being studied – in this case the biblical text – to the lived experience. The following questions arose: How can the Christian connect with significant memories and discover the characteristics of the identity which makes a true disciple? And what will help the Christian today to nourish this identity and maintain it in its true form?

The journey to answer these questions started by looking at Augustine’s analysis of memory in the light of faith.\textsuperscript{226} With Augustine, and through Paul Ricoeur, the link between narrative and history, and memory and identity were explored.\textsuperscript{227} However, this could only be related to Sacred Scriptures as being the source where memory, time and narrative are brought together to define an identity which can be passed on to the Christian today as an authentic source. Romano Guardini’s \textit{Spirit of the Liturgy}, especially his quote from John 4\textsuperscript{228}, pointed to the liturgy as being a space where answers to the above questions can be found.

This chapter is not intended to be an in-depth study of the liturgy.\textsuperscript{229} Rather, it is an attempt to review the aspects of memory and Christian identity discussed in chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation, and to relate them to liturgy. In this way, one hopes to show how liturgy may become a space where the Christian can nourish and connect with the particulars of this identity in a fresh and profound way.\textsuperscript{230}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[227] Ricoeur, \textit{Time and Narrative} Vol 1, 5-30.
\item[229] One is aware that in John’s gospel the institution of the Eucharist is not clearly found as in the other gospels. One is also aware of the discussions surrounding this issue. The aim of this section is not to discuss the symbolism of this sacrament, but rather to look into the ‘spirit and truth’ of the Eucharist. Schnackenburg, \textit{The Gospel According to St John}, Vol. 1, 160-161.
\item[230] In his “Study of Liturgy as Ritual” Mark Searle quotes anthropologists who identify ritual as being central in sustaining the fundamental character, identity and spirit of a religious group. Mark Searle “Ritual”, Part one, \textit{Theology and Rite in The Study of Liturgy}, eds. Chesley Jones,
\end{footnotes}
Liturgy provides a source which links the Christian to their historical and spiritual identity. Through the reading of Sacred Scriptures and the celebration of the Mass, God’s plan of salvation (Jn 4:13, 25-26, 34-35, 42) and Jesus’ carrying out his Father’s will are commemorated and re-lived (Jn 4:34). Both themes have been explored in this dissertation. The theme of worship and the relationship with God which it implies are also common to liturgy and to the text (Jn 4:19-24). Another theme common both to liturgy and John 4 is the individual’s recollection of the past in recognising one’s sinfulness and limitations in front of God (Jn 4:16-18). This theme will be developed in this chapter.

One is aware of the debates surrounding John’s gospel, with regards to the Eucharistic liturgy. One is also aware of the diverse ways in which the liturgy is celebrated by Christians of different denominations. However, the term ‘Christian’ here is being used as in the early Church, namely to refer to all those who choose to believe in and follow Christ which reflects the universal spirit of discipleship as seen in John 4 and discussed in sections 2.1.1, 2.1.3.1 and 2.2.3. By using the term ‘Christian’ one also hopes to reflect what C.S. Lewis observed:

It is at her centre, where the truest children dwell, that each communion is really closest to every other in spirit, if not in doctrine. And this suggests that at the centre of each there is a something, or a Someone, who against all divergences of belief, all differences of temperament, all memories of mutual persecution, speaks with the same voice.


231 One has in mind particularly the penitential rite at the beginning of Mass. Just as the Samaritan woman first acknowledged the truth of her state before accepting the revelation of Jesus, similarly the believer, in recognising their limitations and sinfulness, assumes the proper disposition in relation to God, to worship and celebrate Mass. The psalms and other readings from the Sacred Scriptures often included in different liturgical rites, also offer this awareness of the person’s position in front of God.


233 The term ‘Christian’ is defined in section 1.3.

234 Lewis, Mere Christianity, Preface xii.
With this in mind, Roman Catholic liturgy was chosen because it reflects the Rite in which my personal faith is rooted and the Faculty of Theology where these studies where carried out. It is hoped that this choice does not trivialise the theology underlying liturgical differences, but through the liturgy of the Roman Catholic church ‘hears’ that “same voice” which identifies the Christian. The mode of worship can differ externally, but Christian “true worshipers” (Jn 4:23) are recognised when their worship is “in spirit and truth” (Jn 4:24).

4.1 Meeting Jesus at the Well

In this section, the scene and dialogue with the Samaritan woman at the well will be compared with liturgical celebration to show how the Christian today can draw from this ‘well’ the ‘water’ of everlasting life which, whilst linking with the memory of the past, nourishes the identity in the present.

Just as the Samaritan woman returned to the well of her “father Jacob” (Jn 4:7,12,15) driven by a physical thirst, the Christian sometimes celebrates liturgy out of habit, or as a cultural practice passed on through generations as ‘family faith’. A transformation of this ‘need’ to a ‘desire’ for “water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:14) is required for the person participating in the liturgy to experience this celebration for the spiritual nourishment that it is. The contrasts and different responses of Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman discussed in section 2.1.3 show how a disposition of openness and dialogue can help the person proceed in this search.

In The Spirit of the Liturgy, Joseph Ratzinger speaks of the apostasy of the Israelites in the desert when they erected a golden calf for worship while Moses was on Mt Sinai (Exod 32:1). He identifies two reasons for this being an apostasy. The first reason being that the people could not cope with what they did not see and therefore created a cult to bring God to them when they desired it, rather than waited for God to become present. The second reason for apostasy was that the cult, being “self-generated”, lacked the true spirit from which true worship could arise. Without the true spirit, worship becomes “banal self-gratification” and “[T]here is no experience of that liberation which always
takes place when man encounters the living God.” The Christian who celebrates liturgy without cultivating the right spirit runs the same risks of apostasy. True worship requires that one comes into God’s presence, engages in a relationship and becomes open to revelation (see section 2.2).

As the Samaritan woman came to desire the gift of God that Jesus presented to her, she was brought to face herself in the reality of her past (Jn 4:16-18). Similarly, at the beginning of the celebration of Mass, the Christian confesses their sins in front of God and fellow worshippers. This disclosure and acknowledgment of the past brings the memories of those sins not only to be healed, but also to be surpassed so as to discover one’s true identity as children of God. In this disposition, the Christian can truly relate to God in “spirit and truth”. Guardini, in *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, writes: “In the liturgy man is no longer concerned with himself; his gaze is directed towards God. In it man is not so much intended to edify himself as to contemplate God’s majesty”. In recognising her true self, the Samaritan woman was freed to relate with Jesus on another level (see section 2.2.1).

The change in the woman after Jesus’ revelation opened her up to become a witness for him who transformed her (Jn 4:29-30, 39). And this witness brought others to meet Jesus, leading all to a profession of faith in him as “Saviour of the world” (Jn 4:42). Josef Ratzinger speaks of the liturgy as “implying a real relationship with another who reveals himself to us and gives our existence a new direction.” Through the liturgy, the Christian finds focus in God and comes to relate with others in sharing this revelation.

---

236 This process to true worship is discussed in section 2.2.
238 Described in more detail in section 2.2.1.
4.2 The Sacred Scriptures: Revelation and Authentic Tradition

In the text under analysis the author of the gospel of John refers to the words of Jesus as logos (λόγος) (Jn 4:41). Some biblical exegetes comment on the distinction made from the woman’s words – lalia (λαλία)\(^{240}\) and also question if this is intended to relate Jesus to the Logos in the opening of the same gospel.\(^{241}\) For the Christian today, Jesus is not present in tangible form, but the Word of God (Jn 1:1) can still be heard through the Sacred Scriptures.\(^{242}\) The revelation, which for the Samaritan woman took form in the presence of Jesus, is still encountered in the Sacred Scriptures today. In the preface to Dei Verbum, the Word of God is referred to as: “divine revelation and how it is handed on, so that by hearing the message of salvation the whole world may believe, by believing it may hope, and by hoping it may love.”\(^{243}\) In John 21 the Beloved Disciple – who had witnessed and acknowledged God’s love for him – becomes himself a witness, and his writing ‘remains’ (μένειν).\(^{244}\) In and through the writing of John and the other authors of the Sacred Scriptures, the ‘living water’ is still being passed on to the Christian today. And that ‘living water’ can still transform the human ‘chatter’ (λαλία) into an experience of the Logos (λόγος), similar to the way in which the Samaritan woman’s words were transformed as she shared the revelation of Christ.

The Christian, who hears the Word of God in the liturgy, remembers God’s plan of salvation as unfurled in the Old Testament. They can recall Jesus’ life and actions through the New Testament: Jesus Christ being “both mediator and the fullness of all revelation”.\(^{245}\) And they continue to hear God’s word today “so that He may invite and take them into fellowship with Himself.”\(^{246}\) Through the hearing of the Word, therefore,

\(^{240}\) Refer to section 2.3.3 for a discussion on the use of these words in the text.


\(^{244}\) Jn 21:23-24.

\(^{245}\) *Dei Verbum*, 2; Jn 4:26.

\(^{246}\) *Dei Verbum*, 2.
the Christian can re-live the experience of the Samaritan woman at the well. She was led from the life-giving source left by Jacob to the everlasting life offered by Jesus.

In section 1.1 the importance of authentic tradition being based on the truth was discussed. During the reading of the Word, the Christian can rediscover the identity which was revealed through the ages and which continues to be revealed in the present. Thus, the Sacred Scriptures provide a source which can relate the memory and identity of the person and the Church as a community, to the present and the past. Through this source, the Christian may delve deeper into their faith, discovering more and more the ‘spirit and truth’ of the Christian faith.  

Sacred Scriptures also continue to reveal God and the identity of the Christian within the plan of salvation. The covenants described in section 2.1.2 are only a taste of the rich history surrounding the scene at the well. Similarly, the Sacred Scriptures read during the liturgy recall history and the depth of God’s saving plan and provide a backdrop against which the individual and the Church can connect with their place within that plan.

4.3 Celebrating the Eucharist – Memorial and Mission

The Eucharist is the spiritual food for the Christian given by Jesus Christ himself. It encompasses all that is central in the identity of the Christian, being “the permanent presence of Christ.” In sharing, ingesting and assimilating this food the Christian allows Jesus’ presence to become one with the person. Thus, in this sacrament, the Christian does not only identify with, but takes on the identity of Christ himself. In Ratzinger’s words: “the Eucharist is meant to transform us, to change humanity itself.

---

247 Dei Verbum, 8, 19.
248 Ibid., 14, 21, 26.
251 "As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me" (Jn 6:57); Cf. Sacramentum Caritatis, 70; Ratzinger, The Spirit of the Liturgy, 90.
into the living temple of God, into the Body of Christ,” a body having members who are different yet share one identity in Christ.

In the scene at Jacob’s well Jesus reveals his identity as Messiah (Jn 4:26) and then speaks of what nourishes that identity – doing his Father’s will (Jn 4:34). This defines Jesus’ identity as true Son of God. In the Eucharist, this identity is being remembered and celebrated not only as an action which really took place – the death and resurrection of Christ – but also as the interior act of self-giving through which salvation continues in time. The Christian not only re-lives the gift of salvation, but becomes one in this saving act which transcends time. Ratzinger described it thus:

Just as the pain of the body is drawn into the pathos of the mind and becomes the Yes of obedience, so time is drawn into what reaches beyond time. The real interior act, though it does not exist without the exterior, transcends time, but since it comes from time, time can again and again be brought into it. … What is perpetual takes place in what happens only once.

In chapter 4 of John’s gospel the “Yes of Obedience” which is Jesus’ food, transcends time and bears the fruit of salvation as described in the same chapter with the approach of the Samaritans (Jn 4:35). And just as Jesus sent the disciples “to reap that for which you did not labour” (Jn 4:38), in the celebration of the Eucharist, the Christian becomes participant in this act of salvation.

Ratzinger speaks of the sacrifice of atonement in cultic worship as the effort of the human to connect and reconcile with the gods. He also says how, in front of the one true

---

252 Ratzinger, The Spirit of the Liturgy, 86.
253 Lumen Gentium, 10, 11. This theme is developed in section 3.2.
254 The difference brought by Jesus transformed the celebration of the Jewish Passover Meal from reliving a saving event to reliving the person of Jesus as saviour. Hence, in celebrating the Eucharist as Zikkărōn, memorial, the Christian celebrates their saviour Christ, but also renews their identity as saved and ‘son’ of God through Christ. Thus, in taking on the same spirit, the Christian allows oneself to be transformed by his ‘new’ identity. Ratzinger, The Spirit of the Liturgy, 55.
256 Ratzinger, The Spirit of the Liturgy, 56.
257 Discussed in section 3.3.
God, the human person realises that no sacrifice is enough: “The only real gift man should give to God is himself”. But he also indicates that whereas in the Old Testament and in other cultic practices the sacrifice was burnt and destroyed, for the Christian giving oneself up as a sacrifice is life-giving. Through the passion, death and resurrection of Christ, the Christian sacrifice is transformed into one which gives life.

Mary Coloe in her dissertation on Temple symbolism in the fourth Gospel brings up the discussion about the preposition used to described Jesus’ position at Jacob’s well. The preposition - ἐπί - is best translated as ‘upon’ or ‘on’. Biblical Scholars relate the scene at Jacob’s well with Ezekiel’s vision of life-giving waters flowing from the Temple (Ezek 47). The Jewish tradition underlying Ezekiel’s vision recounts how the Temple was built on the fissure overlying the source of “creative waters.” In the Old Testament, Noah’s altar sealed the source of this water, forming the foundation stone of a new creation. Jesus’ sitting ‘upon’ Jacob’s well in John 4 is compared to this ‘stone’ both as being the foundation for a new creation and also as being the source through which the waters of everlasting life flow. During the liturgy of the Eucharist, Jesus source of life-giving water is commemorated in the element of water, which reminds us of the water that flowed from Jesus’ side on the cross.

In this chapter, it has been seen how memory, time and tradition come together and are transcended during the liturgy, in the Sacred Scriptures and the celebration of the Eucharist, as the Christian comes to God who becomes present to meet his people. A disposition which is open to meet God and ready to let go of inauthentic traditions and material structures is required if the Christian is to experience the revelation of God. This time of worship in ‘spirit and truth’ can then be a space where the Christian can discover and confirm their identity.

In the liturgy, this identity is discovered and celebrated not only on an individual level in relation to God, but it encompasses the communitarian and universal aspect of the

---

259 Ibid., 35-49.
260 Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 95.
261 See section 2.2.3; *Lumen Gentium*, 3; De La Potterie, *The Hour of Jesus*, 129.
Christian identity mentioned in section 2.1.3.1. As Guardini says: “In the liturgy we pray as members of the Church; but we rise to the sphere which transcends the individual order and is therefore accessible to people of every condition, time and place.”

In the liturgy, the Christian community discovers its identity with the communion of saints and with other Christians celebrating in different times and spaces. What brings all together is the ‘spirit and truth’ – the “intention, thought and language”, “their identical belief, the identical sacrifice they offer, the Divine Food which nourishes them alike.”

Finally, in the liturgy the Christian meets to celebrate joyfully. The identity described above is not only discovered but experienced joyfully in the encounter with God and fellow Christians. In chapter 4 of John’s gospel Jesus speaks of the sower and reaper who rejoice together. In true worship, Christians come together to rejoice in this ‘harvest’ which encompasses the salvation of themselves and of the rest of the world.

In this way, the liturgy, when celebrated in ‘spirit and truth’, may become for the Christian the space and time to continue to discover one’s identity in relation to God, and obtain the nourishment required to share this outside that space, just as the Samaritan woman did in her encounter with Jesus, at Jacob’s well.

---


264 Ibid., 18.

265 Mark Searle, while discussing liturgy as a ritual, relates it to a celebration “when participants focus more on the encounter with the transcendent than on the outcome”. This echoes Guardini’s view of the liturgy as having “no purpose, but it is full of profound meaning. It is not work but play. To be at play, or to fashion a work of art in God’s sight…” Searle “Ritual” 3, Part one, Theology and Rite in *The Study of Liturgy*, 55-56; Guardini, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 39.

266 Discussed in section 3.2
Conclusion

The study of the text in John 4:1-42 has led to a number of characteristics inherent in the Christian identity. Jesus as Messiah – the Christ – is central to this identity. In this scene he was present from the beginning\(^{267}\) and the dialogue with the Samaritan woman was initiated by him. In recognising that it is Jesus who initiates the encounter, the Christian recognises also his identity in relation to God as creator and saviour.

It was also seen that taking on the Christian identity is a process: a journey involving a dialogue of faith and of revelation. For one to engage in this dialogue there needs to be a disposition which is open to, and in search of, the truth. This was evident in the Samaritan woman’s approach. She allowed the dialogue to develop and the revelation to unfold, in contrast to Nicodemus’ encounter in John 3. This openness is also required for the Christian to discover the truth about their personal identity in relation to their life and as children of God in whose image and likeness they are created. This identity renders the person receptive to the gift of God. When one’s truest needs are faced and acknowledged, as the Samaritan woman did when facing the truth about her social status and unquenchable thirst (Jn 4:15-18), Christ’s life-giving proposition can be embraced.

The revelation of the self, renders the Christian amenable to recognise Jesus as the Messiah in one’s life. The Samaritan woman progressed from calling Jesus ‘Sir’, to perceiving him as a prophet and finally asking whether he could be the Christ (Jn 4:29). Jesus, in turn, accepts the definition of messiah when given by a Samaritan woman and reveals his divinity to her (Jn 4:26). This revelation brings about a transformation in the woman. She returns to her people leaving the jar behind. The jar may be taken to symbolise the earthly needs which the woman leaves behind as these are transcended when her spiritual needs are met. It also symbolises all that may be carried from the past – memories, tradition, desires and expectations – which are left behind when the

\(^{267}\) This statement implies two facts: Jesus is present first in the scene at Jacob’s well, but he is also presented by the evangelist as the Logos who “was with God”, and “was God” in the beginning (Jn 1:1-2).
individual discovers Christ. This letting go frees the Christian to discover the true identity in front of God.\textsuperscript{268}

The second scene reveals what nourishes Jesus’ identity and hence that of the Christian. The scene widens to present the communitarian and universal aspect of the Christian identity, with the return of the disciples of Jesus and the entry of the Samaritans from the town. The apostolic aspect of the Christian identity was also observed in this part of the text: that of being sent and participating in God’s plan of salvation. Carrying out the will of God the Father becomes the nourishment and driving force for the Christian – that which confirms the identity as children of God through Christ.

Time and other barriers are transcended in Christ at Jacob’s well. It brings together ancestors and history, Samaritans and Jews, new believers and faithful disciples. This reflects the connection of the Christian with the past, the healing of rifts and memories and the creation of new communion through Christ. A realised eschatology, characteristic of the gospel of John is inferred (Jn 4:35), as is the joyful relationship of the disciples who are being invited to share in the harvest.

The characteristics elicited above may be expressed in the liturgy where God meets his people. Sacred Scriptures and the Eucharistic liturgy link the Christian to the past but also bring God’s presence into the present through the hearing of the Word and re-living of the paschal mystery. Brought together with the communion of saints in the liturgy the Christian may worship in spirit and truth and rejoice in the harvest: a realised eschatology.

Through this study, it was seen that the identity of the Christian is not something static, acquired at ‘birth’ – during baptism – but a process which involves an encounter, openness and ongoing growth; a process which also needs to be nourished. This process involves a relationship with God and with other fellow humans. It is not the phenomenological approach of neurotheology or the outward practices of religion which animate the Christian identity, but it is this identity born from relationships which gives

\textsuperscript{268} Augustine describes going beyond memories to discover one’s true identity created in the image and likeness of God, which identity then helps the person remain on the right path. St. John of the Cross speaks of the purification of memories which allows one to be united with God. These points are elaborated upon in section 1.1.
rise to the visible expression. It is not the liturgical form which gives the Christian identity, but the spirit and truth which is expressed in the liturgy.

Returning to the questions posed at the beginning of this dissertation, it is not the choice one makes when faced with questions about life – abortion, embryo freezing or euthanasia – which give expression to the Christian identity, but it is the identity itself which underlies and is expressed in the choices made: an identity which must be embraced and nourished.

The Christian is the one who “believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing … may have life in his name” (Jn 20:31).

**Recommendations**

Liturgy was only briefly touched upon in Chapter 4. This chapter may be expanded to study how different forms of liturgy enliven and nourish the Christian identity. It would also be interesting to explore whether the decline in Sunday mass attendance\(^{269}\) is linked to changes in certain values when it comes to social issues. Another route to explore is whether liturgy – lived experience of God – is more effective than catechism – providing knowledge on God – for the Christian community to be renewed.\(^{270}\) This is not to exclude one in favour of the other, but to determine the emphasis and focus for the Christian.

From a philosophical point of view, it would be interesting to study how the change brought about by Descartes – *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am) – has had an effect on the way Christians relate to their memory and identity. If the being is no longer rooted in God, in whose image and likeness the Christian believes to have been created, Christian identity risks becoming one created by the human person in its

---


\(^{270}\) Refer to section 2.1.3.1 for a discussion of the different faith responses: Nicodemus who seeks a “knowledge which is quantifiable” and “accessible to reason” and the Samaritan woman who is open to the spirit. Mc Gann, *Journeying Within Transcendence*, 46.
consciousness: a product of the ‘cogito’. And memory, previously thought to have formed this identity, may become a source open to manipulation by the human person, depending on its interpretation on retrieval. In this regard, another line of study can be to explore how Sacred Scriptures, believed to be inspired by the Spirit of God, have influenced and formed Christian identity by transmitting this Spirit through narrative.

The process of writing this dissertation involved a personal exploration and growth. It led to a reflection on one’s perception and experience of the Christian identity and an awareness of the many ‘husbands’ present in life. The term ‘baal’ used to denote both god and husband implies the dependency of the person on god/husband. I became aware that when one’s hopes and welfare are placed in work, family, social status, pleasure and material wealth, these can replace God as a source of life. However, they only give temporary alleviation of the deeper needs. And one keeps going back to them, just as the Samaritan woman had to return periodically to Jacob’s well to quench her thirst with the material water. Keeping God as source and centre in one’s life gives life and spirit to the core, from which all things can then flow. As my identity became more rooted in God, I felt the desire to discern God’s will more strongly and make it my nourishment in life. This process also involved a ‘being sent’ – to reach out, and share the joy of ‘the harvest’ with others.

The final stages of writing this dissertation coincided with the Easter celebrations. Family circumstances prevented me from attending the liturgy of these days. This presented me with a challenge considering the emphasis I was placing on liturgy in this dissertation. The experience of living this particular liturgical time away from the celebrations being held in church led to a deeper understanding of the verses:

“... the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.” (Jn 4:21) and “... the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him.” (Jn 4:23). God is ready to step out of the churches and meet whoever seeks to worship him in spirit and truth in the midst of their daily life, just as he met the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well.
Epilogue

The scene of the encounter at Jacob’s well is often described alongside Ezekiel’s vision of water flowing from the temple. (Ezek 47). One would also like to relate the journey taken in this dissertation, to discover the Christian identity and memory, with this vision.

Memory and identity, as seen from a neurotheological point of view, are like the trees which are given life and nurtured by the water coming from the sanctuary (Ezek 47:12). When one starts from the phenomenological point of view taken in neurotheology one is at the end of the ‘river’, watching the effects of this life-giving water – fruit and leaves for healing (Ezek 47:12). These fruit and leaves are not the ‘identity’ but only the effects or outward expression of this identity. If one is to discover the real identity of the Christian one must travel up the ‘river’ to discover the source. It leads to the Temple where the Christian meets with the true source and with other fellow Christians.

Within the Temple, close to ‘the spirit and truth’; Christians can relate to the True Source of their identity. And with this identity restored and nourished they can move once again out of the Temple to become source and nourishment for the rest.
Appendix A

**A Diagrammatic Representation of the scene at Jacob’s well**

Representing the movement (vertical) from Jacob’s well to God the Father through the Holy Spirit as source and Jesus Christ as Saviour. And the communion between Samaritans and Jesus disciples (horizontal) through the encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman.
Bibliography

Church Documents


http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/05/30/pope_francis_at_santa_marta_memory,_prophecy,_hope/1233427.

**Biblical Commentaries**


**Sources related to Biblical Studies and Spirituality:**


Websites


Dictionaries


**Accessory Sources:**


