

3rd Sunday in Lent, Cycle A, March 19, 2017

The family had decided to take a short vacation during spring break, just a quick trip south to a warmer climate, to escape the bitter cold here. Since the family included younger children, they were visiting an amusement park. Evidently, a lot of other people had the same idea. It was very crowded. They had to wait a whole hour to go on one, very popular ride. Admittedly, it was a lot of fun. But, it was over in a couple of minutes. Was it worth the wait?

Someone can work hard all their life to attain a certain goal. Maybe, it's to build the house of their dreams. If only they could live there, then they will be truly happy. That hope motivates them to push ahead and work hard. Finally, they reach their goal. They feel successful at their achievement, but also, a sense of deflation. Is that all there is to it? They have what they have worked for, and yet, something seems to be missing.

Whenever we are looking forward to something, a big change in our life, whether it's marriage, attending a new school, taking on a new job, moving to a different city, we often paint a rosy picture of that new situation. We gloss over the potential problems that may arise.

At first, everything looks perfect. But eventually, we start to see that it is not. Our new spouse has flaws that we had overlooked. Not all of our expectations have been met. The honeymoon is over. We yearn for more, something that isn't there.

The Samaritan women in the gospel story had to fetch water from the well every day, had to haul it back to her home, enough water for drinking, cooking and washing. It was a never-ending task. She was addressing a need that could never be satisfied.

But, Jesus assures her, that "whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst, the water I shall give will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Jesus Christ can satisfy our deepest thirst, the deepest desires of our hearts. Jesus knows those desires even better than we do ourselves. We can arrive at whatever goal we set, and yet, we yearn for something more.

In the gospel story, the shaft of Jacob's well sank deep into the ground. It never went dry. It could always provide water for the villagers and their livestock.

Jesus promises to penetrate deep into our hearts, to get at the bottom of our desires. We may think that we want to live in a beautiful home. But, at the bottom of that desire, we yearn for something more, something that we ourselves may not understand or recognize. We yearn to dwell in the presence of God, to live with God forever.

We may think that we want to look youthful and fit, to look younger than our years. But, at the bottom of that desire, we yearn for something more, something that we ourselves may not recognize or understand. We yearn for eternal life, the life that comes to us from Jesus Christ, the life that comes to us from his resurrection.

Jesus Christ can satisfy our deepest thirst, the deepest desires of our hearts. Jesus knows those desires even better than we do ourselves. He is drilling a well deep into our hearts, so that he might provide us with living water, a spring welling up within us, so that we might drink, and never thirst again.

We first receive the waters of life through the sacrament of Baptism. But, those waters can continue to flow in us, to renew us in the grace of Jesus Christ. During this season of Lent, we check on those waters, to make sure that they are flowing freely, unobstructed.