

March 14, 2020

Third Sunday in Lent

Never stop giving thanks!

Exodus 17:3-7

Psalm 95:1-2,6-9

Romans 5:1-2,5-8

John 4:5-42

In the first reading the Israelites complain and grumble against Moses who cries out to the Lord in desperation. The Lord answers Moses, instructs him to strike a large rock from which a spring arises. The place where all of this happened was named Meriba and Massah indicating it is where the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord.

The Psalmist encourages us to sing joyfully, be thankful, and open our hearts as we bow and kneel in worship. The Lord is our God, our Shepherd. We are reminded not to harden our hearts and put the Lord to the test as the Israelites did in the desert.

In the second reading Paul explains that we have been justified by faith and we find our peace with God through Jesus Christ. Our hopefulness will not disappoint us because love will be poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit; this love is proven by Jesus who died even for godless people in order they be saved.

In the Gospel Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well and asks her for a drink. This water, he tells her, most refreshing to a thirsty person, is nothing in comparison to the "living water" that quenches our thirst for the living God. After telling her of personal details she comes to recognize that Jesus is someone special. The disciples, on the other hand, object to his even talking with her and urge Jesus to eat. The response is, "doing the will of him who sent me, and bringing his work to completion is my food." Jesus stays on for several days and the people come to recognize him as the messiah.

The Father sent the Son who gives us Living Water
So that the Spirit can pour love into our hearts.

We seek many things in this world and yet all of us have, at one time or another, appreciated a simple glass of water on a hot, dry day. You can imagine the relief of the Israelites when water flowed from the rock struck by Moses. Their feelings reflected the Psalm's call for joy and the praise the people feel when there is confidence in God's presence and care. The Romans came to realize that the One who loves and seeks is the Lord our God. The Samaritan woman could not understand how Jesus could give her "living water" without a bucket. Can we understand?

We are deeply aware of struggles in and around us.
We turn to you Jesus, that we might not become discouraged, and
We rely on your compassion and love for us.
We know who we are
- sinners who experience the after-effects of our wrongdoings
but we are loved and you Lord bring us hope.

May we joyfully embrace the new life you give us.

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The disciples object to Jesus' approach to the woman at the well, but he saw something in her that they did not. What is our thinking when we interact with others?

Bearing the Faults of Others

Whatever changes we cannot make in ourselves or in others ought to be patiently accepted until God deems otherwise. Consider that in such situations it is to our advantage to exercise patience without which our merits are not of great value. However, when such obstacles occur pray to the Lord for guidance and seek the help that enables us to bear hindrances cheerfully. It is not wise to use our power to simply avoid obstacles in the path of virtue as patience is not accomplished by avoiding people, things, and circumstances which are particularly taxing to us.

To some you must be compassionate because they are wavering.¹ Refute falsehood, correct error, give encouragement -- but do all with patience and with care to instruct.² However, if anyone who is admonished once or twice does not comply, do not contend with that person, do not treat him as an enemy, but correct him as a brother³ and then leave it to God in order that His will be done and that He be honored by all the faithful since He knows how to turn evil into good.

Reflect on how to be patient in bearing the shortcomings of others, whatever they may be, for we too fall short in ways that others must tolerate. If I am unable to change myself into the person I want to be how can I expect others to measure up to my expectations?

*Do I expect others to be perfect
while I have not amended all of my flaws?*

*Do I seek to have others sternly corrected
but am not as open to correction as I should be?*

*Do I disagree with the liberty others may have
yet do not wish to be denied in anything?*

*Do I agree that others need to be bound by rules and regulations
as long they do not restrain my ways?*

*Do I use the same scale of fairness and justice to weigh others
compared to myself?*



¹ Jude 1:22

² 2 Timothy 4:2

³ 2Thess 3:15

If we were all perfect there would be nothing to bearing others for the love of God. But God has so ordained things that we encounter learning experiences from bearing another's burdens. No one is perfect, no one is without fault, no one is without burdens to carry, no one is an island to themselves, no one is wise enough in and of themselves; hence we need to accept, comfort, help, instruct, and even admonish one another.

Man reveals his virtue when adversity is encountered for in those times his inner strength becomes apparent.

This article, Bearing the Faults of Others, is based on Book 1, Chapter 16 of Thomas of Kempis' writing, "Imitation of Christ."