

## THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

There are powerful forces that keep adult children from fully engaging in recovery. Shame convinces us that something is fundamentally wrong with us. Secrecy tells us not to expose family dysfunction. Denial minimizes the impact of early wounds so we can continue functioning. These coping mechanisms once helped us survive unstable environments, but over time they left us disconnected from our own needs. What begins to change that pattern is hope grounded in truth.

This Sunday's second reading reminds us where that hope comes from (Romans 5:1-2, 5):

*Brothers and sisters: Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God. And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

Hope does not depend on perfect family histories or flawless emotional responses. It rests in God's love poured into our hearts. In recovery, hope often begins when someone names experiences we thought were unique to us. We realize that our hypervigilance, people-pleasing, or fear developed for reasons. We are not alone.

This Sunday's gospel reading gives us a vivid image of unmet longing (John 4:7-9, 13-15):

*A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?"... Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."*

The woman's repeated trips to the well mirror the patterns many of us developed to cope. We may return to overworking, overgiving, or withdrawing emotionally in hopes of feeling secure. Yet those strategies rarely satisfy for long.

Jesus does not shame her history. He acknowledges her story and speaks to her deeper thirst. Adult children often carry a longing to be seen and understood without being judged. When we share honestly in recovery and are met with compassion, hope begins to take root. We start to imagine a life not defined by old roles.

The woman leaves her jar behind and tells others about her encounter. In a similar way, our willingness to name dysfunction and choose healing becomes a quiet witness. We are no longer bound to repeat the past.

Lent invites us to bring our thirst into the light. The living water Christ offers meets us at the level of identity. We are beloved children of God, not the sum of our family's brokenness. As we receive that truth, hope strengthens our courage to live differently.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When have you experienced hope through sharing honestly about your family history?
- Where do old survival patterns still leave you feeling spiritually thirsty?
- What might it look like to trust that Christ meets you with compassion rather than judgment?

## MASS READINGS

**FIRST READING** Exodus 17:3-7

**RESP. PS.** Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

**SECOND READING** Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

**GOSPEL** John 4:5-42

