

A Short Teaching on The Bucket
by Deacon Gerry Palermo

Greetings on the Third Sunday of Lent.

Readings: EX 17:3-7; PS 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9; ROM 5:1-2, 5-8; JN 4:5-42

What will it take for God to convince you to put your bucket down?

The bucket you keep close to your side. The one we fill with water, food, and things, lots of other things. The bucket has become an Idol. No, the bucket has made us our own god. We fulfill for ourselves or so we try.

During the Exodus event, the people extremely thirsty, put Moses and God to the test. God responds by having Moses strike the stone at Horeb to make the water flow abundantly. Jewish lore has it that the Israelites took the rock with them on their journey using it for water whenever water was scarce. There were 21 journey segments from Rephidim to the desert of Zin, at Kadesh (Num 33) but they always had water in the desert from the rock. There at Kadesh the rock produced its final water for the people for they were at the edge of the Promised Land where there are natural spring waters again. The people were very happy with the Lord for producing water for them all those years.

In the Gospel reading today, the Samaritan woman explained at length to Jesus the wonders of Jacob's well and how it served her ancestor Jacob and even produces water for her even until this day. She was very happy with the Lord for producing water from Jacob's well all those years.

Jesus however wants her to expand her understanding of life and the grace of God. Jesus encourages her to see that God provides more than just the filling her water bucket. Jesus wants to give her Living Water.

The dialog between the Samaritan woman with Jesus is rich in symbolism and conversion. For brevity - the woman had but one partner to whom she was not married. The five husbands are a theological reference to five false gods of Baal. Jesus notes that neither this mountain nor Jerusalem will be the place of worship but rather the place within the soul where spirit and truth reside. This honest exchange between woman and Jesus allowed her to put her bucket down. She doesn't have to be her own god anymore. She drank from the living water and wanted all she knew to drink as well.

Stop living a life trying to fill your bucket. Put the bucket down. Receive the person in spirit who is the living water and fulfills the desire of every living thing. Come and receive Eucharist.

Peace be with you.

Deacon Gerry