

MARCH 19, 2017



# THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT



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

## REFLECTION

The woman at the well said to Jesus, “Give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty” (John 4:15). Water has multiple meanings in John’s account of the Gospel. The living water which Jesus offers will not only quench thirst, it will continue to nourish and sustain! Clearly, the woman was deeply changed by her encounter with Jesus. It was a moment of conversion, of turning toward Christ. She had been a sinner, an outcast from the community, drawing water at the hottest part of the day, alone. Jesus came along and asked her for a drink, meeting her right where she was. He both accompanied her in the moment by sitting down with her at the well, and also accompanied her in a way that met her spiritual needs. He didn’t shame or judge her when he acknowledged her sinful lifestyle. He didn’t send her away and tell her to come back after she repented. He didn’t make her jump through hoops. He sat down with her. He spoke with her (an act that surprised and nearly scandalized the disciples!). By his very presence he offered a gift that transformed her life. Indeed, there must have been something truly remarkable about the way in which Jesus encountered this woman. Lent is a time of conversion, of turning toward Christ by acknowledging our sin, and of letting God’s grace sink in. These changes begin with recognition of our need for God, turning toward God in prayer. God wants us to draw near, no matter what we’ve done in our past that might be separating us from his love.

## ACTION

Jesus models compassion in his encounter with the woman at the well, and his actions are a model for us to follow, too, as we engage the challenging people around us. Instead of getting wrapped up in other people’s shortcomings, or focusing on what is wrong with them, let’s focus on how we can be more like Jesus in this Gospel—sitting down, listening, and offering “living water.” Instead of getting frustrated with others when they don’t live up to our expectations, let’s start by meeting them right where they are. We too, must meet others where they are. This is the basis of Christians living as disciples of Jesus. In the words of St. Teresa of Avila, “Christ has no body now but yours . . . Yours are the eyes with which he looks with compassion on this world.”



## JOURNALING QUESTIONS



- Have you ever felt unconditional love, even when you might not have deserved this love? Why is it sometimes so difficult to love without judging?