

MARCH 20, 2022
3rd Sunday of Lent – 1st Scrutiny
Exodus 17: 3-7; John 4: 5-15, 19-26, 39a, 40-42

“JESUS, THE WATER OF EVERLASTING LIFE.”

“The Mission is a 1986 film which tells the story of a Spanish Jesuit priest who went into the South American jungle to convert the enslaved natives who had been subjected to the cruelty of Portuguese colonials. One of the most telling scenes in this film occurs when Captain Mendoza, who had killed his brother in a fit of rage, is seen climbing a mountain with a backpack on his shoulders as an act of penance for his past sins. The backpack, which contained all the weapons of his former life as a slave merchant, was so heavy that he could not climb higher unless he gave up the backpack. He was relieved of it when one of the natives, whom he had formerly taken into slavery, forgave him and cut the rope of the backpack with a sharp knife. Thus, he saved Mendoza's life, instead of taking vengeance. The backpack represents sin. We cannot carry our ‘backpacks’ of sin with us. Until we repent, are forgiven and let them go, ‘we cannot climb to where God needs us.’ This scene in the movie illustrates today’s readings, which tell us of a merciful God who wants sinners to repent and who uses natural calamities and tragedies in life as loving warnings to awaken His children.”¹

My dear sisters and brothers, as we know Lenten theme is all about God’s compassion and mercy, faithfulness, and consistency. He loves us no matter what, no matter how we conduct yourself and behave or how heavy our sins are. His love never changes because God is love, His very essence. He cannot not love. Jesus Christ always offer Himself for us to imitate and give the water of life so that we may live.

In our First Reading, we heard that the people of Israel complained to Moses when they were in the wilderness without water. He brought that complain to God. The Lord

¹ stories4homilies.blogspot.com

instructed Moses: “Go on ahead of the people and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.”² Israelites quenched their thirst because God gave them water to drink. This is also the message of our gospel: Jesus quenched the thirst of the woman, the water of life everlasting that Jesus gave to her.

The Samaritan woman “intended to go to the same old well she had gone to for years, the well that her ancestors and their flocks drank from. Today is different. Jesus holds before her two realities of her life; the reality of what is and the reality of what might be. He brings her past to the light of the noon day. ‘You have had five husbands, he says, ‘and the one you have now is not your husband.’ It is not a statement of condemnation but simply a statement of what is. He tells her everything she has ever done. She has been found out. But it doesn’t end there. Jesus is more interested in her future than her past. He wants to satisfy her thirst more than judge her history. Jesus knows her. He looks beyond her past and sees a woman dying of thirst; a woman thirsting to be loved, to be seen, to be accepted, to be included, to be forgiven, to be known. Her thirst will never be quenched by the external wells of life. Nor will ours. Jesus says so. ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty.’ This is the living water of new life, new possibilities, and freedom from the past. This living water is Jesus’ own life. It became in the Samaritan woman ‘a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.’ She discovered within herself the interior well and left her water jar behind. She had now become the well in which Christ’s life flows.”³

² Exodus 17: 3-7 Holy Bible NRSVCE Canadian Bible Society

³ interruptingthesilence.com

My dear brothers and sisters, like the Samaritan woman, we do not like people around us find our vulnerability and the dark side of our past. We are fearful to make it known or found out by others, without really seeing the real us. To know us not by our past but by as a changed person, known at a deep intimate level. We thirst for people who will accept us for who we are, pour our lives and let them 'drink' and know from the depth of our very being. This is what Jesus is asking from the woman when He says, "give me a drink.' It is an invitation to make herself known to Him. Jesus wants her to be known so that He may love her and to loved her so that she may know Him.

"It's not enough, however, to hear her story or even believe her testimony. Until we come to the well of Christ's life within us, we will continue returning to the dry wells of our life. We will continue to live thirsty. We will continue to live in fear of being found out. So, from what wells do we drink? How much longer will we carry our water jars? There is another well, one that promises life, one by which we are known and loved. Come to a new well. Come to the well of Christ's life, Christ's love, Christ's presence that is already in you. Come to the well that is Christ himself and then drink deeply. Drink deeply until you become the one you have drunk."⁴

My brothers and sisters, let us come to the wellspring of Jesus. Let us drink from the water that Jesus offers us everyday – His life, His body, His blood. If we remain with Him, we will never be thirsty or hungry because Jesus is the Bread of everlasting life. Let us open ourselves to Him, listen to His words in the scriptures. The challenge for all of us is to be the water for others so that they too may know that Jesus is the One who will quench our thirst and will give life everlasting.

Let this be our prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, may I always drink form the wellsprings of your life and words so that I may change my heart for you. May I always stay in your

⁴ ibid

love by letting myself instrument of love and care, mercy, and compassion to those around me. May I see every event of my life especially at this moment of pandemic and war, as an invitation and challenge to change and put my trust in your loving hands. Amen."