Third Sunday of Lent (A)

Gospel text (*Jn* 4:5-42): Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon.

A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" —For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.— Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

The woman said to him, "Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself with his children and his flocks?" Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." Jesus said to her, "Go call your husband and come back." The woman answered and said to him, "I do not have a husband." Jesus answered her, "You are right in saying, 'I do not have a husband.' For you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true."

The woman said to him, "Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain; but you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You people worship what you do not understand; we worship what we understand, because salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth;* and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit

and truth."

The woman said to him, "I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Anointed; when he comes, he will tell us everything." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking with you."

At that moment his disciples returned, and were amazed that he was talking with a woman, but still no one said, "What are you looking for?" or "Why are you talking with her?" The woman left her water jar and went into the town and said to the people, "Come see a man who told me everything I have done. Could he possibly be the Messiah?" They went out of the town and came to him.

Meanwhile, the disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat." But he said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." So the disciples said to one another, "Could someone have brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, 'In four months the harvest will be here'? I tell you, look up and see the fields ripe for the harvest. The reaper is already receiving his payment and gathering crops for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together. For here the saying is verified that 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap what you have not worked for; others have done the work, and you are sharing the fruits of their work."

Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me everything I have done." When the Samaritans came to him, they invited him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. Many more began to believe in him because of his word, and they said to the woman, "We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world."

"Give me a drink"

Fr. Pau FERRER i Falgueras
(Sant Cugat del Vallès, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we celebrate the Third Sunday of Lent: we are halfway along the road toward Easter, the most important moment of the year. The Lenten liturgy helps us walk a path, to “leave Egypt,” the place where we live enslaved and from which God wants to lead us out in order to meet Him.

Two Sundays ago, we were invited to enter the desert with Jesus and to entrust our conversion to God. Last week the Gospel showed us Jesus transfigured: the one who will suffer and die for you is God the Son. In today’s Gospel, however, Jesus tells us that He thirsts for your love.

From the very beginning of His encounter with the Samaritan woman, it becomes clear that Christ is truly man: “Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well” (Jn 4:6). And immediately He asks the Samaritan woman for a drink. It is important that we pause to consider the fact that God Himself wanted to experience need, not only physical but also affective: the heart of Jesus longs for your love!

From here we can make the conversation of Jesus with the Samaritan woman our own. You and I also need conversion; we too have “husbands” in which we place our security. But Jesus does not want from you an external perfection; He wants you to love Him above all things.

This is the road toward Easter; the new life the Church offers us. Pope Leo XIV tells us that “Easter is the cornerstone of Christian life, around which all other events revolve.” The conversation of Jesus with the Samaritan woman today can lead us to ask whether the resurrection of Christ is a true reason for hope, or whether we place our expectations of happiness in other things. And it leads us to ask for the same faith as the Samaritans in the Gospel, so that we may say from the heart: “This is truly the Savior of the world!” (Jn 4:42).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Not for nothing was Jesus tired… The strength of Christ created you, the weakness of Christ recreated you. With his strength he created us, with his weakness he came to seek us out.” (Saint Augustine)

- “In the encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well, the topic of Christ’s “thirst” stands out in particular. It culminated in his cry on the Cross ‘I thirst’ (Jn 19:28). This thirst, like his weariness, had a physical basis. Yet Jesus thirsted for the faith of us all.” (Benedict XVI)

- “‘If you knew the gift of God!’ (Jn 4:10). The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we come seeking water: there, Christ comes to meet every human being. It is he who first seeks us and asks us for a drink. Jesus thirsts; his asking arises from the depths of God's desire for us. Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him.” (Catechism Of The

Catholic Church, Nº 2560)

Other comments

“Give me a drink”

Fr. Julio César RAMOS González SDB
(Mendoza, Argentina)

Today, just as in that Samarian afternoon, Jesus comes into our life, halfway through our Lenten journey, telling us, as He did to the Samaritan woman: “Give me a drink” (Jn 4:7). Saint John Paul II said: “His material thirst symbolizes a far deeper reality: it expresses His ardent desire that His dialogue partner and her fellow-citizens will open themselves to faith.”

The Preface of today's Eucharist celebration speaks to us of this dialogue that ends up in a salvific barter where the Lord… “so deeply thirsted” for the salvation of the Samaritan woman “he set on fire in her the flame of God's love”.

Even today Jesus continues to “thirst”, namely, to desire humanity “thirst” for our faith and love, “thirst” for our response of faith before so many Lenten invitations to conversion, to change, to reconcile to God and our brothers, to prepare ourselves, as much as we can, to receive a new life of resurrection in the nearing Easter.

“I am he, the one who is speaking with you.” (Jn 4:26): this direct and clear acknowledgment by Jesus of His mission, which He had never done before with anybody else, shows likewise God’s love, a love that undergoes more in quest for the sinner and promise of salvation, that will abundantly satiate the human desire for true Life. This is why, further down in this same Gospel, Jesus will proclaim: “Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as scripture says: ‘Rivers of living water will flow from within him.’” (Jn 7:37b-38). So, your commitment today, is to go out of yourself and tell all men: “Come see a man who told me…” (Jn 4:29).