



Bringing Home the Word

Third Sunday of Lent | March 19, 2017

Source of Life

By Mary Katharine Deeley

The conventional wisdom of fitness experts and health professionals is that we should drink eight glasses of water a day. This suggestion is the product of a country with the luxury of clean, abundant, easily accessible water. Some of us are so used to processed water that we balk when we have to drink well water.

Some people think bottled water is a necessity because, in their minds, it tastes better. It rarely hits home that in much of the world safe drinking water is scarce,

if it's available at all. People who live in those areas have to make do with the little good water they have for drinking, cooking, and washing.

In the desert regions of the Middle East, wells were a source of life and a social meeting place. Asking for water took a little courage in a place where water was rare. Offering someone water was a great gesture of hospitality.

Jesus' request invited the woman's hospitality and led to so much more. She opened her life to Jesus; in turn, Jesus revealed who he was and the gift of life he brings.

Living water must have sounded like a dream to a woman with a stagnant well, and maybe it does to us, too, but we do know this: Those who drink eight glasses of water a day will eventually die as surely as those who fight for even one.

On the other hand, Jesus promises that if we drink the water he gives, we will have eternal life—for he *is* Living Water. Have you had your glass today? †

*All of us need
the living water
of Christ, our Lord.*

A Word From Pope Francis

[Repentance] is the call to change one's life. Conversion is not the question of a moment or a time of the year, it is an undertaking that lasts one's entire lifetime. Who among us can presume not to be a sinner? No one. We are all sinners. The Apostle John writes: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins..." (1 John 1:8-9). And that is what is happening during this celebration and throughout this day of penance.

—Homily,
Celebration of Penance
March 28, 2014



Sunday Readings

Exodus 17:3-7

"Is the LORD in our midst or not?"

Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

"And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts."

John 4:5-42

"Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in him because of the word of the woman who testified."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS REFLECTION

- What about your faith have you taken for granted because it's as abundant as water?
- How can you offer the precious gift of faith to someone this Lent?



Coming to Faith and Living Water

By Raymond E. Brown, SS

The story of the woman at the well illustrates how difficult it is to come to Jesus in faith because of obstacles. Many people have a chip on their shoulder toward God because they feel beaten down by the inequalities in life. The woman smarts from the Jewish dislike for Samaritans, especially for Samaritan women. And that is her first obstacle to dealing with Jesus.

Jesus does not answer her objection; he is not going to change instantly a

whole world of injustice. Yet he can offer something that will enable the woman to put injustice in perspective, namely, living water. He means water that gives life; she misunderstands it as flowing water, asking him if he thinks he is greater than Jacob, provider of a well.

Ironically, as John expects the reader to recognize, Jesus is greater than Jacob; but Jesus refuses to be sidetracked from his main goal. He explains that he is speaking of the water that springs up to eternal life,

water that will permanently end thirst. With a masterful touch, John shows her attracted on a level of the convenience of not having to come to the well every day for water.

To move the woman to a higher level, Jesus shifts the focus to her husband. Her reply is a half truth, but Jesus shows that he is aware of the real story. Confronted with Jesus' surprising knowledge of her situation, the woman is still not fully convinced. She poses to the villagers the question, "Could this be the Messiah?" The villagers come and encounter Jesus for themselves. We are left to surmise that, by being instrumental in bringing others to believe, the woman's own faith came to completion. And at last she drank of the water of life. †

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Season of Lent Is Very Baptismal

By Rev. Lawrence E. Mick

The key to understanding the meaning of Lent is simple: Baptism. Preparation for baptism and for renewing baptismal commitment lies at the heart of the season. Our challenge today is to renew our understanding of this important season of the Church year to see how we can integrate our personal practices into this renewed perspective.

Why is baptism so important in our Lenten understanding? Lent as a forty-day season developed in the fourth century from three merging sources.

The first was the ancient paschal fast that began as a two-day observance before Easter but was gradually lengthened to forty days. The second was the catechumenate as a process of preparation for baptism, including an intense period of preparation for the sacraments of initiation to be celebrated at Easter. The third was the order of penitents, which was modeled on the catechumenate and sought a second conversion for those who had fallen back into serious sin after baptism. As the candidates for baptism (catechumens) entered their final period of preparation for baptism, the penitents and the rest of the community accompanied them on their journey and prepared to renew their baptismal vows at Easter.

Lent, then, is radically baptismal, and whether we are lifelong Catholics or new

to the faith, we are all called to reapproach our faith this season with the spirit of a new convert and a penitent. †

Source: *Catholic Update*,
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Lord, you created me to be a member of the human family. Empower me to show respect and love to all people, regardless of their racial, cultural, religious, and social background.

— From *Mindful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*
Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

March 20–25

- Mon. St. Joseph: 2 Sm 7:4–5a, 12–14a, 16 / Rom 4:13, 16–18, 22 / Mt 1:16, 18–21, 24a
- Tue. Lenten Weekday: Dn 3:25, 34–43 / Mt 18:21–25
- Wed. Lenten Weekday: Dt 4:1, 5–9 / Mt 5:17–19

- Thu. Lenten Weekday: Jer 7:23–28 / Lk 11:14–23
- Fri. Lenten Weekday: Hos 14:2–10 / Mk 12:28–34
- Sat. Annunciation of the Lord: Is 7:10–14; 8:10 / Heb 10:4–10 / Lk 1:26–38