

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT



Living Water

Loving Savior, font of life,
you have poured out your living water
upon us,
filling us with your Spirit.
Cleanse our hearts when we are over-
whelmed by fear, despair, or disbelief.
Refresh us when we grow weary.
Drench us with your love and mercy

so that our hearts will overflow with peace
and we will immerse ourselves in justice and
reconciliation.
Engulf all who thirst for you in an onrush
of your grace
until we drink forever from the streams
of eternal life.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, March 15, 2020

This Is Better



Today's Readings: Exodus 17:3-7; Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9; Romans 5:1-2, 5-8; John 4:5-42. When good things happen in our lives, we do not always welcome the changes. God freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and led them to a new homeland, but along the way the people complained. They feared the desert. They fretted about food and water. Although God protected and provided for them, the people claimed that things had been better in Egypt.

After Jesus offers living water to the woman at the well, she challenges him about this mysterious gift. She notes that he does not have a bucket and then she insists on the excellence of that particular well. Next, she laments the hassle of trekking back and forth for water. Only after Jesus

painstakingly convinces the woman that he is no ordinary Jew does she leave her water jar behind to accept the living water, the new life, that he offers.

St. Paul writes of all the good that has come to us because of God's love. Yet God's love is utterly unlike ours. God loves us simply because it is God's nature to love. We love people because of how they treat us or because they are related to us. It seems safer and more prudent for love to be earned. We struggle to accept the love that God has poured into our hearts. We still glance back at Egypt, clutch our water jars, and wonder if God's extraordinary gift is better than any other.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, March 16

What We Deserve

Naaman, thinking he deserved better treatment, nearly missed the opportunity to be healed. The people in Jesus' hometown also thought they deserved privileged treatment. They so resented Jesus' willingness to minister to others, they stopped listening to him. They even tried to silence the voice of God. Use Psalms 42 and 43 to pray in solidarity with those whom the world does not value. *Today's Readings:* 2 Kings 5:1–15b; Psalm 42:2, 3; 43:3, 4; Luke 4:24–30.

Tuesday, March 17

St. Patrick, a True Servant

How do you act in a crisis? Azariah admitted his sins and expressed his trust in God. St. Patrick, after being enslaved in Ireland, chose to return years later to share the Gospel. Azariah and St. Patrick admitted their need for God, but the servant in the Gospel parable remained selfish and hard-hearted. Sometimes once the danger has passed, we too return to our former ways. Read part of St. Patrick's Confessions and ask God to keep you faithful during difficult times. *Today's Readings:* Daniel 3:25, 34–43; Psalm 25:4–5ab, 6 and 7bc, 8 and 9; Matthew 18:21–35.

Wednesday, March 18

St. Cyril of Jerusalem

Jesus, like Moses before him, told people to uphold God's law in everything. By our obedience we become part of God's promised kingdom and reveal God's wisdom and goodness to others. In his homilies, St. Cyril of Jerusalem urged the newly baptized to heed what they were taught and to treasure God's grace so as to enter God's kingdom. Identify and pray for the people in your community who are preparing to become Catholic this Easter. *Today's Readings:* Deuteronomy 4:1, 5–9; Psalm 147:12–13, 15–16, 19–20; Matthew 5:17–19.

Thursday, March 19

St. Joseph, Faithful Provider

When Mary became pregnant in a most unexpected way, St. Joseph took her into his home and provided for her and her son. This legacy of St. Joseph continues in the story of his intercession on behalf of farmers in Italy who needed rain. When the rains came, the farmers celebrated with a feast they blessed and shared with the poor. Offer a special prayer of thanks for your food today, and share what you can with a local food pantry. *Today's Readings:* 2 Samuel 7:4–5a, 12–14a, 16; Psalm 89:2–3, 4–5, 27 and 29; Romans 4:13, 16–18, 22; Matthew 1:16, 18–21, 24a or Luke 2:41–51a.

Friday, March 20

Steadfast Love

In the passage from Hosea, God reveals his unfailing love despite his people's choice to carve idols and turn to other gods. The God of Israel proves infinitely patient and forgiving. Jesus reminds us that God deserves our complete devotion. Insofar as God shows steadfast love for us, we are to reciprocate by loving God as well as other people. What can you do today to show God's love to someone else? *Today's Readings:* Hosea 14:2–10; Psalm 81:6c–8a, 8bc–9, 10–11ab, 14 and 17; Mark 12:28–34.

Saturday, March 21

Painfully Aware

As the people in the First Reading return to God, the Lord knows that they will soon stray again. They might not even realize how faithless they are. They are like the Pharisee who is so self-absorbed he doesn't actually pray. We are called to be like the tax collector: deeply aware of both our sinfulness and our continuous need for God. Spend fifteen minutes today in silence, repeating the words of the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." *Today's Readings:* Hosea 6:1–6; Psalm 51:3–4, 18–19, 20–21ab; Luke 18:9–14.

