



Parish of the Holy Eucharist

Small Group Faith Sharing Material
3rd Sunday of Lent—March 19, 2017
Sunday Readings

Opening Prayer

O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness, who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving have shown us a remedy for sin, look graciously on this confession of our lowliness, that we, who are bowed down by our conscience, may always be lifted up by your mercy. 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

(source: *The Roman Missal, Third Typical Edition*)

Mass Readings

Reading 1

Ex 17:3-7

In those days, in their thirst for water, the people grumbled against Moses, saying, “Why did you ever make us leave Egypt? Was it just to have us die here of thirst with our children and our livestock?” So Moses cried out to the LORD, “What shall I do with this people? a little more and they will stone me!” The LORD answered Moses, “Go over there in front of the people, along with some of the elders of Israel, holding in your hand, as you go, the staff with which you struck the river. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock in Horeb. Strike the rock, and the water will flow from it for the people to drink.” This Moses did, in the presence of the elders of Israel. The place was called Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled there and tested the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD in our midst or not?”

The Word of the Lord

Commentary on Exodus

The children of the Exodus thirsted for God in the same way as they thirsted for water. Water became a powerful symbol of the life-giving power of God in their lives. For people who dwell in the desert, water becomes a matter of life or death. To have water is to live; to have a God who satisfies their every need is to have life and existence itself.

QUESTIONS

1. Why are the Israelites complaining to Moses that he should never have freed them from slavery?
2. What is your greatest thirst in life?

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD;
let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us joyfully sing psalms to him.

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Come, let us bow down in worship;

let us kneel before the LORD who made us.

For he is our God,

and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides.

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Oh, that today you would hear his voice:

“Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,

as in the day of Massah in the desert,

Where your fathers tempted me;

they tested me though they had seen my works.”

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Reading 2

Rom 5:1-2, 5-8

Brothers and sisters: Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God. And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For Christ, while we were still helpless, died at the appointed time for the ungodly. Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. *The Word of the Lord*

Commentary on Romans

The Letter to the Romans speaks of God’s saving love for us in Jesus Christ our Savior. God did not save us because we were good and acceptable. Instead, God saved us when we were still in our sins. Salvation began for us in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and continues now in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins and the reconciliation with God. Even in this life now, we already share in the glory of God which will be fulfilled heaven.

QUESTIONS

1. How did God prove his love for us?
2. When have you felt loved by God?

Gospel

Jn 4:5-42

Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, “How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?” —For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.—Jesus

answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink, 'you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.'" The woman said to him, "Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself with his children and his flocks?" Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." Jesus said to her, "Go call your husband and come back." The woman answered and said to him, "I do not have a husband." Jesus answered her, "You are right in saying, 'I do not have a husband.' For you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true." The woman said to him, "Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain; but you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You people worship what you do not understand; we worship what we understand, because salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Christ; when he comes, he will tell us everything." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one speaking with you." At that moment his disciples returned, and were amazed that he was talking with a woman, but still no one said, "What are you looking for?" or "Why are you talking with her?" The woman left her water jar and went into the town and said to the people, "Come see a man who told me everything I have done. Could he possibly be the Christ?" They went out of the town and came to him. Meanwhile, the disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat." But he said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." So the disciples said to one another, "Could someone have brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, 'In four months the harvest will be here'? I tell you, look up and see the fields ripe for the harvest. The reaper is already receiving payment and gathering crops for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together. For here the saying is verified that 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap what you have not worked for; others have done the work, and you are sharing the fruits of their work." Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me everything I have done." When the Samaritans came to him, they invited him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. Many more began to believe in him because of his word, and they said to the woman, "We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world."

The Gospel of the Lord

Commentary on John

The thirst of the Samaritan woman finds its echo in all of our souls as we yearn for a closer relationship with God. The process of conversion from sin to godliness is well-described here for all, both the baptized and those to be baptized. Samaritans were a mixed breed of people, despised by the Jews. They were descendants of the remnants of the Israelites left when the Northern Kingdom was devastated by Assyrian invasion in 721 BCE. Inter-marriage between Assyrian and Israelite people led to a mixture of the two religions. They did not worship at Jerusalem as did the Jews but had their own temple on Mount Gerizim in Samaria. The Church sees at least three elements in this passage:

1. *The overture of God to the sinner.* Jesus takes the initiative in addressing the woman. Jesus offers salvation to a person who needs it very much, all the while perhaps being unaware that she needs it. Her *thirst for God* has led her into a life that was less than honorable, even among Samaritans. The fact that she comes to the well at noon, when no one else is likely to be there, may be due to her having been rejected by the other women of the village.

2. *The faith-response and subsequent conversion of the sinner.* The woman asks Jesus to give her the water that will satisfy her thirst. She yearns for more than she has now in her life. She is open to what God can give her. Her multiple marriages have not only alienated her from the other people in the village, but she has become alienated from herself.

3. *The mission of the disciple to proclaim the Good News to others.* She goes to tell others about the one she has found who will provide for all their needs. Having heard the truth about herself, her life, and about God, she hurries to share it with other people.

QUESTIONS

1. **How is this a story of conversion and evangelization?**
2. **When have you had such a powerful experience of God that you needed to share it with others?**

Watch the Video

Please watch the reflection on the weekly readings prepared by the staff at Parish of the Holy Eucharist. It can be found on the parish website at www.pothe.org or you may obtain copies of the DVD at the parish office.



Credits

Opening Prayer. *Missale Romanum, Libreria Editrice Vaticana*, 2008. *Roman Missal*, Catholic Book Publishing Co., New York, 2011.
 Readings for Mass. Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC.
 Commentary and Catholic Doctrine. *Echoing God's Word*. © 2013 Rev. Clement D. Thibodeau, 12 St. Anne Ave., Caribou, ME 04736 All rights reserved.