

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

(YEAR A)



Our Hearts Are Ready

God our Father and Creator,
bless us in our daily lives
of work and prayer.
Harden not our hearts
when we are confronted with truth.
You are with us,
as you were with Moses and the
people of Israel,
and as you were with the
Samaritan woman.

May our hearts be open to accept
your Word,
and our spirits be ready to proclaim
your truth.
May our work reflect your grace
and the fruits of our work be shared
with all.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, March 3, 2024

Living Water



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 or 4:5–15, 19b–26, 39a, 40–42. When Jesus asks the Samaritan woman for water, she responds with confusion for a number of reasons. As Jesus continues to speak, her confusion deepens until she is enlightened. The exchange between the woman and Jesus is not only about finding the Messiah, but about being willing to accept the life of the resurrected One in our midst today.

Are you able to accept Christ in your midst at home, at work, in the marketplace, and at rest, as well as in church? How much confrontation is required before we recognize

the Living Water in our lives? Perhaps we will find the Living Water in those still, small moments when we are hoping to slip by the crowds. Perhaps we will find it in a moment of unexpected confrontation, when we truly hear the Word of God slip through the conversation. In this Gospel passage, Jesus reminds us that we are never isolated from the truth, nor are we alone in receiving the fruits of an individual's labor. In today's Gospel, what begins as two people meeting at a well becomes a profession of faith, by disciples and townspeople, that Jesus is truly the Savior of the world.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, March 4 Faith and Humility

When Jesus is asked to perform signs in his hometown as he did in other places, he refuses, saying, “No prophet is accepted in his own native place.” Jesus accepted that his former neighbors would not believe and so did not seek to prove himself. Sometimes we face humbling situations; we, too, do not need to prove ourselves. It is necessary only to accept that all we have is by the grace of God. *Today’s readings: 2 Kings 5:1–15ab; Psalm 42:2–3; 43: 3–4; Luke 4:24–30.*

Tuesday, March 5 Love and Kindness

In today’s Gospel, Jesus tells Peter that he must forgive another “not seven times but seventy-seven times.” From that instruction, we may ascertain that we are to forgive over and over again. Such forgiveness is an act of kindness, one which any of us would hope to receive after our own transgression. When wronged, we have an opportunity to create enmity or to nurture love. Who needs your forgiveness? From whom do you need to request forgiveness? *Today’s readings: Daniel 3:25, 34–43; Psalm 25:4–5ab, 6, 7bc, 8–9; Matthew 18:21–35.*

Wednesday, March 6 Praise the Lord

“Praise the Lord, Jerusalem,” we sing today in the refrain for Psalm 147. In recognizing all that God has done, the psalm is a reminder that prayers of praise should be part of our prayer life. During these remaining weeks of Lent, schedule a time at the end of the day to recall the ways that God has blessed you. Compose your own prayer of praise and thanksgiving. You might include today’s refrain in your prayer. *Today’s readings: Deuteronomy 4:1, 5–9; Psalm 147:12–13, 15–16, 19–20; Matthew 5:17–19.*

Thursday, March 7 Soften Your Hearts

In the reading from Jeremiah, the Lord speaks of how his people have ignored his voice and his commands. The Lord tells the prophets: “But they obeyed not, nor did they pay heed. They walked in the hardness of their hearts.” Hardened hearts are still noticed, as people are concerned with many things. Efforts can be made to soften hearts. Today, tell someone that God loves him or her, and that you do too. Do not expect a response. *Today’s readings: Jeremiah 7:23–28; Psalm 95:1–2, 6–7, 8–9; Luke 11:14–23.*

Friday, March 8 Listen with Your Heart

Sometimes we ask questions when we already know the answer. Are we hoping for a different answer from what we know is from God? The third week of Lent is winding down. Have you committed to a process of transformation? Have you set aside time for discernment and reflection? As the Lenten season continues, take courage and listen with your heart. *Today’s readings: Hosea 14:2–10; Psalm 81:6c–8a, 8bc–9, 10–11ab, 14, 17; Mark 12:28–34.*

Saturday, March 9 Spring Cleaning

The phrase “Practice makes perfect” is kept in mind while seeking to improve performance. In today’s readings, we hear that God desires our love and mercy, not our sacrifice. Each season of the liturgical year is a new opportunity to grow in our love for God and others and to learn to be generous with our mercy. Lent’s emphasis on penitence and baptism is an invitation to discard what keeps us from God and bring to the fore those practices that conform us to the promises of our baptism. Some might call this an interior spring cleaning. *Today’s readings: Hosea 6:1–6; Psalm 51:3–4, 18–19, 20–21ab; Luke 18:9–14.*

