

## **03/12/2023 3rd Sunday of Lent-A (Samaritan Woman)**

Exo.17:3-7 / Rom.5:1-2, 5-8 / Jn.4:5-42

Today's readings are centered on Baptism and new life. The first reading from Exodus tells of the Jews' complaining about their thirst. The rock which Moses strikes represents God who gives the water, essential for our spiritual life. This reading shows us a time when God's people literally thirsted, and God satisfied them. Let us just go through the Gospel. The conversation began with Jesus a Jewish man asking the Samaritan woman for a drink though Jews do not associate with Samaritans; But thirst can make people discard formalities and reservations. Jesus was tired and thirsty and He wanted a drink. The Samaritan woman was also thirsty and that is why she came to the well to draw water, although it was at an odd time – it was at noon, a time when people would stay indoors because of the heat.

But as their conversation went on, more and more was revealed. The Samaritan woman came to draw water from the well to quench her physical thirst. But there was another kind of thirst that she could not quench her thirst for true love – she told Jesus she had no husband. But she already had five husbands and the one she has is not her husband. Jesus knew her secrets, but He was gentle in revealing it to her. He revealed it to her with love and compassion. She tried to avoid people and she tried to hide her secrets from Jesus.

This thirst of Jesus is symbolic; it was for her faith that Jesus thirsted. And during the conversation with Jesus, we see the woman's faith growing by the way she addressed Jesus; the titles she gives to Jesus show more and more respect and faith as their conversation progressed. Firstly, she says, "you, a Jew" (Jn.4:9). Then she calls Jesus, "Sir" (Jn.4:11, 15). Then she calls Jesus a prophet. (Jn.4:19) Finally she refers to Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah (Jn.4:29)

Jesus, who is the living water, slowly quenched the thirst in her heart, and with that she did the really astounding thing. She hurried back to the town, to the people that she had been avoiding, and to tell them to come and see the man who had told her everything she ever did! Her spiritual thirst had made her hide her secrets from people. But Jesus gave her the living water and the courage to face the truth. Did we ever feel like saying or hear someone say, "There must be something more to life." Whenever we feel like saying or hear someone say, "There must be something more to life" it

shows we need more of Jesus in our lives. Having Jesus in the center of our lives makes our whole life better.

A father wanted to read a magazine but was being bothered by his little girl. She wanted to know what the United States looked like. Finally, he tore a sheet out of his new magazine on which was printed the map of the country. Tearing it into small pieces, he gave it to her and said, "Go into the other room and see if you can put this together. This will show you our whole country today." After a few minutes, she returned and handed him the map, correctly fitted and taped together.

The father was surprised and asked how she had finished so quickly. "Oh," she said, "on the other side of the paper is a picture of Jesus. When I got all of Jesus back then our country just came together." Yes, when we allow Jesus where he belongs our whole life just falls into place. This season of Lent is a gift from Jesus to get Jesus back where he belongs in our lives and to allow everything in our lives fall into place as it should. At the end of Lent, we want to have the picture of Jesus put back together again properly in our lives because Jesus is the "something more to life" that we are looking for.

From whom or from where do we draw life? This question can be answered on several levels. Maybe we draw life from our spouses as we experience their love. Perhaps we draw life from our children whenever we rejoice in their talents and achievements. We may draw life from the fulfillment and satisfaction provided by our work that makes a real difference to the quality of life for us and for other people. Or we may draw life from our hobbies that renew our enthusiasm for life. Situate the story in the context of Lent, thinking of all those who will experience conversion and growth at this season, those who will be received into the Church community on Holy Easter, or who will take part in Lenten missions.

Jesus comes to us as sinners with the offer of new life, he puts no limit on those to whom he offers his love and forgiveness. Jesus wants to cleanse us with His living water in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Jesus wants to quench the thirst of our hearts with the living waters of true love, which only He can give. Let us turn away from those dead waters that will create more dark secrets and make us hide from God and from others. Let us recall that we are in his presence, let us recall our need, let us ask him to give us new life and pour into our hearts the Holy Spirit. Let us turn to Jesus who gives us the living waters of truth and love, so that our hearts will be at peace with God and with others. **Amen.**