

Third Sunday of Lent

March 15, 2020

Dear Parishioners of Christ on the Mountain,

I want to assure you that I will celebrate the Universal prayer of the Holy Eucharist for you daily. I will continue to honor all Mass Intentions that have been requested.

Celebrating private mass is interesting. I miss you all. I have to say the responses of the congregation along with the priest's prayers. I do it all with you in my mind and my heart. This morning as I celebrated the Universal Sacrament of the Church, I was struck with some powerful words from the Collect. "O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness, who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving have shown us a remedy for sin, look graciously on this confession of our lowliness, that we who are bowed down by our conscience, may always be lifted by your mercy."

God will lift us up from what we are experiencing at this time. In the first reading from Exodus we hear the people were thirsting for water. We are thirsting for an end to this pandemic. Why has the Lord brought us here? The Lord told Moses to hit the rock with the staff that had struck the river and lead the people out from the slavery of Egypt. Strike the Rock and the water will flow from it for the people to drink. We have to strike the Rock of our faith and water will flow and we will drink.

In Romans Paul reminds us, brothers and sisters, since we are justified by faith, we have peace and we can boast of hope, and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. The spiritual water poured out for us on the cross. It has been poured into our hearts.

I have included here a reflection on the Samaritan woman by St. Augustine. The account of the Samaritan woman is so rich in meaning. Please know you are not forgotten but that you are loved.

In his peace and strength,

Fr. David

From a treatise on John by St Augustine:

A Samaritan woman came to draw water

A woman came. She is a symbol of the Church not yet made righteous.

Righteousness follows from the conversation. She came in ignorance, she found Christ, and he enters into conversation with her. Let us see what it is about, let us see why a Samaritan woman came to draw water. The Samaritans did not form part of the Jewish people: they were foreigners. The fact that she came from a foreign people is part of the symbolic meaning, for she is a symbol of the Church. The Church was to come from the Gentiles, of a different race from the Jews.

We must then recognize ourselves in her words and in her person, and with her give our own thanks to God. She was a symbol, not the reality; she foreshadowed the reality, and the reality came to be. She found faith in Christ, who was using her as a symbol to teach us what was to come. She came then to draw water. She had simply come to draw water; in the normal way of man or woman.

Jesus says to her: Give me water to drink. For his disciples had gone to the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman therefore says to him: How is it that you, though a Jew, ask me for water to drink, though I am a Samaritan woman? For Jews have nothing to do with Samaritans.

The Samaritans were foreigners; Jews never used their utensils. The woman was carrying a pail for drawing water. She was astonished that a Jew should ask her for a drink of water, a thing that Jews would not do. But the one who was asking for a drink of water was thirsting for her faith.

Listen now and learn who it is that asks for a drink. Jesus answered her and said: If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink," perhaps you might have asked him and he would have given you living water.

He asks for a drink, and he promises a drink. He is in need, as one hoping to receive, yet he is rich, as one about to satisfy the thirst of others. He says: If you knew the gift of God. The gift of God is the Holy Spirit. But he is still using veiled language as he speaks to the woman and gradually enters into her heart. Or is he already teaching her? What could be more gentle and kind than the encouragement he gives? If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink," perhaps you might ask and he would give you living water.

What is this water that he will give if not the water spoken of in Scripture: With you is the fountain of life? How can those feel thirst who will drink deeply from the abundance in your house?

He was promising the Holy Spirit in satisfying abundance. She did not yet understand. In her failure to grasp his meaning, what was her reply? The woman says to him: Master, give me this drink, so that I may feel no thirst or come here to draw water. Her need forced her to this labor, her weakness

shrank from it. If only she could hear those words: Come to me, all who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Jesus was saying this to her, so that her labors might be at an end; but she was not yet able to understand.

Responsory:

℞. Jesus cried out, If any man is thirsty, let him come to me! Let the man come and drink who believes in me! From his breast shall flow fountains of living water.* He was speaking of the Spirit which those who believed in him were to receive.

℣. Anyone who drinks the water that I shall give will never be thirsty again.* He was speaking of the Spirit which those who believed in him were to receive.

Let us pray.

God our Father,

In your infinite love and goodness

You have shown us that

prayer, fasting, and almsgiving

are remedies for sin.

Accept the humble admission of our guilt,

and when our conscience weighs us down

let your unfailing mercy raise us up.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.