

Sunday March 15, 2020, Third Sunday of Lent Homily

By: Fr. Paul Magyar

This week I am focusing my homily on the first reading from the book of Exodus 17:3-7 and the gospel reading from John 4:5-42. The overall theme is on Thirst.

In the book of Exodus in this week's reading we hear about Moses and the Israelites in the desert. The people are thirsty, they think they will die of thirst, they start being hostile to Moses and doubt that God cares for them. God intervenes in this terrible time and instructs Moses to go to the rock at Horeb and strike it with his staff. Moses does so and water comes out of the rock and the people drink and start to believe in God again.

Moses' name is an ancient Egyptian name, Tutmose which means "master of water". All Biblical names are functional corresponding to the function or action that the particular biblical character does. Moses was found on water as a baby by pharaoh's daughter, he strikes the river Nile with his staff and turns it into blood as referenced in the reading, splits the Red sea, talks with God within the vapour of the cloud, and strikes the rock with his staff and water comes out. Moses is the master of water because God makes him do a lot with it.

Once the Israelites start to drink and their thirst is quenched and their anger is soothed, Moses calls the place of this event Massah "to quarrel" and Meribah "to test". The place where the people quarrelled and tested God.

The Israelites were thirsty and so was the woman at the well in the gospel of John. Jesus travels to a city called Sychar and sits by the well which is located about ½ mile south west from the city at a crossroads. People usually come for water in the morning or in the evening when it is cooler, however the woman in the event comes for water at noon, which is an unusual time. The indication is that the woman wants to avoid the crowds and does not want to socialize with the other town people. Jesus knows this about her and He is thirsting for her faith and trust.

Samaria is between Judah and the Galilee region. The Samaritans are gentiles. Jews are not to talk to Samaritans. That's the cultural rule at that time. The well at the crossroads is called Jacob's well because according to tradition Jacob the son of Isaac had the ability to bring up water from the earth.

Jesus talks with the woman and gives her the opportunity to confess her sins and therefore offers her reconciliation. The woman was thirsting for a life free from sin. It is through this encounter with the reconciliation power of God that makes the woman gain trust and faith in Christ and she immediately starts to proclaim this good news to the town-people and bring them to Christ.

Praying for all of you

Fr. Paul Magyar