

Suggested Opening Song: All Are Welcome, #215

Water plays a pivotal role in today's liturgy. In the Liturgy of the Word, we hear Moses bring forth water in the desert when the Chosen People feared dying of thirst. In the Gospel, Jesus reveals himself as the source of living water, telling the woman at the well that whoever drinks of this water will never thirst again. Today we also celebrate the first scrutiny rite with those who are preparing for baptism, where they will receive the water of new life. Whether we have been baptized for many years or are preparing for baptism in just a few weeks, we thirst for the life-giving water that only our Lord, "the one called the Christ," can provide.

As we gather let us begin our service by professing what we believe.

Profession of Faith p. 144

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (*bow as we say*) and by the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Introductory Rite:

Greeting:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be God forever. **Blessed be God forever.**

Penitential Rite: p. 12

Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to participate in this sacred celebration.

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Opening Prayer:

O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness, who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving have shown us a remedy for sin, look graciously on this confession of our lowliness, that we who are bowed down by our conscience, may always be lifted up by your mercy.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Liturgy of the Word:

First Reading p. 124

A reading from the Book of Exodus

Exodus 17:3-7

In those days, in their thirst for water, the people grumbled against Moses, saying, “Why did you ever make us leave Egypt? Was it just to have us die here of thirst with our children and our livestock?” So Moses cried to the Lord, “What shall I do with this people? A little more and they will stone me!” The Lord answered 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.” This Moses did, in the presence of the elders of Israel. The place was called Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled there and tested the Lord, saying, “Is the Lord in our midst or not?”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to GodResponsorial Psalm*Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9*

R/. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

R/. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; / let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; / let us joyfully sing psalms to him. **R/.**

Come, let us bow down in worship; / let us kneel before the Lord who made us.

For he is our God, / and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides. **R/.**

Oh, that today you would hear his voice: / “Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as in the day of Massah in the desert, / Where your fathers tempted me;
they tested me though they had seen my works.” **R/.**

Second Reading

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

Brothers and sisters: Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God. And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For Christ, while we were still helpless, died at the appointed time for the ungodly. Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.Gospel

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

*John 4:5-42***Glory to you, O Lord**

Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon.

A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, “How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?” – For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans. – Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself with his children

and his flocks?” Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

Jesus said to her, “Go call your husband and come back.” The woman answered and said to him, “I do not have a husband.” Jesus answered her, “You are right in saying, ‘I do not have a husband.’ For you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true.” The woman said to him, “Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain; but you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem.” Jesus said to her, “Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You people worship what you do not understand; we worship what we understand, because salvation is from the Jews. But 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. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth.” The woman said to him, “I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Christ; when he comes, he will tell us everything.” Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one speaking with you.”

At that moment his disciples returned, and were amazed that he was talking with a woman, but still no one said, “What are you looking for?” or “Why are you talking with her?” The woman left her water jar and went into the town and said to the people, “come see a man who told me everything I have done. Could he possibly be the Christ?” They went out of the town and came to him. Meanwhile, the disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat.” But he said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.” So the disciples said to one another, “Could someone have brought him something to eat?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, ‘In four months the harvest will be here? I tell you, look up and see the fields ripe for the harvest. The reaper is already receiving payment and gathering crops for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together. For here the saying is verified that ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap what you have not worked for; others have done the work, and you are sharing the fruits of their work.”

Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in him [because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me everything I have done.”] When the Samaritans came to him, they invited him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. Many more began to believe in him because of his work, and they said 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 Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection on the Word:

- The God we encounter in the Torah does not hesitate to punish those who disobey or break the commandments. When the Chosen People complain to Moses, accusing him of bringing them to the desert to die of thirst, and Moses complains to God, God could have made them pay for their insolence. But instead God quenches their thirst by taking a rock as hard as their hearts appear to be and imbuing it with flowing water. Similarly, Jesus does not shame the woman for her many marriages or her current lifestyle, but offers her living water, water that within her will well up to eternal life. Paul points out that Jesus went on to die for us on the cross while we were still sinners, saving us rather than condemning us. May we realize that the life-giving water we receive in baptism is a gift most undeserved.
- When one takes the time to engage someone else in conversation beyond idle chitchat or cocktail party banter, both parties invariably end up revealing something about themselves that neither saw coming. Witness the dialogue between Jesus and the woman in today’s Gospel. This happens to be the lengthiest conversation Jesus has with one other person in the Gospels. When they first address each other, the woman just wants to fill her jar with water and Jesus just wants a drink. But by the end, the woman has confirmed that Jesus told her everything she had done and Jesus has revealed himself as the source of living water and the Messiah. When she

leaves the well, Jesus knows her as well as she knows herself and she knows who he is even more than his own disciples seemingly do at this point.

- Little by little, Jesus uncovers the woman's character. She is a Samaritan of strong faith, worshipping on the mountain where Jacob dug the well they have used for centuries. She has had a checkered married life, with five husbands in the past and now living with a man who is not her husband. She recognizes Jesus first as a prophet, then as the Messiah, whom they have all been awaiting anxiously. In a similar way, the scrutinies, the first of which we celebrate today, are intended to uncover our own sinfulness and weaknesses while strengthening our faith and our hope that God can heal and save us. May we recognize the springs of water that we have within us that give us whatever we need to satisfy our spiritual thirst.

Question of the Week

How can the life-giving water I received in baptism flow through me to quench the thirst of others in need?

Prayer of the Faithful:

Saint Paul tells us that hope does not disappoint and so we joyously pray for our needs, infusing them with the hope God gives us.

- For the Church, that we always may be a source of life-giving water to those who thirst for a spiritual home, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- That access to the precious resource of clean water may be seen as a fundamental and universal human right, so that its prevalence may be ever expanded, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For women religious, that they may be blessed and strengthened in their ministries so that God's grace may flow through them like water, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For those preparing for the Easter sacraments, that the living waters of Christ may become a spring welling up to eternal life, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- That those whose spiritual lives are dry and parched might be refreshed by the life-giving waters they received in baptism, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For what else should we pray? Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

God of all goodness, you quenched our thirst in the desert of Sinai, at the well of Jacob in Samaria, and through your Son, with the water that wells up to eternal life. Shower us with your blessings as you respond to our every thirst, granting them through the One who gave his life for us, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer: p. 180

Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Rite of Peace:

The sign of peace outwardly expresses a deep spiritual reality; through this sign we acknowledge Christ's presence in each other and share the peace we have received from Him. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Communion:

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The body of Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion:

As we receive the pledge of things yet hidden in heaven and are nourished while still on earth with the Bread that comes from on high, we humbly entreat you, O Lord, that what is being brought about in us in mystery may come to true completion.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Concluding Rite:

Final Blessing:

May the Lord bless us,  protect us from all evil and lead us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Go in peace! **Thanks be to God.**

Suggested Closing Song: There's a Wideness in God's Mercy, #206