



# Our Parish COMMUNITY

March 15, 2020

Third Sunday of Lent (A)

Ex 17:3-7

Rom 5:1-2, 5-8

Jn 4:5-42 or 4:5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-42

## Water for Living, or Living Water?

**W**ater flows through this Sunday's readings. In the passage from Exodus, the Hebrews cry out for the water so necessary for life. In the Gospel, Jesus speaks of living water that provides eternal life.

The exchange between the Hebrews and Moses is straightforward and startling. Physical thirst led them to question the divine care that miraculously delivered them from the hands of Egyptian oppressors. We shouldn't be too quick to shake our fingers at them. How many times have we looked past blessings we take for granted, only to focus on lesser immediate needs? These desert people are our ancestors in more ways than one.

The Gospel of John is most interesting. Jesus is in Samaria, a land hated by the Jews. There he initiates a conversation with an inhabitant of the town of Sychar, someone who is an outcast in three major ways. She is a woman—no self-respecting man would be alone

with a woman he didn't know. She is a Samaritan—Jews considered Samaritans unclean. And she is promiscuous—his own honor might be at risk. The woman's questionable social status does not prevent Jesus from engaging her, first in social etiquette ("Give me a drink" [4:7]), then in a theological exchange ("Whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst" [4:14]).

The Hebrews experienced God's saving action in their exodus, but they lacked trust. The woman, hated by the Jews, was an outcast of her own people, yet she believed. How do we respond to the water?

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

### FOR Reflection

- ★ *Look at the deepest longings of your heart. What might quench your thirst?*
- ★ *The Samaritan woman may have been the last person we would expect Jesus to engage with. What does this say about us?*



*[Jesus said,] "The water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

JOHN 4:14

RICCARDO MANER/SHUTTERSTOCK

# Dear Padre,

**For many of us older Catholics, our children have either left the faith or they don't belong to any church. Consequently, their children aren't baptized. We were taught that anyone may baptize in an emergency. Can we baptize our grandchildren? If so, how?**

**W**hen necessary, "any person," even one who is not baptized, "can baptize provided that he has the intention of doing that which the Church does and provided that he pours water on the candidate's head while saying: 'I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit'" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1284).

Church law permits baptism when at least one consenting Catholic parent or guardian plans to nurture the child in the faith and in the faith community. Some people—with the best intentions—may disregard these legal conditions and resort to baptizing a child in secret or against the parents' will. However, while the Trinitarian formula used while pouring water over a child qualifies as the sacrament even under non-life-threatening circumstances, it's also contrary to Church law. This has negative consequences both for the child being baptized and the grandparents doing the baptizing!

May you find consolation in these words: "Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament" (CCC 1257). Should a child die without baptism, we can trust in God's mercy, since the full proclamation of the gospel and request for the sacrament was not possible for the child. Moreover, Jesus' tenderness toward children allows us "to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without baptism" (CCC 1261).

—Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR  
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## A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

*This season of Lent is a good occasion to draw near to [Jesus], to encounter him in prayer in a heart-to-heart dialogue; to speak with him, to listen to him....In this way we can renew in ourselves the grace of baptism, quench our thirst at the wellspring of the Word of God.*

—ANGELUS, MARCH 19, 2017

## Calendar

### Monday

MARCH 16

*Lenten Weekday*

2 Kgs 5:1–15b

Lk 4:24–30

### Tuesday

MARCH 17

*Lenten Weekday*

Dn 3:25, 34–43

Mt 18:21–35

### Wednesday

MARCH 18

*Lenten Weekday*

Dt 4:1, 5–9

Mt 5:17–19

### Thursday

MARCH 19

*St. Joseph,*

*Spouse of the*

*Blessed Virgin Mary*

2 Sm 7:4–5a,

12–14a, 16

Rom 4:13, 16–18, 22

Mt 1:16, 18–21, 24a

or Lk 2:41–51a

### Friday

MARCH 20

*Lenten Weekday*

Hos 14:2–10

Mk 12:28–34

### Saturday

MARCH 21

*Lenten Weekday*

Hos 6:1–6

Lk 18:9–14

### Sunday

MARCH 22

*Fourth Sunday*

*of Lent*

1 Sm 16:1b, 6–7, 10–13a

Eph 5:8–14

Jn 9:1–41 or

Jn 9:1, 6–9, 13–17,

34–38