

5th Sunday of Lent – The Fifth Last Word of Jesus From the Cross – “I Thirst” – March 28/29, 2020

“I thirst,” He rasped now from the cross.

Water ... that most basic element from which all of life springs.

Water ... roiling, storming, dark, deep ... primordial at the dawn of Creation: “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.”

Water ... the gateway to freedom as Moses led God's Chosen People through it from slavery in Egypt to promise.

Water ... flowing from sheer rock in the desert to slake the thirst of God's wandering, murmuring flock.

Water ... through the parted waters of the Jordan, Joshua led Israel to a land flowing with milk and honey.

Water ... the prophet's vision of the rebuilding of God's temple and God's people after an age of destruction, loss, and exile ... “I saw water flowing from the right side of the temple.”

Water ... every man is born from the womb's water, even the Son of Man.

Water ... at a baptism in river's waters, the heavens declared, “This is my beloved Son.”

Water ... water turned to abundant new wine at a wedding ... water walked upon in the night ... water pouring and churning in the storm ... water stilled at the command of the Lord of the waters.

Water ... spit mixed with dirt to form clay to create light in a blind man's eyes.

Water ... drawn from a cistern in the middle of the day, become for a doubting woman a well-spring of faith.

Water ... for the Master to wash the feet of His servants at a Last Supper where those servants became priests of the new order, no longer slaves but now friends.

Water ... mixed with blood, sweated in a garden of agony.

Water ... perspiring, pouring from His ravaged body, fluid filling His heaving lungs.

Water ... cracked lips, dry tongue ... "I thirst" ... water!

Water He thirsted for now ... water, and more than that. He cried out for consolation ... from the Father who had seemingly forsaken, from the friends who had betrayed and abandoned, from the women who wept over Him.

He cried out in thirst for the coming of the Kingdom not in some faraway future but now, where the lion would lie down with the lamb and there would be no harm or ruin on all God's holy mountain.

And, He cried out in thirst for us, for us, the patriarchs and prophets and reluctant pilgrims of the past, for us, the priestly people, the Church of the future ... all He wanted in His thirst for us was to love us and for us to love Him and for us to, at last, love one another.

In these dark days of plague and pandemic, these days when we thirst for the touch of family and friends, these days when we thirst to drink from the Cup of Blessing, these days when we thirst for healing and help, these days when we thirst to hear the sound of song and laughter once more, in these days when we thirst, draw close to the well of the cross, to the living waters of love flowing from the side of the Man of Sorrows. Draw near and hear Him whisper, "I thirst." He thirsts for you.

O let all who thirst, let them come to the water.

And let all who have nothing, let them come to the Lord:

Without money, without price.

Easy the load and light: come to the Lord.

Amen.