

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent (a)

This Sunday, we leave behind Mark's Gospel, and turn to St. John for a story that is NOT in the Synoptics. It is recommended especially for parishes with catechumens who will be baptized at Easter, and it's a good reminder for all of us who will be renewing our baptismal vows at that time as well. So, let's look at why.

In the first reading from Exodus, Moses has led the Israelites out of Egypt to escape their slavery to Pharaoh. With the help of God, he has gained them freedom. But now.....they're in the desert.... With no WATER. They're getting thirsty. Now that they are free, they seem to need God more than ever. They need life-sustaining water.

Which brings us to the Gospel of the Samaritan woman at the well to draw water. Jacob's well, which was given to him by his Father Isaac, and he gave it to his son Joseph back before the Israelites ever even ran off to Egypt in the first place. Water from the rock in the desert, or water from the well of Jacob, both water from God...but neither is "**Living Water**", which Jesus says He can give.

So..... What IS that?

Well, Jesus offers it to the Samaritan Woman. And...why would she need it? (I think we can safely assume it's NOT about bodily thirst.) Let's look closer at the woman.

She's at the well, alone, at NOON. This is the heat of the day. No one goes out at this hour. She's there then, because she's trying to avoid other people.

She's had five husbands and is now living with a man who is NOT her husband. She's not only a Samaritan, but she is a known public sinner.

And Jesus is not only talking to her, which is itself scandalous, but he is offering her Living Water. He is offering her His relationship, which she takes advantage of, having Him spends two days with the Samaritans, and he is offering her Forgiveness.

This is HUGE!

Jesus is inviting Non-Jewish Samaritans to follow Him; to receive water which is not only life-sustaining, but life Giving. In fact, IT Is..... living. It is the water of baptism. It is the HOLY SPIRIT himself.

What did Paul write to the Romans?

"...the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us." And here's the KICKER, "For Christ, while we were still helpless, DIED at the appointed time for the ungodly....God Proves his love for US.... In that while WE were still SINNERS... Christ died for us."

He died for the Jews.

He died for the Samaritans.

He died for the sinful woman at the well.

He died for our Catechumens.

He died for US.

From his pierced heart flows blood and life-giving, living, baptismal...water. And he invites us all to come. Come TO... the WATER.