

On this third Sunday of Lent, We hear the *first* of three Gospels proclaimed for catechumens to be baptized at the Easter Vigil. While we have no catechumens this year at Holy Trinity, We're blessed to journey with two individuals, who will be confirmed on Holy Saturday.

But these Gospel passages from St. John are for *all* of us. We are an Easter people whose whole *lives* are a Lenten journey. Not just these 40 days, but *every* day, we're called to *scrutinize* our *faithfulness* to this journey: A *lifetime* of converting to Christ.

And so the Gospel today and over the next two Sundays, Present us with *signs* of Christ's presence. Today, at the well with the Samaritan woman, He reveals *He is living water* for eternal life. Next week, he restores the sight of the man born blind. The following week, he raises Lazarus from the dead.

And after that? *We* are blessed by the sign of *all* signs: The sign of the tree of life we lost when we preferred to make gods of ourselves, Rather than be one with our *Father* in the Garden of Eden. The *definitive* tree of life comes after Jesus leaves the Garden of *Gethsemane* -- *The* tree of life is the *Cross*. Or faith would be *absurd* and *insane* if that were the *end* of the story. But we *know* the cross leads to the *resurrection*.

Are we *committed* to this life's journey with Christ in our midst? Are we able to bear our crosses -- Our struggles and pains and disappointments and sometimes *terrible* suffering and even *death*? Not without *Christ*. And not without *faith* in the resurrection.

But in following Jesus, we *too* must bear crosses -- We must *die* to selfishness, divisiveness, the tendency to want to love God's gifts more than *God* -- the *giver* of those gifts.

In the first reading, Moses is nearly *stoned* to death because the people lose *faith*. They *forget* the great things God has done: Freeing them from slavery in Egypt and feeding them manna from heaven. They *grumble* and *complain*. We *all* have our moments of *grumbling* and *complaining*. Our *trust* in God's love is shaken when *we* want to be God -- When *we* get upset that *our* plans and desires aren't panning out the way *we* think they should. The Israelites were *thirsty* as they wandered in the desert.

The woman at the well? She *too* was thirsty in the heat of the noon day. *We* are thirsty too. Some thirst for money or power. Others? For affection or popularity. We *all* thirst for *things*. And there's *plenty* of good things to try to *slake* that thirst in this life. Sex, food, a bigger house, a faster car, the brightest children, or the cutest *dog*. The *perfect* liturgy!

But we could have our *fill* of *all* these things, and remain *very thirsty indeed*. And *Why*? Because we *forget* -- or God help us, we never *knew* -- That our *true* thirst is for communion with our Loving God. And as the Gospel shows us today: *God thirsted first! Amazing!* That the almighty God of heaven and earth should thirst for *us*!

We were made from His love. We were made *for* love. Jesus went out of His *way* to head to His cross in Jerusalem by way of Samaria -- Ancient enemies of the Jews. And he crossed *another* boundary by talking to -- And even *sharing a cup* with a Samaritan woman! A Jew would be made *unclean* by crossing such boundaries, But not *this* Jew; not *Jesus*! The most unclean thing could touch Jesus, and *He* would make it healthy and full of life -- *His* life! The life of *God*! The God who *thirsted first* -- and *reached out to us for a drink*.

Do we *trust* that God loves us no matter the dry spells and pitfalls in our lives? Will we *drink* of His everlasting love? And will we allow that love to *flow* from us to our brothers and sisters -- And to those people *we* might cast as unclean or an enemy. Will we *accuse* them of being less beloved by God than us? Will we draw a line in the sand or build a wall to keep them out of our hearts?

Or will we *be* Christ for them? And *see* Christ *in* them?

A very frustrated Moses asks of his grumbling and ungrateful people: "Is the Lord in our midst?"

The Samaritan woman didn't drink from the well, and she left her bucket there.

But she was no longer *thirsty*. She was *filled* with the living water of Jesus Christ.

And she *ran* across boundaries *people* put in place, And brought the living water of God to her people.

Our challenge today, and *every* day,

Is to fill our buckets, *not* with our selfish desires or temptations.

*Not* our ungratefulness and accusatory or divisive tones with other children of God.

We're all *called* by our baptism to *fill* those buckets with the generous love of God,

That shall *never* run dry.

And to let it pour out for *others*,

Just as Christ's blood and water poured out from his side for each of *us*.

St. Paul tells us the Spirit of the Risen Christ has been poured into our hearts.

I like to tell kids the spirit is like chocolate syrup sitting in the bottom of our glass of milk.

It's no good unless we *stir it up!*

Stir up the Spirit of God in our hearts so we can *dare* cross boundaries --

And live a life of love and commitment to His Body, this Holy Church.

Christ has *proven* His love for us.

Now it is up to us to *drink* of that love.