

Third Sunday in Lent - Year A
March 4, 2018
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Reflection

During Lent, we do more than prayer, fasting and almsgiving. We get ready to welcome new members. On this Third Sunday of Lent, parishes across the world are scrutinizing the elect - those who are completing the RCIA program. They will be received into the Church at the Easter Vigil through the sacrament of Baptism. This year, we will baptize four people, confirming them and giving them the Eucharist. Like the people of Israel crossing a wilderness of thirst, they have journeyed through Scripture and catechism, prayer and ministry. They are guided by volunteers, who are in turn led by the Holy Spirit. So like the people of Israel, they were never alone, but walked in the company of God.

Today's readings revolve around water, which reminds us of baptism; the sacrament of faith. Jesus met the Samaritan women at a well. He asked her for a drink, but really came to offer living water that brings eternal life. He wanted to bring her truth and love through the Holy Spirit; healing and joy through worship as a child of God; making her into an instrument of salvation for others. He said, "The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." This was a mystical explanation. It collided with a practicality hardened by sin, so she didn't understand his voice. But God was able to make use of her sin. Jesus knew exactly what she had done, and whom he was speaking to.

Exo 17:3-7
Ps 95
Rom 5:1-2, 5-8
Jn 4:5-42

He knew her thirst, and his words cracked her hardness like Moses striking rock. She came to see him as more than a Jew, more than a prophet, but Messiah and Saviour. No longer that woman with five husbands, compelled to go to the well alone at the hottest hour of the day, she proclaimed him to the city as disciple and evangelist. Her faith made her just, and she came to peace with God, through Jesus and the grace of the Holy Spirit. Jesus asked her for a drink, and then poured God's love into her heart.

Our baptism is like that too. We were made children of God by the pouring of water and the words that Jesus gave us. Dying to self and rising to life in the Spirit, our sins were forgiven, and we were made members of the Church. We became temples of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in our deepest core; whom we encounter in prayer; who guides us to truth. Most of us were baptized as infants because God chose us first and called us from the womb. He asks us for little and gives us much.

For this Eucharist, we pray for those who are choosing faith with the hope of eternal life; and we thank God for the love that we've received through his most beautiful and magnificent gift. And now we will help Emily, Cassandra, Winston and Lucille through prayer: to hear God's call and discern his will; to turn from sin and accept his loving mercy.