Riley Deere

**3rd Sunday of Lent, Cycle A**

In the readings for today, we see through different interactions, that those who are struggling to see God around them, learn to trust in God’s plan and his salvation, and their relationship with God is renewed.

In the Gospel reading, John tells us a story about a conversation between Jesus and a Samaritan woman in a city called Sychar. Jesus is resting at a well when a woman comes to retrieve water, but she is stopped by Jesus when he asks for a drink. She questions him saying, “How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?” Keep in mind that this was during a time when Jews and Samaritans were deeply divided, so this was not a normal interaction. Jesus tells her that if she knew the gift of God and who she was talking to, she would have asked him for a drink, and he would have given her the living water. The Samaritan woman begins to question Jesus and wonder who this man is to make such promises. How is this Jew, more powerful than Jacob, the man who made this well? Jesus shares with the woman, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst.”

The woman has a change of heart and asks Jesus for this living water so that she won’t have to thirst again or keep coming to the well. Jesus informs her that he knows she has had five different husbands, which was frowned upon during those times, and the woman is shocked that he knows. Jesus explains, “…the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed, the Father seeks such people to worship him”. The woman says, “I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Christ; when he comes, he will tell us everything.” Jesus reveals himself to her, “I am he, the one speaking to you.” The woman goes back into town, spreading the word of her encounter with Christ, “He told me everything I have done”, she exclaims as proof to the other Samaritans! The Samaritans invite Jesus to stay with them and more of them begin to believe. The people say to the woman, “We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world”.

The Samaritan woman questioned Jesus and denied his gift of God. But we see once she lets her guard down a little and opens herself up to trust this man, she is able to accept that he is Christ. Even though he is doubted, God nonetheless still provides for her and the other Samaritans, with this living water. His water will put an end to their temptations and desires, wash away their sins, and it will renew their relationship with God so that they will never thirst again.

In the first reading, we see a similar situation occur. The Israelites had been staying in the desert, but eventually, they grow angry at Moses, and cry, “Why did you ever make us leave Egypt? Was it just to have us die of thirst with our children and our livestock?” They lose hope and start to go against Moses. So, Moses desperately calls out to the Lord for help. The Lord tells Moses, “Go over there in front of the people, along with some of the elders of Israel, holding in your hand, as you go, the staff with which you struck the river. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock in Horeb. Strike the rock, and the water will flow from it for the people to drink.” Water poured from the rock and the Israelites were saved. Again, we see even when the Israelites were questioning Moses and starting to lose faith in his leadership, God still provided for His people and gave them water to drink. In Psalm, they show they are reminded, “Let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation…For he is our God, and we are his shepherds, the flock he guides.” And in the second reading, they claim, almost like water, “…the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us”. We identify in each reading this idea that through drinking the living water, people’s relationships with God are renewed. It symbolizes their baptism and God washing away their sins.

We show appreciation to God in the Eucharistic prayer pleading, “For you came in mercy to the aid of all so that those who seek might find you. Time and again you offered them covenants and through the prophets taught them to look forward to salvation.” God was doubted and denied but he still provided for his people and showed them they could be saved. Every time we partake in communion, we are drinking the blood of Christ, living water, and renewing our relationship with God as he washes away our sins. We are shown the Eucharist is just as much about the drink as it is about the food, wine as it is the bread, and blood as it is the body.

As college students, we are learning to become more independent and starting a new journey of life on our own, and with that, comes responsibility. Sometimes, we can get wrapped up in what this newfound independence has to offer, and we don’t always make the right choices for ourselves and our bodies. There’s a dangerous thing called FOMO or fear of missing out, which I know I have been a personal victim of, and probably some of you too. However, no matter how much we want to always be in the action and on go-mode, whether that is staying up late every night with our friends or going out every weekend, these are things that can only cure our immediate thirst for happiness. Although we resist and don’t always want to, when we take time for ourselves to go to bed early and feel refreshed in the morning or go for a walk to get rid of some stress, we are mentally and physically renewed. When we acknowledge and accept the need to take care of our mental and physical health, we are overall happier and more pleased with our lives. Just like when we accept God into our lives and the love he has to offer, we are renewed in our faith as He washes our sins away so we will never thirst again.