

2020 March 14
Third Sunday of Lent

Readings:

First: Exodus 17.3-7, "Strike the rock, and water will come out of it." (6b)

Psalm:95, "O that today you would listen to his voice!"(8a)

Second: Romans 5.1-2, 5-8, "God's love has been poured into our hearts." (5b)

Gospel: John 4. 5-42, "The true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth." (23b)

The Water Mission

St. Paul is telling the Romans today, *"And hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us."* (Romans 5.5) Jesus speaks about the same Holy Spirit when he told the Samaritan woman, *"The Water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life"*. (John 4.14) The water that gushed out from the rock in the wilderness at the striking of Moses symbolizes the Holy Spirit. (Exodus 17.6)

Holy Spirit is the life-giving water in the Church, in the world. The mission of Jesus going to Samaria, to the well of Jacob, was one in search of the wandering, the straying, the 'lost'. It was a rescue mission. He comes to the same well, from which Jacob drew water to rescue his cattle on his journey back to his ancestral property. (Genesis 29.2) He didn't dig the well. It was there. Who did dig it? We don't know. But it was God, the Spirit of God that led Jacob to that well and to his future wife Rachel. It was the same Spirit that led the Samaritan woman to the well, where she discovered the sources of Living Water, and herself, and her mission.

She vanishes into thin air after she brings the people of that township to Jesus, with whom Jesus stays some days. At first, for the woman Jesus was a stranger, a Jew with whom she did not want to have any association because he was an alien from an enemy territory. This alien stranger turned out to be her Redeemer and that of her townsfolk. Jesus was always on his mission, though sometimes they seemed 'aimless wanderings'. However, for him every journey, every day was with a mission, to give the Living Water.

We find such missions when he comes across the lepers, the blind man, the widow's dead son, the woman with a hemorrhage, Zacchaeus, Mathew, the paralytic at the pond, and so on. We find in the gospels hundreds of such search and rescue missions. It was Jesus who found them and reached out. Our faith and all that we are proud of came to us because Jesus found us, called us and accompanies us. And we too have a mission, to find out the straying, the wandering and the lost and to bring them to Jesus just like the Samaritan woman brought the town's people to Jesus, to witness to Jesus by testifying, *"Come and see a man who told me everything that I have ever done!"* (John 4.29) Let us be on the lookout for Jesus, that he may continue to find us and that we may bring the straying and the searching ones to him. They are out there for us to pick up!

Fr. George

