



Hosanna



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SUNDAY LITURGY

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THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Year A

INTRODUCTION

Today, the church invites us to have thirst for God. This thirst must lead us to Christ who can quench our thirst. Our thirst for God should make us grow in faith. Our faith must not be static but dynamic. The experience of God must make us a witnesses before men.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

My eyes are always on the Lord, for he rescues my feet from the snare. Turn to me and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor. (*Ps 24:15-16*)

COLLECT

O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness, who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving have shown us a remedy for sin, look graciously on this confession of our lowliness, that we, who are bowed down by our conscience, may always be lifted up by your mercy. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

FIRST READING

The Israelites, on their journey to the Promised Land were tested by the Lord to prove their loyalty to Him. They were tested by their thirst for water and as usual they failed but the Lord remained faithful. Thus He broke open the rock to quench their thirst.

A reading from the Book of Exodus 17:3-7

The people thirsted there for water, and

the people murmured against Moses, and said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?" So Moses cried to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." And the Lord said to Moses, "Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand the rod with which you struck the Nile, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock and water shall come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the fault finding of the children of Israel, and because they put the Lord to the proof by saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

Responsorial Psalm 95

Response: O that today you would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts.

Come, ring out our joy to the Lord; hail the rock who saves us. Let us come before him, giving thanks, with songs let us hail the Lord.

R/ O that today you would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts.

Come in; let us bow and bend low; let us kneel before the God who made us for he is our God and we the people who belong to his pasture, the flock that is led by his hand.

R/ O that today you would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts.

O that today you would listen to his voice! “Harden not your hearts as at Meribah, as on that day at Massah in the desert when your fathers put me to the test; when they tried me, though they saw my work.”

R/ O that today you would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts.

SECOND READING

Christ is the manifestation of God's love. It is Christ by whom we are made righteous. St. Paul establishes that Christ is the living water through whom the thirst for righteousness will be quenched.

A reading from the Letter of St Paul to the Romans 5:1-2,5-8

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. While we were yet helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man – though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

ACCLAMATION (Jn 4:42,15)

Lord, you are really the Saviour of the world; give me the living water, so that I may never get thirsty.

GOSPEL READING

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St John (shorter form) 4:5-42

Jesus came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and so Jesus, wearied as he was with his journey, sat down beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that 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 have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?” Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.”

The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain; and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks 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 Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ); when he comes, he will show us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.” Many Samaritans from that city

believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."

HOMILY

NICENE CREED

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrant: Dear friends, Jesus is the Eternal Spring and living water. May our hearts be opened before the throne of mercy with our prayers and petitions. Let us pray that our confidence and trust in the living water may be cherished.

1. We implore your choicest graces to be showered upon our Pope Francis, Our Archbishop Bernard Moras, bishops and all the priests that through their active ministry bring eternal glory to your name alone. Let us pray.

2. Lord, Bless all those who are persecuted for their faith that they may receive their reward of eternal happiness in the world to come. Let us pray.

3. Lord, Guide all the political leaders that they may be true to their conscience and make the legislation policies beneficial to citizens. Let us pray.

4. Lord, Bless all the students who are preparing to appear for their examinations that they may reap the fruit of their hard work. Let us pray.

Celebrant: Lord we entrust all our care and worries to your heart. We trust in your Love and care. Bless us that we may be the trees which bear fruits in all the seasons. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Be pleased, O Lord, with these sacrificial offerings, and grant that we who beseech pardon for our own sins, may take care to forgive our neighbour. Through Christ our Lord.

PREFACE III (Lent)

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For by your gracious gift each year your faithful await the sacred paschal feasts with the joy of minds made pure, so that, more eagerly intent on prayer and on the works of charity, and participating in the mysteries by which they have been reborn, they may be led to the fullness of grace that you bestow on your sons and daughters.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

For anyone who drinks it, says the Lord, the water I shall give will become in him a spring welling up to eternal life. (*Jn 4:13-14*)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

As we receive the pledge of things yet hidden in heaven and are nourished while still on earth with the Bread that comes from on high, we humbly entreat you, O Lord, that what is being brought about in us in mystery may come to true completion. Through Christ our Lord.

REFLECTION

Jesus revealed that he is the living water. Jesus left Judea because John was preaching in Judea. It was God's will and the need of the ministry that Jesus walked in to the territory of Samaria. There was a controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans. Jews considered the Samaritans as half Jews. In 722 BC, the strong and able

Jews were deported to Assyria. There, they inter-married the Assyrians. They became mixed breed with the Assyrians. The Assyrian king, in order to maintain the population, allowed the population to inhabit Samaria. When they got settled, the intermarriages continued. The population consisted of newly transplanted population, weak of the land, outcaste, and irreligious Assyrians. Therefore, the Jews did not accept them as pure race. There were litigations and rivalry between these two class of people.

The rivalry worsened when the Jews refused the help of Samaritans in rebuilding the temple. Ezra led the people of Israel back to the land from Babylon. With the help of the Babylonian king, Ezra began to rebuild the temple when they returned to the land. When the Samaritans came forward to help the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, the Jews refused their help saying that they were not pure race. Therefore, offended Samaritans did not like the attitude of the Jews and opposed them in everything. In opposition to Jews, they built a temple in Gerizim in opposition to the temple of Jerusalem. As they built the temple, they also twisted the salvation history for their convenience. They accepted only the first five books of Moses. They claimed that Abraham offered Isaac on the mount Gerizim. Melckhazadeck met Abraham on mount Gerizim. Moses built the first altar on mount Gerizim when he returned from Egypt.

From then on, a Jew visiting the territory of Samaria was rare and unthinkable. But, Jesus walks in to a Samaritan village because he knew that Samaritans too needed the gospel and the salvation. He met

a Samaritan woman and began conversing with her. The intention of Jesus was to give the living water to the Samaritan woman. For a Jew, living water meant flowing water. Stagnant water was considered to be dead water. Jesus spoke about the living water which is more than any running water on earth. As psalmist says, “for with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light”. God lives for eternity. In the same way, living water from Jesus lives for ever and gives life eternal. It was a free gift of Jesus to the Samaritan woman. When she spoke with Jesus, she exhibited her ignorance. She said, “where can you get this living water?” and “are you greater than our father Jacob?”.

Jesus made her to understand that in every human there are two kinds of thirsts; physical and spiritual. Human knows how to quench the physical thirst lest they suffer. But, he struggles to quench the spiritual thirst. At times, he is in confusion to learn the ways and means to quench the spiritual thirst. There can be mistakes of human to quench the spiritual thirst with the stagnant water. The stagnant water of the flesh and the world will never quench the spiritual thirst.

Today, we need to understand that the living water comes from Jesus alone. He alone is the source of living water. The one who receives this living water from Jesus will never thirst again. He will fully quench his spiritual thirst and be satisfied. The springs of living water should be identified within man and not out side of him. Once we find it, it keeps flowing without end until we reach the heavenly abode.

- Rev. Fr. Arockiaswamy Sebastian

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