

## **HOMILY by Fr. Anthony Davis**

**“The Water I Shall give will become a spring of Eternal Life...”**

March 15, 2020

3rd Sunday in Lent (Year A)

Exod.17:3-7; Rom. 5:1-2, 5-8; John 4:5-42

The theme of today’s Mass centers around water. The links with Baptism are obvious. Water is the source of life but also of destruction. So we have the story of the Flood, which brought salvation to Noah and his family but death to a sinful world; the crossing of the Red Sea, which meant life and liberty to the Israelites but death to the army of the Pharaoh; and the water from the rock for the Israelites in the desert. We will “HOPEFULLY” hear more about these at the Easter Vigil during the blessing of the baptismal water (all things being equal).

The Gospel about the Woman at the Well also centers around the theme of water and life. The story begins by Jesus showing himself as a person in need: tired, hungry and thirsty. We constantly have to remind ourselves how genuinely human Jesus was, “like us in all things but sin”.

He asks for help from a person he was supposed to avoid (a strange woman on her own) and also to hate (a Samaritan). The woman herself is very surprised at his approach but her surprise allows Jesus to turn the tables and offer her “living water”. She, understanding him literally, asks how he can give it as he has no bucket. But the water that Jesus will give is different. Those who drink it will never be thirsty again and it gives eternal life. Again, literally, the woman wants this water that lasts forever. Then she will never have to return to the well again.

What is this water that Jesus speaks about? It is God’s Spirit which comes to us in Baptism. Baptism is not just a ritual producing magic effects. It is the outward, symbolic sign of a deep reality, the coming of God as a force penetrating every

aspect of a person's life. And this happens through our exposure to Jesus and to the Gospel vision of life and our becoming totally converted to that vision. This can only happen through the agency of a Christian community into which we are called to enter. As the Second Reading says today, "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit". It is not just a question of a ritual washing or immersing and saying magic words but of a real drinking in of that Spirit. The spirit quenches our thirst, not by removing our desire for God's presence but by continually satisfying it.

Again the water that Jesus promises is closely linked to conversion and forgiveness of sin. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, but the sin must first be exposed and acknowledged. And Jesus' goal is not just the woman's sin but the whole town from which she comes. Sinner that she is, she will become the agent of their salvation and conversion! As a result, in this story many in that Samaritan village came to believe in Jesus. And they said: "It is no longer because of what you [the woman] said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the World."

For our catechumens, and for all of us, the faith that has been handed on must become our own faith. So that, even if everyone around us were to abandon Jesus, I would not. Ultimately faith is totally personal. "I live, no not I, but Christ lives in me."

Let us pray today that especially in this trying abnormal times all Catholic Christians, (including all those preparing to be baptized at Easter), may find that life-enriching faith for their lives and keep the flame of faith and trust in our living God still burning!

May God heal the world soon in Jesus' mighty name. Amen!!!