

Third Sunday in Lent - 0930
March 24, 2019
Fr. Rick Lorenz

Reflection

The Lenten experience of the Church is defined by prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Another important aspect is getting ready to welcome new members. On this Third Sunday of Lent, parishes across the world are scrutinizing catechumens. We help them through prayer to hear God's call and discern his will; to turn from sin and accept his loving mercy. These catechumens will be received into the Church at the Easter Vigil through the sacrament of Baptism. It will be immediately followed by Confirmation and First Communion. Catechumens and baptized candidates for confirmation go through the RCIA program. The formation that we offer in our RCIA program is measured and thorough, tailored and comprehensive. We spend time guiding each candidate; journeying with them through Scripture and catechism, prayer and ministry. Today we will accept Jason as a catechumen; he will begin formally to prepare for baptism. Joining him are Renee and Stephen. They were already baptised, but will receive Confirmation and the Eucharist. Cory and Alain were baptized and have already received First Communion; they are preparing for Confirmation.

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.

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

He wanted to bring her truth and love through the Holy Spirit; healing and joy through worship as a child of God.

His mystical explanation 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. 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. He 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 the 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 the men and women who are choosing faith with the hope of eternal life; and we thank God for the love we've received through his most beautiful and magnificent gift.