

3RD SUNDAY OF LENT

We are all aware of the importance of water in our lives, especially in WA where it is a scarce resource. .

The water in today's readings is different. Jesus tells the Samaritan woman that the water he gives is living water and those who drink his water will never thirst again.

Jesus water brings many gifts. We first received his water at baptism when through the pouring of the water of baptism we were received into his body, the Church, becoming heirs to the kingdom of Heaven.

Every time we enter the church we bless ourselves with holy water recalling his death on the cross and his redeeming love.

Our Lenten theme "up from the waters" depicted in our display over here reminds us of our baptism and how Jesus tells us that his water is like a spring welling up inside us to lead us through life and into everlasting life.

Water had important applications for the Jews, It represented cleanliness, they washed themselves on a regular basis with water, using a special instrument this ceremony, depicting their desire to rid themselves from any defilements, was called mikveigh.

In Ezekiel we hear “I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you will be cleansed from all your uncleanness”.

John’s baptism in the river Jordan was similar, as it was a baptism of repentance.

On occasions we have a sprinkling of holy water at mass, which has a similar meaning. This water represents our desire to repent of our sins.

In the first reading today the Jews complain of their thirst, which we may see as a longing for God and spiritual satisfaction. The rock which Moses struck represents God, who is spiritual water for our lives. This was a time when the people thirsted for God and he satisfied them.

Through Jesus, God gave us the Spirit when mankind needed it most, and he continues to do so every day of our lives.

The gospel today gives us a glimpse into the profound mystery that is Jesus. He was different.

For instance when travelling from Judea to Galilee, he took the short cut through Samaria. Jews would have taken the long way round to avoid contact with the Samaritans. This was of no concern to Jesus.

On the way Jesus passed through the town of Sychar he came to the place of Jacobs well.

There were many wells in this region but this was a historic place as the well was on a piece of ground that had been bought by Jacob and later bequeathed to Joseph.

When Jesus reached the well it was midday, very hot. He was weary and thirsty. At the well he met the Samaritan woman; she was a moral outcast, because of her past life in which she'd had five husbands, and was currently living with another man. She was probably not welcome at the

communal well in the town, so she came to this well to draw water.

She was astounded when Jesus asked her to draw him some water, he was a Jew who should have treated her with contempt yet here he was asking her for water.

Jesus saw in this social outcast, a woman who mattered to God, a woman who was thirsting for love, different to that that she had experienced in her life, a love that would last, fill her to the full and give purpose to her life.

At the end of this long heart-to-heart conversation with Jesus, the woman passes through several stages; first she calls Jesus a Jew, then sir, or Lord, then a prophet & finally realizes he is the Messiah.

Then an amazing transformation takes place, she becomes an evangelist and returns to the village proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah, encouraging all she meets to come to Jesus.

From the readings today, what do we see as life messages for ourselves?

We need to open our hearts to allow Jesus into our private lives, to free us, to change us and offer what we really need, the living water that is the Holy Spirit of Jesus and his love

And what about our attitude to others, Jesus behaving as a Jew should have held this woman in contempt, of course he did not, but what about us, how do we approach others who do not meet our expectations. Do we condemn them, do we treat them as outcasts or do we open our hearts to them as Jesus expects.

The Samaritan woman in the gospel story today became an evangelist, taking Jesus to others and encouraging them to come & see what he had to offer.

We all know that Jesus expects nothing less from us. We are all called to be evangelists.

AS Christians we should believe that the good news of Jesus Christ is too important not to share. We call this work of sharing:- evangelization.

So how do we evangelise, we do so firstly by the way we live out our lives as committed Christians, lives in which we treat those around us, our families our friends our neighbors, caring for them with true Christian love.

Like the Samaritan woman we should also not shrink from taking any opportunity to bring Jesus to others .

We are well into lent now, so we should be taking every opportunity available to open our hearts to the living water that Jesus offers so that he can refresh our spirit as Easter approaches.