

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT YEAR A

THEME: **JESUS THE LIVING WATER**

The readings for our Mass today are centered on Baptism and new life. Baptism represents God's living water which comes to us, penetrating every aspect of our lives and satisfying our spiritual hunger. The Holy Spirit, the word of God and the Sacraments of the Church are the primary sources of this living water of divine grace.

We have come to this Mass to drink this water of eternal life and salvation. Washed in it at Baptism, renewed by its abundance whenever we receive the Holy Eucharist, invited to it at every proclamation of the word of God, and daily empowered by the Spirit, we are challenged by today's Gospel to continue longing for the living water which only God can give.

Our first reading describes how God provided water to the ungrateful grumblers of Israel, thereby placing Jesus' promise within the context of the Exodus account of water coming from the rock at Horeb. The responsorial psalm refers to both the Rock of our salvation and also to our hardened hearts. It reminds us that our hardened hearts need to be softened by the grace of God, which comes to us through prayer, fasting and works of mercy.

Jesus in our Gospel reading, gave an unclean Samaritan woman an opportunity to receive the living water. Jesus awakened in her the hunger for wholeness and integrity which she had lost, a hunger he had come to satisfy in everybody's life. Today's Gospel passage reveals Jesus as the source of our Living Water and teaches us the need for us to always come to him to quench of thirst and hunger.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, Jesus wishes to come into our private life, not to embarrass us, not to judge us or to condemn us, but to free us, to change us and to offer us what we really need: the living water of the Holy Spirit. Like the Samaritan woman in today's Gospel passage, let us in this Lenten season have the courage to get rid of our unholy attachments and evil habits that keep us enslaved and idolatrous.

Lent is a time for us to learn from the mistakes of our over-indulgence in food, drink, drugs, gambling or any other addiction that distances us from the living water. This is a time for us to acquire the graces we need to witness to Jesus by standing for truth and justice in our day-to-day life.

Like the Samaritan woman in today's Gospel passage, we are expected in this season of Lent to acknowledge Jesus as the living water that will satisfy all our thirst and desires, and also make him known to others. Remember, God does certainly write straight on crooked lines.