

Third Sunday of Lent (A) – Scrutiny

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I lived in the Dominican Republic for about 9 years, it is a tropical country and as such the weather consists of one season... Hot... then you have summers... so you go from hot to hotter. Here in the Midwest, we get to experience all four seasons and sometimes during the same day. Having lived in a one season climate and now in a four-season climate, I get to appreciate the four seasons. Each season has its uniqueness and its beauty, there are things that you do in the summer that you don't do in the winter, spring brings some different flowers than the rest of the seasons, fall brings colors, foliage, smells that are unique to the season and winter in wonderland can only happen in winter.

Similarly, the Church has seasons, we are in the season of Lent, and the season is characterized by the color purple, incense, ashes, fasting, prayer and almsgiving among other things. Lent is also a walk through the desert, and in this walk we are called to repentance and conversion, we are called to be more Christlike, to allow his light to penetrate us and remove any darkness. Today our elect starts a series of three scrutiny, the purpose of these scrutiny is for them to continue their journey of repentance, conversion, and discernment to join us at the table of the Eucharist. As our catechumens continue to walk in this Lenten desert, so do we. The desert is a place of extremes, a place of dryness, a place of testing. This dryness, extreme heat creates thirst...

In the book of Exodus, we find the people of Israel at Meribah and Massah, thirsty, they were grumbling, they were tired, they felt like they were dying, and they were crying out to God through Moses. They were thirsty... At times is easy for us to look at the people of Israel and wonder why... why did they complain so much... didn't they see that God was with them... that they were the chosen group... but it is easy for me to say 3000 years later... the fact is that they were thirsty... Studies show that we can survive about 3 weeks without eating but we can only survive about 3 days without a drink... thirst is a warning sign, it is your body telling you that you are getting dehydrated it is a red flag to tell you, you better get something to drink or else... The people of Israel feared the or else... they were thirsty, they felt that they were going to die... So, the Lord had Moses strike a rock and water flowed from it.

Then we encounter the great story of the Samaritan women. Jesus was thirsty and asked her for a drink. Jesus was thirsty for her, for her concerns, her troubles, her anxiety, he knew that she was thirsty, but she didn't realize it. When he offered her living water, spring water, water that yields eternal life, she realized how thirsty she was. She was thirsty but not for drinking water that would be temporary, she was really thirsty for the water that yield eternal life, the spring water, the water that only Jesus can give. Jesus became the rock from which water flows, but this water unlike the water from rock at Meribah and Massah is the water that truly satisfies. So, **what do you thirst for?**

Do you thirst for power, food, clothing, money, prestige, pleasure, do you thirst for love, recognition, security, freedom, peace, health, contentment, hope, faith, happiness, **what do you thirst for?** Like the people of Israel, we have physical thirst, we have physical needs, we have wants, but like the Samaritan woman, we also have spiritual needs, we have spiritual thirst. The challenge is that at times we let our physical needs and even our wants, take priority over our spiritual, and it could be

because we fail to realize that if we seek the heavenly kingdom first, if we seek the things from above first, the rest will be given.

I dare to say that our catechumens our elect thirst for our Lord, they thirst for it, because otherwise they wouldn't be seeking it, they wouldn't be going through scrutiny. They thirst for the spring of living water; they thirst for the water that yields eternal life. The water that flows from our Lord Jesus Christ, that water that flows into the water of baptism, that water that flows in the form of our Sacraments. **That water which is the Eucharist.** At the cross Jesus thirst, and he thirst for you and me. He gave his life so that we can drink from that eternal spring in the Eucharist. The water that gushed out of Jesus side, is the water that we now have in his sacraments.

As you continue this Lenten journey, this walk through the desert, you will be thirsty, you will feel dehydrated, you will feel like you are about to faint... Are you willing to ask our Lord to give you his living water, his spring water? Let us approach his Eucharist and say... **LORD YOU ARE TRULY THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD; GIVE ME LIVING WATER, THAT I MAY NEVER THIRST AGAIN.**

Mother Teresa has a famous letter called "I Thirst for You", I would like to share a short verse, this is Jesus talking to you... talking to me:

- **Come to Me without delay because, when you give Me your sins, you give Me the joy of being your Savior.**
- **There is nothing I cannot forgive and heal; so, come now, and unburden your soul.**
- **No matter how far you have strayed without a destination, no matter how often you have forgotten Me, no matter how many crosses you bear in this life; I want you to always remember, one thing that will never change.**
- **I THIRST FOR YOU – just you, as you are.**