

A Homily Lent 3
Includes Mass for Shut-ins
John 4:5-42
March 26-27, 2011

Jesus often used very common things to teach His lessons.

Water is so common. We cannot live without it. People say, "I'm dying of thirst." The availability of water often determines the locations of cities. The water supply influences strategies in battles. It also is one factor in predicting if factories will be successful.

Here in the United States, water is so readily available with the turn of a faucet. Sometimes we tend to take for granted how blessed we are by this. We really notice it when the water is shut off, even if for a little while.

Jesus refers to water so often in the Scriptures.

When Jesus asked John the Baptist to baptize Him, water was a ritual cleansing. The Lord wanted to show us the way to forgiveness.

Perhaps we can ponder how when we are baptized, we share the very life of Jesus Christ.

In John's Gospel, the very first miracle Jesus worked was at the wedding feast in Cana. He transformed water into wine.

Perhaps we can ponder our need to be transformed by the Lord so that we might become more like Christ.

The Scriptures tell the story of a woman who was so contrite for her sins that she bathed Christ's feet with perfume and dried them with her tears.

Perhaps we can ponder that no sin of ours is greater than God's love. No matter what our past has been, we can begin anew.

The Gospel of John tells us that when Jesus was crucified, a soldier pierced the Lord's side with a lance and blood and water flowed out. This shows us that Jesus gave everything He had to give.

Perhaps we can ponder how Christ gave us all that He had. He still does!

Today's Gospel certainly highlights the importance of water. Jesus meets a woman from Samaria at a very significant well. People went to the well often. It was not only where they obtained their water supply. It was also where many conversations took place about everyday life.

The story reminds us that Samaritans were enemies of Jews. Jesus was a Jew. He violated what would have been expected of Him by talking with her. But He used this opportunity to teach her that He is the life-giving water who quenches our spiritual thirst. In His conversation with her, Jesus did not merely promise her water from that well. He promised much more! He promised to quench her thirst for God. He spoke of quenching thirst in its highest meaning. He alone could quench her thirst for truth, goodness, and beauty. The Spirit of Jesus could irrigate the desert of her restlessness and unsatisfied soul.

Lent is called the springtime of the soul. This is a great time to let the Lord quench our thirst for what truly matters.

May we come to know Jesus more and more as Lent continues.