

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT—March 8, 2026 - EMMAUS

Introduction: “Water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink,” was the lament of the Ancient Mariner as he sat idle in the doldrums of the sea. We, like him, live in a world with over a million, million gallons of water per cubic mile. But alas, only 3% is drinkable, fresh water, and 3/4 of that is frozen solid, according to The World Book Encyclopedia.

We must have water to live. We can perhaps go a month without food, but probably no more than a week without any water. When our body is really dehydrated, craving water, a little water on our lips and in our throat will cause the craving to go away, briefly. But if our deep inner organs are not refreshed, the craving thirst will quickly return. Like the Ancient Mariner many of us are dehydrated, dying of thirst—not a thirst for H₂O, but a spiritual thirst for Living Water.

As in this week’s first reading, sometimes our thirst is expressed negatively like the people of Israel when they were in the desert. We grumble and complain about our situation in life rather than being thankful for all God is doing to sustain us. At other times we often try to satiate our thirst by merely wetting our lips with things spiritual rather than drinking deeply at the Wellspring of Life. Or in the worst-case scenario, like the woman at the well, we try to quench our spiritual thirst by artificial means, drinking of that which never can satisfy our inner thirst. And all the time the Living Water from which we could drink deeply, and satisfyingly is right at our fingertips. As Romano Guardini assures us in *The Lord*, “He is the stream of living water from the eternal source of the Father’s love to the thirsting world.”

In Isaiah 55:1-3 the Lord extends to us a question, and an invitation: “All you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come, receive grain and eat; Come, without paying and without cost, drink wine and milk! Why spend your money for what is not bread; your wages for what fails to satisfy? Heed me, and you shall eat well, you shall delight in rich fare. Come to me heedfully; listen, that you may have life.”

How do we drink of the Living Water? This week's Responsorial Psalm gives us some insight. The Psalmist tell us to “sing to the Lord,” to “come into his presence with

thanksgiving,” to “worship and bow down,” and to “hearken to his voice.” Each of these actions describe interactive communication wherein we take the time to express our love and appreciation, and take time to stop and listen as he speaks to us in sacred Scripture and in prayer. At first, we may feel somewhat ill at ease as we participate in something new, but as we develop our ability to think and to listen and to express our love, we will find our soul refreshed with Jesus, the Living Water. Pope John Paul II has reminded us that “Christ is always in our midst and wants to speak to our hearts, we can listen to him by meditating with faith on Sacred Scripture, recollecting ourselves in private and communal prayer, pausing in silence before the tabernacle, from which he speaks to us of his love.”

This week we are reaching the midpoint of Lent. Let’s respond to our Savior and make a lifetime commitment to drink deeply of him through private and public worship. Let’s put a halt to trying to quench our thirst through artificial means and turn to Christ, who is the thirst-quenching Living Water we really need and desire. He is free for the asking.

Source: **Michael Donovan**

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