

This Week's Readings

First Reading: Exodus 17: 3-7.

The Lord makes water flow from a rock to sustain the People of Israel wandering in the desert.

Second Reading: Romans 5: 1-2, 5-8.

Through Jesus, who offers himself for us sinners, God pours into our hearts what we thirst for: faith, hope and the Spirit - the Giver of Life.

Gospel: John 4: 5-42.

Jesus promises to give the Samaritan woman and us the spiritual water without which we cannot live.



Points for Reflection

As we proceed with our preparation for the celebration of the Paschal Mystery, we are reminded that it is through Baptism that we share in Christ's death and resurrection. **The material and visible element, by which Baptism is performed, is water. Today's Scripture Readings explain to us the symbolism of water.**

1. The experience of thirst is certainly familiar to us. Today's **First Reading** tells us that the Israelites, while wandering in the desert, had such an experience, too. Water is so vitally important that nothing in nature can survive without it. Precisely through the experience of thirst for water, God wanted the People of Israel to experience the need for something more important than water itself. In the desert God makes a covenant with his People, but he wants to put Israel's faith to the test. When the unbelieving People grow thirsty, he gratuitously gives them water from the rock, so that they may recognize him as the Lord of their history. If they are faithful to him, water comes as the source of life and fruitfulness. But if they are unfaithful, God brings drought or devastating floods (where water becomes the sign of curse). Thus, awareness grows on the part of the Jewish People that the water they need so badly is not only material water, but the spiritual water that cleanses the heart, and without which God cannot be approached.
2. In today's **Gospel**, we see Jesus tired and thirsty. He asks the Samaritan woman for water to quench his thirst. But when she is ready to give it to him, he tells her about another kind of water. Jesus presents himself as the new purveyor of a well of living water. This water, however, does not spring from the earth. It is a gift of heaven, to be found in Jesus.

What does Jesus mean by this "living water"? St John sees in the well of living water the Spirit of God. The Spirit has been linked to Jesus' teaching throughout his earthly life, but was to be manifested above all in Jesus' glorification, when he would build the new mankind upon true worship of God, consisting in obedience to God's will, and he would send the Apostles on their mission throughout the world.

This is, therefore, the message that Jesus wants to convey to us today:

- It is only by finding him that we can quench our thirst for goodness, truth and happiness. In him all hopes are fulfilled. He is the rock from whose side water gushes. He is the giver of life-giving water, water that quenches thirst for all eternity. And the water that Christ gives is none other than the Spirit. We all need the Spirit as much as we need water to live.
- Like water, the Holy Spirit purifies, washes, refreshes, strengthens all those who are led by him.

- And if we, like the Samaritan woman, let the Spirit lead us, we come to know who Christ is and how important he is for us; we are revealed to ourselves: we discover the mystery of our inner self, our sinfulness and helplessness and, therefore, our need for Jesus as our Saviour; we come into communion with the Father through genuine worship, the worship of obedience to his will; and we become apostles, missionaries: we share the good news of our discovery of Jesus as our only Saviour to all those we meet.
- We need water to live; but the life-giving water, which Christ gives us, leads us to heights of infinitely greater dimension. When we receive this greater gift in faith, our set of values is radically transformed, and our thirst becomes thirst for God and his kingdom.
- **The water which is used in Baptism, therefore, is meant to signify all this. Those who are baptized and confirmed receive the Spirit of Christ and are changed into new creatures, filled with love for the Father, concerned about their brothers and sisters in need, and apostles of Jesus Christ.**

*"Lord, you are truly the Saviour of the world.
Give me living water,
that I may never thirst again".*

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Kids' Corner

Colour the pictures of Jesus below.

