

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT



Let Water Flow to the People

Father of all the nations,
in the desert, your servant Moses
struck the rock,
and water flowed for the people.
At the well, Jesus talked to a woman,
who led many to believe in him.
Like her, we long for your living water.
Fill our empty buckets so that we can
give a drink
to the thirsty we meet today.
Refresh our minds and move us
to bring others to your Son.
Lead us again to the paschal waters
of faith
that bring forgiveness and peace.
We ask this through our Lord
Jesus Christ,
your Son, who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Sunday, March 23, 2014
Pondering Baptism

Today's Readings: Exodus 17:3–7; Psalm 95:1–2, 6–7, 8–9 (8); Romans 5:1–2, 5–8; John 4:5–42. Today's stories about water are intended to remind us of Baptism. Through the elect, those preparing for their Baptism at the Easter Vigil, we can look more deeply into our own Baptisms. Jesus is the living water, and as we hear today, the Scriptures, prayers, and music of the liturgy often emphasize the life-giving properties of water.

Whether in the story of a rock split open to provide gushing water, or as a man standing by a well, offering living water, God pours out the cleansing, rejuvenating experience we need. Today's Gospel teaches about morality, spirituality, revelation, mission, ministry, and faith. In this Lenten period of purification and enlightenment, the elect

are pondering these aspects of the Christian life at a deep level. We, too, can reflect on them more deeply as we prepare to renew our baptismal promises.

In the presence of Jesus's living water, the woman at the well could confront her sins, open her heart, reorder her life, and turn to God. Immediately, she ran to tell others. We, also, go to the well for a deep encounter with Jesus. Cleansed and invigorated by the water he offers, we, too, run off to bring others back to him.

Use these words of today's Responsorial Psalm as a way to stay alert to the purification and enlightenment Jesus is offering: "O that today you would listen to his voice! Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness."



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, March 24

Purification and Enlightenment

Lent is the period of purification and enlightenment—an intense time for the elect (those preparing for Baptism at the Easter Vigil). In today's first reading, a man is cured of leprosy after washing and being cleansed—a reminder of Baptism. As we look forward to renewing our own baptismal promises, let us join in solidarity and prayer with the elect, who thirst for the living God. Today's Readings: 2 Kings 5:1–15ab; Psalm 42:2, 3; 43:3, 4 (42:3); Luke 4:24–30.

Tuesday, March 25

Annunciation of the Lord

When the angel Gabriel announced his stunning news to Mary, she responded, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." These words of the Mother of God and the mother of the Church are echoed in today's Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 40): "Here I am . . . I delight to do your will, O my God"—a fitting prayer for all of us throughout Lent. Today's Readings: Isaiah 7:10–14; 8:10; Psalm 40:7–8a, 8b–9, 10, 11 (8a, 9a); Hebrews 10:4–10; Luke 1:26–38.

Wednesday, March 26

Teaching the Children

Today's reading from Deuteronomy urges us to hear the "statutes and ordinances" of our God and to teach them to our children and our children's children. Parents and godparents promise to do so at their children's Baptism, for they are their children's first teachers. Also at the Baptism, they trace the Sign of the Cross on the child's forehead. Parents and godparents are encouraged to continue to do this daily—when putting children to bed, in the morning when they rise, and in their going and coming. Today's Readings: Deuteronomy 4:1, 5–9; Psalm 147:12–13, 15–16, 19–20 (12a); Matthew 5:17–19.

Thursday, March 27

Harden Not Your Hearts

To listen to the Lord, we must open our hearts. Even when God's prophets spoke to the people of Israel, they did not always listen. Psalm 95—"O that today you would listen to his voice! / Do not harden your hearts"—is one of the common psalms found in the Lectionary, and used in Morning Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours. Let these words echo in your mind each day so that you will be able to stand with the Lord. Today's Readings: Jeremiah 7:23–28; Psalm 95:1–2, 6–7, 8–9 (8); Luke 11:14–23.

Friday, March 28

A Simple Command?

The whole law is fulfilled in a simple command: Love God above all and love your neighbor as you love yourself. Yet we often find it is not so simple. Scripture is filled with difficult questions and commands that disciples ponder with their every breath. Lent gives us a special opportunity to wrestle with the challenges proposed in the Gospel. Whenever we do this wrestling, we know that we are "not far from the kingdom of God." Today's Readings: Hosea 14:2–10; Psalm 81:6 c–8a, 8bc–9, 10–11ab, 14 and 17 (11 and 9a); Mark 12:28–34.

Saturday, March 29

Be Merciful

At the center of today's Gospel are the Pharisee and the tax collector. Both are sinners, and so are we. As we move closer to the celebration of Easter, many parishes offer communal penance or reconciliation services that include the opportunity for individual confession. Be sure to participate in one of these liturgies, and get into the practice of celebrating the Sacrament of Penance on a regular basis. "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" Today's Readings: Hosea 6:1–6; Psalm 51:3–4, 18–19, 20–21ab (Hosea 6:6); Luke 18:9–14.



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Keeping the Seasons
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