

Word Sharing Circle (WSC) Reflection Guide

3rd Sunday of Lent (Cycle A, Year I)

March 19, 2017

Community Word:

True faith overcomes temptation.

Theme:

We overcome temptation when we do the Father's will.

Promise:

"Whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst." (Jn 4:14a)

Reflection:

In the gospel of the 3rd Sunday of Lent, John narrates the encounter of Jesus with a Samaritan woman. Jesus was resting by Jacob's well when a Samaritan woman came with a jar apparently to fetch water. Jesus made a simple request, ***"Will you give me a drink?"*** (Jn 4:7). Laws and traditions in those days say that Jews were not to speak to Samaritans (who they consider as enemy), men were not permitted to address women without their husbands present, and rabbis or Jewish teachers had no business speaking to shady ladies such as this one. While Jesus was willing to do away with these societal restrictions and practices, the woman was not, and so she reminded him, ***"You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman, how can you ask me for a drink?"*** (Jn 4:9).

The woman focused on the law; Jesus focused on grace – ***"If you knew the gift"*** (Jn 4:10), an irresistible offering and a special ***"gift that comes by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ,"*** (Rom 5:15b). Jesus was offering the Samaritan woman a different kind of water, the ***"living water"*** that is essential for the woman's salvation, to quench a deeper kind of thirst. To quench her spiritual thirst, the Lord made a bold promise: ***"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst and will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life,"*** (Jn 4:14). And with that one statement, Jesus drew her attention from 'everyday life' to 'everlasting life.'

Yet the woman did not quite understand what the Lord was talking about and she was not ready for a leap of faith. She wanted whatever Jesus was offering, but only so that she would not be thirsty, or she could avoid returning again and again to the well. Many of us are like this woman, more inclined to satisfy our physical desires as the only thing that matters, but overlooking our spiritual needs. It is a common temptation to focus on earthly desires and material things, but we forget to take care of our spiritual well-being.

Jesus told the woman to call her husband and come back. This is not an odd request since women shouldn't converse with a man alone in a public place. But Jesus' request was more about uncovering the truth than about following society's rules. When she confessed that she has no husband, Jesus affirmed her answer, then gently exposed her sin: ***"The fact is, you have had five husbands and the man you now have is not your husband."*** Not ready for the truth, the woman changed the topic. She instead talked about worship, Jerusalem and the difference between the Jews and the Samaritans.

Like this woman, at one point in our life, we were also guilty of her kind of evasion by ignoring God's call for true conversion. Before we knew Jesus as our personal Savior, we steered conversations away from the spiritual path, chose to debate on religion and doctrines, move away from working on our relationship with God, others and self, and remained entrenched in the worldly view of things. Our misguided life of sinfulness had made us thirstier for the right kind of spirituality and life of godliness.

Finally, the woman at the well did her best to shut Jesus up and said, ***"when the Messiah comes, He will explain everything to us."*** And how stunned she must have been when Jesus said, ***"I am He, the one speaking with you,"*** (Jn 4:26). By the action of Jesus, the woman was led to make her confession of faith. Full of faith and joy, she even left her water jug and went back to her village and urged her neighbors, ***"Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"*** (Jn 4:29). She is considered to be the first person who Jesus revealed to that He is the Savior.

If we have the humility and faith to listen to Jesus and do the Father's will, we will truly receive the living water of mercy for our transformation and salvation.

Prayer:

O Loving Jesus, we thirst for You. We believe in You. We need You. In Your mighty name, we pray that You grant us mercy and grace to be freed from temptation, from our weaknesses and sinfulness. Transform us into the persons You want us to be and let Your living spring of water fill us and flow through us to and for others. Amen.

Reflection Questions:

1. What does "living water" mean to you? What were the instances in your spiritual journey that you felt "thirsty" for Jesus? In what way has Jesus quenched your thirst and transformed you?
2. How do the worldly view of things (lack of economic/ financial opportunities, prevalence of political injustices, etc.) kept you away from Jesus, thereby, making it harder to experience the love of Jesus?

This Week's Daily Mass Reading Guide:

March 19, 2017 (Sun) - Ex 17:3-7/Ps 95:1,2,6,7,8,9/Rom 5:1,2,5-8/Jn 4:5-42
March 20, 2017 (Mon) -2 Sm 7:4-5.12-14/Ps 89:2-5,27,29/Rom 4:13,16-18,22/
Mt 1:16,18-21
March 21, 2017 (Tues) - Dn 3:25,34-43/Ps 25:4-9/Mt 18:21-35
March 22, 2017 (Wed) - Dt 4:5-9/Ps 147:12,13,15,16,19,20/Mt 5:17-19
March 23, 2017 (Thur) - Jer 7:23-28/Ps 95,1,2,6-9/Lk 11:14-23
March 24, 2017 (Fri) - Hos 14:2-10/Ps 81:6-11,14,17/Mk 12:28-34
March 25, 2017 (Sat) - Is 7:10-14/Ps 40:7-11/Heb 10:4-10/Lk 1:26-38

"Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Read your Bible daily!"