

Lent

March 27, 2011
THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

*This
third week
of Lent
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time to
spend
a moment
at the
well with
Jesus.*

Today's Readings

Ex 17:3-7
Rom 5:1-2, 5-8
Jn 4:5-42 or 4:5-15,
19b-26, 39a, 40-42

John's Gospel regularly portrays Jesus as the all-knowing Savior in control of his destiny and speaks freely of Jesus' identity as the Messiah. By contrast, he is often surrounded by followers who misunderstand him or are confused by his statements.

Today's reading—the familiar encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well—follows this pattern. Jesus speaks to her about “living water,” her sinful past, and his nature as the Messiah, and she spends much time trying to understand what he means.

What is most distinctive about this woman is her persistent inquisitiveness. She knew Samaritans and Jews were not to speak to each other, but instead of running away when Jesus initiated conversation by asking her for a drink, she conversed with him. She questioned him. She persisted in her thirst for knowledge about this man and what he shared with her. She didn't hesitate to speak with this Jewish man in broad daylight, and then she even went out and shared what she had heard with others. Without a doubt, she tasted of Jesus' living water, and her thirst was quenched.

Looking at our own relationship with God, do we seek God as passionately as the Samaritan woman pursued Jesus? Do we challenge God with our hardest questions? Do we use our God-given brains to think deeply about Jesus' teachings and how they apply to our own lives? God can handle our persistence, our challenges, and our questions—God is bigger than all of them.

This third week of Lent is a good time to spend a moment at the well with Jesus, thirsting for the living water he seeks to give us—if only we ask.

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dear Padre

What are scrutinies?

Q My future sister-in-law is converting to Catholicism, and last week she was talking about something called *scrutinies*. I've been Catholic all my life and never heard of them, but I was too embarrassed to admit it. What are they?

Cheryl

Dear Cheryl,

Scrutinies are three processes candidates in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) program undergo at the beginning of Lent. However, scrutinies aren't limited to the elect; they're for all faithful Catholics.

The three scrutinies are 1) conversion of self, 2) repentance of heart, and 3) spiritual purpose of action. In the first, the Bible story of the Samaritan woman

helps us see it is possible to seek forgiveness of God. In the second scrutiny, the story of the man born blind helps us see we should place our faith in Jesus. In the final and third scrutiny, the story of Lazarus' death and resurrection helps us see the love God always has for us.

There are two types of conversions. One is the kind your future sister-in-law is going through as we welcome her to the Catholic Church. The second type is for all faithful Catholics. Here, conversion means to enter more deeply into a life of faith as we live the sacramental life of the Church. This is seen most clearly through the sacraments of Eucharist and penance.

We and our brother and sister elect are called to scrutinize our lives, pray to overcome the things that turn our hearts away from God, and ask for the grace to be saved and loved.

Tuan Anh Pham, CSSR

Monday

March 28

Lenten Weekday

2 Kgs 5:1–15b / Lk 4:24–30

Tuesday

March 29

Lenten Weekday

Dn 3:25, 34–43 / Mt 18:21–35

Wednesday

March 30

Lenten Weekday

Dt 4:1, 5–9 / Mt 5:17–19

Thursday

March 31

Lenten Weekday

Jer 7:23–28 / Lk 11:14–23

Friday

April 1

Lenten Weekday

Hos 14:2–10 / Mk 12:28–34

Saturday

April 2

Lenten Weekday

Hos 6:1–6 / Lk 18:9–14

Sunday

April 3

Fourth Sunday of Lent

1 Sm 16:1b, 6–7, 10–13a

Eph 5:8–14

Jn 9:1–41 or 9:1, 6–9,

13–17, 34–38

