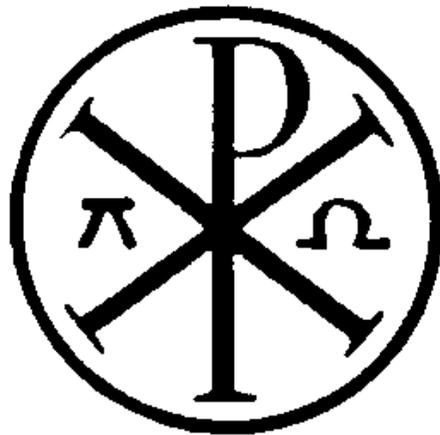


Third Sunday of Lent

2014 Lenten Adult Education Series

Based on the Sunday Lectionary
Readings (Year A) and the *Catechism of
the Catholic Church*



Written by
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Third Sunday of Lent – March 23

Opening Prayer

Pray together the responsorial psalm:

Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

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

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

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

Activity for Responsorial Psalm

One meaning of “harden your heart” is to refuse to think about, let alone do, what God wants. A person can think that God wants to take away from him some great good or even *everything* good. He then rebels against God’s will.

- For your eyes only, write about a time when you wanted to or even did “harden your heart” against God. Why did you react this way?

Response to responsorial psalm:

Reading 1 Ex 17:3-7

Have someone read aloud Reading 1:

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 out 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?”

Activity for Reading 1

One of the ways Catholics read the Old Testament is typologically or allegorically. An event, a person, or statement in the Old Testament can be seen in a new way in light of the New Testament. This event, person, or statement in the Old Testament is a “type” or symbol of an event, person, or statement in the New Testament.

Thus, in reading the Bible, the *Catechism* says,

Christians ... read the Old Testament in the light of Christ crucified and risen. Such typological reading discloses the inexhaustible content of the Old Testament As an old saying put it, the New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New. (CCC 129)

Respond to the following question in writing:

- In the first reading, Moses miraculously provides water for the Chosen People by striking a rock with his staff. Beyond this literal reading, can you see new meanings in it in light of the New Testament?

Response to Reading 1:

Share responses with the group.

Reading 2 Rom 5:1-2, 5-8

Have someone read aloud Reading 2:

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.

Activity for Reading 2

Respond in writing to the following question:

- How would you interpret the second reading from the Epistle to the Romans in light of the Psalmist's plea, "If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts"?

Response to Reading 2:

Share responses with the group.

Gospel (shorter version) Jn 4:5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-42

Have someone read aloud the Gospel:

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.

“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 who is speaking with you.”

Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in him.
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 word,
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.”

Activity for the Gospel Reading

According to the *Catechism*,

To be human, “man’s response to God by faith must be free, and . . . therefore nobody is to be forced to embrace the faith against his will. The act of faith is of its very nature a free act.” “God calls men to serve him in spirit and in truth. Consequently they are bound to him in conscience, but not coerced . . . This fact received its fullest manifestation in Christ Jesus.” Indeed, Christ invited people to faith and conversion, but never coerced them. “For he bore witness to the truth but refused to use force to impose it on those who spoke against it. His kingdom . . . grows by the love with which Christ, lifted up on the cross, draws men to himself.” (CCC 160)

Respond to the following question in writing:

- How do you see this Gospel reading as an invitation for you to conform your life to God freely, without coercion, so you can worship the Father “in Spirit and in truth”?

Response to the Gospel activity:

Closure Activity

What one thing do you feel most moved to say about this “proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ” (all the readings taken together)?

Response to the central salvific meaning of these readings:

Share responses.

Practical Application (for your eyes only):

What one thing do you resolve to do this week, based on this experience?

Practical resolution:

Closing Prayer:

Pray together again the responsorial psalm in the light of all you have learned and experienced this Third Sunday of Lent.