

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT



Our Hearts Are Ready

God our Father and Creator,
of Abraham and Jacob,
and all of our ancestors of faith;
bless us in our daily lives of work
and prayer,
as we find you in Word and bread and water;
Harden not our hearts when we are
confronted with Truth,
nor when we are lost in confusion
or despair;
For we know you are with us,
as you were with Moses and the people
of Israel,
and as you were with the
Samaritan woman.
May our hearts be open to accept your Word,
and our spirits be ready to proclaim
your Truth.
May our work reflect your grace
and the fruits of our work be shared
with all.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

March 19, 2017

Living Water

Today's Readings: Exodus 17:3–7; Psalm 95:1–2, 6–7, 8–9; Romans 5:1–2, 5–8; John 4:5–42. The Samaritan woman is approached by Jesus, and responds as expected. What would you do in her situation? She has timed her trip to the well to avoid confrontation. This is her regular time to slip up to the well—Jacob's well—and fill her jug. This stranger makes it all so confusing! The exchange between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is not only about Jesus being the Living Water, it is also about accepting the teachings of Jesus as truth, and finding our spiritual thirst quenched by him. The exchange between the woman and Jesus is not only about finding the Messiah—the promised one—in our midst, it is also about being willing to accept the truth of Jesus' messiahship and the life of the Resurrected One in our midst today.

Where is your thirst quenched? Does your search for the promised one continue, or are you able to accept Christ in your midst at home, at work, in the marketplace, and at rest, as well as in church? How much confrontation is required before we recognize the Living Water in our lives? Perhaps we will find the Living Water in those still, small moments when we are hoping to slip by the crowds. Perhaps we will find it in a moment of unexpected confrontation, when we truly hear the Word of God slip through the conversation. In this Gospel passage, Jesus reminds us that we are never isolated from the truth, nor are we alone in receiving the fruits of an individual's labor. In today's Gospel what begins as two people meeting at a well becomes a profession of faith, by disciples and townspeople, that this is truly the Savior of the world.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, March 20

Solemnity of St. Joseph

A wonderful tradition celebrated today is the St. Joseph's Table, begun in Sicily, Italy, to mark that the town's crops were saved from a drought. At these festive gatherings, participants bring what they can, the food is blessed, prayers are said for continued blessings, and the abundance is shared. *Today's Readings: 2 Samuel 7:4–5a, 12–14a, 16; Psalm 89:2–3, 4–5, 27, 29; Romans 4:13, 16–18, 22; Matthew 1:16, 18–21, 24a.*

Tuesday, March 21

Mercy and Forgiveness

The readings today ground us solidly in the Lenten practices of mercy and forgiveness. While we plead for repeated mercy from God, we must practice the same toward one another. We are called to examine our response when others, who have wronged us, ask for forgiveness. But we are to work toward reconciliation even when others do not ask. The opportunity to forgive is endless—seven times seven multiplied repeatedly. *Today's Readings: Daniel 3:25, 34–43; Psalm 25:4–5ab, 6, 7bc, 8–9; Matthew 18:21–35.*

Wednesday, March 22

Fulfilling the Law

The challenge of today's readings comes from both Moses and Jesus: remain faithful to the Commandments and the Kingdom of Heaven will be your reward. However, the power in Jesus' words is that he did not come to "abolish but to fulfill" both the Law and the prophets. Christians should be sure to read both the New and Old Testaments. For the next week, take some time to read an Old Testament passage each day for reflection. *Today's Readings: Deuteronomy 4:1, 5–9; Psalm 147:12–13, 15–16, 19–20; Matthew 5:17–19.*

Thursday, March 23

Harden Not Your Hearts

Echoing what is described in the readings, today's psalm refrain calls us to remain faithful. Our fidelity needs to be not only in what we do, but at the core of our being, in our hearts. All of the readings today serve as a kind of examination of conscience. Mid-Lent is the perfect time for a personal assessment of our Lenten practices and to ask whether we are truly on the path of conversion of heart. Are we with Jesus or against him? *Today's Readings: Jeremiah 7:23–28; Psalm 95:1–2, 6–7, 8–9; Luke 11:14–23.*

Friday, March 24

Stations of the Cross

Each Friday is a reminder of Good Friday, and the Lenten practice of walking the Stations of the Cross can be part of that. Whether we join in a parish, communal celebration of Stations, or mark them with prayer and reflection on our own, we enter into a somber reminder of Christ's Death on the Cross on a Friday afternoon. We walk with him, carrying his Cross, mourn with the women of Jerusalem, and witness his salvific Death. *Today's Readings: Hosea 14:2–10; Psalm 81:6c–8a, 8bc–9, 19–11ab, 14, 17; Mark 12:28–34.*

Saturday, March 25

Annunciation of the Lord

The joy of Mary's acceptance when Gabriel announced to her that she would have a child who would be the Savior of the world is our joy as well. Today's solemnity is a reminder of the joy we should have in Lent, even as we struggle with sorrows and sinfulness and the hard work of conversion. Our call is the same as Mary's—to work with God so that all that we do may be according to his Word. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 7:10–14, 8:10; Psalm 40:7–8a, 8b–9, 10, 11; Hebrews 10:4–10; Luke 1:26–38.*

