

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent: Thirsting for Life-Giving Water**

“Companions on the journey” is the title of one of our well-loved liturgical songs, and it captures a truth at the heart of Lent, reminding us that the Christian life is a shared pilgrimage. In this holy season, we walk together-especially with those preparing for the Easter Sacraments, the Catechumens and the Elect who now enter their first scrutiny and seek deeper conversion. With them, we are invited to examine our own hearts, welcome God’s renewing grace, and journey toward the Easter mysteries.

The readings of this Third Sunday of Lent draw us into the reality of both physical and spiritual thirst, and they point us toward the One who alone can satisfy the deepest longings of the human heart. They remind us that only God’s living water can truly refresh our weary spirits and transform our hearts.

In the first reading, the Israelites wandered in the desert exhausted and wearied. Though, they had witnessed God’s mighty works-ending their slavery in Egypt and opening the Red Sea before them, fear clouded their memory. They grumbled against Moses and cried out, “Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die of thirst?” Moses, overwhelmed, turned to God and the Lord instructed him to strike a rock with his staff so that water might flow forth for the thirsty people. God revealed His steadfast compassion toward His pilgrim people despite their doubt, their stubbornness, and their hardened hearts.

In the Gospel, we encounter another thirsty soul: the Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob, burdened by the weight of her past, her shame, and the judgment of others. She came at noon, the hottest hour of the day, to avoid public ridicule.

Yet Jesus was already there, waiting to restore her dignity and heal her heart. He asked her for a drink and then offered her something far greater-the living water. The woman opened her heart to Him, recognized Him as the Messiah, and left her water jar behind-a symbol of the burdens she no longer needed to carry, and she became a witness to her community.

We all find ourselves in both the Israelites and in the Samaritan woman. We, too, wander through deserts of fear, doubt, and longing. We carry hidden wounds and question whether God is truly with us. But Saint Paul reminds us of God’s enduring love, saying that Christ died for us while we were still sinners. God’s grace meets us exactly we are and He responds to our cry with loving care. And as we accompany the Catechumens and the Elect, may their journey remind us of our own call to conversion-to drink deeply of Christ’s living water and allow His grace to transform our hearts.

Fr. Dr. Ben, Pastor.