**Lent 3 A Lectionary Catechesis**

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| The readings for the first scrutiny are very complex and rich, so there’s more than enough material for many seasons of Lent. Symbolism as realities, like water especially today regarding climate change, are a whole topic by themselves. The recognition for ourselves like the woman at the well of Samaria that Jesus is the Christ is another topic to focus on. Finally, there’s the numerous aspects of reconciliation and evangelization work that the readings surface to explore in groups or in homilies. These are only a few of the major ones. The ultimate focus is evangelization and the invitation of God’s grace in our lives.  |

**FIRST READING: Exodus 17, 1-7**

This is the Massah (Hebrew for “test”) and Meribah (Hebrew for “quarrel”) which is in the psalm today. Moses and the people did not listen to God’s voice. They tested God and quarreled among themselves with Moses. The incident occurs between leaving Egypt and arriving at Mt. Sinai. Moses strikes the rock once here for water; this incident is often conflated with Numbers 20,11 whereat Moses strikes the rock twice, against God’s orders. Taking matters into his own hands and power, so to speak, not believing God’s command that a single strike with his rod would produce the water. The main point being here our demands to God for life-giving and saving water. Note here that Moses used his staff at “the river” to pass over and not the sea; this seems strange.

**Vss. 1-6: CCC 694** Water is a symbol of the Holy Spirit; in baptism it is new birth, and as here it drinking of the one Spirit. It is this life giving Spirit who comes from the side of the crucified Christ.

**Vss. 2-7: CCC 2119** Moses tempts or tests God, thereby calling into question his love, power, and provi- dence.

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| **KNOW YOUR****FAITH** | Humans have fundamental thirsts. What are they? Someone once wrote about our seven thirsts. Name them. What does providence mean? |
| **LIVE YOUR****FAITH** | How do you respond to the trials and temptations of life? What is the spiritual lesson in striking the rock once or twice? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Why are our lives (think of the saints) so satisfied with God’s grace and presence? Relate this story to the waters of Baptism and thereby evangelization. |
| **WORSHIP** | What are the opposites of “testing” and “quarrelling?” Share your reflections on the Eucharist as drink and food for life.  |

  **First Reading**

**RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 95, 1-2. 6-7. 8-9**

A call to worship and prayer, this is the opening psalm of the liturgy of the hours. The central image for God as rock and rest, brings the psalmist to have us remember the events of Massah and Meribah, which remain unidentified still today with certainty. The call to worship is something that God placed in each human person.

**Vss. 1-6: CCC 2628** Adoration is human recognition of place before the Creator; it includes silence and humility.

**Vss. 7-8: CCC 2659** We must hear God’s voice each day, not only yesterday or at some future date.

**Vs. 7: CCC 1165** The Catechism teaches that “today” in the psalm points to the “hour” of Christ’s Passover which Lent invites us to enter and be present within.

**Vs. 9: CCC 2119** Cf. above in first reading.

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| **KNOW YOUR****FAITH** | How are we to come into God’s presence? Share your definition of temptation?  |
| **LIVE YOUR****FAITH** | Do you regularly pray and attend Eucharist on Sundays? Why do we need this? What is a “hardened heart” in your experience? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | What are the obstacles that come in between our lives and the time we need to worship God? The psalmist invites us to come together to acclaim God. How do we invite people today into our gathering as Church? |
| **WORSHIP** | Do you sing joyfully to the Lord? Do you listen carefully to the readings during Mass?  |

 **Responsorial Psalm**

**SECOND READING: Romans 5, 1-2. 5-8**

Reconciliation with God is the full context of this passage. This is where and how justification begins. Once we were friends with God in the garden, but we broke that trust. So righteousness comes through the process of reconciliation. The way we cover our true narratives in this ministry is through respect and regard for freedom, which alone can lead to authentic love. Again, God loves first, because “we were still helpless”, a very uncomfortable feeling for the human person. Today there is a deeper sense than for years of a lack of trust, a tangible fear, and a failure of hope. Our modern predicament seems overwhelming and irresolvable.

**Vss. 3-5: CCC 2734, 2847** “Filial trust is tested – it proves itself -- in tribulation.” The Holy Spirit makes us discern our trials and discern between them. God does this to pre- serve the freedom of our being so that we can choose out of love, not slavery. The Catechism suggests we need to discover our “evil inclinations.”

**Vs. 5: CCC 368, 733, 1820, 1964, 2658** The heart in Biblical symbolism stands for the depth of one’s being. Here we are pointed to Romans 5,5. God’s love is poured out. #1820 is a fine reflection on Christian hope. In #1964 a detailed explanation of the First Covenant as a “type” of the Second Covenant is explained. In #2658 the Catechism shares the prayer of St John Vianney on love and hope.

**Vs. 8: CCC 604** This verse is cross referenced to I John 4, 10. 19 “In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent His Son to be expiation for our sins.”

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| **KNOW YOUR****FAITH** | Unfortunately, vs. 3 is not included in the reading, so read it and discuss the Christian psychology put out there. Why must God be the one to initiate the reconciliation?  |
| **LIVE YOUR****FAITH** | What, in your mind, is the relationship between trust and human suffering? Have you experienced the “pouring out into your heart” the Holy Spirit? Share when. In what are we humans helpless?  |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Does your personal hope, boast in the glory of God? What does this passage mean in evangelization terms? Does your life reflect “peace with God”?  |
| **WORSHIP** | Pray the prayer for your priests of St John Vianney that their pastoral work might bear fruit of the Spirit. How is the Mass a sign of the hope of which St. Paul speaks?  |

 **Second Reading**

**GOSPEL: John 4, 5-42 The Woman of Samaria at the Well Encounters Jesus**

This encounter at the well of Samaria with the woman is the most extended conversation Jesus has with anyone in the gospels, and it is with a woman. It is noteworthy that this occurs on foreign territory and with a woman in very positive ways for evangelization theology. The woman is both inquisitive and sharp in her answers as her heart moves toward faith. Her first step is about her hospitality to Jesus at a deep and historical well. The symbols abound in this gospel, and do what symbols do – they lead us to connect, to communion with God. Note that Jesus goes to eat and stay with her. She is one of the ultimate evangelists in the gospel by going to her whole community with news of meeting Christ.

**Vss. 6-7: CCC 544** Jesus in his thirst experiences our humanity and so identifies with the poor, here the woman.

**Vss. 10-14: CCC 694, 1137** In the heavenly liturgy, the water of the river of life flows from God’s throne. Rev 22,1

**Vs. 10: CCC 728, 2560, 2561** Christ seeks us at the well with the woman. “Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God’s thirst with ours. God’s thirst is that we thirst for him.” Check out the related Jer 2,13!

**Vs 14: CCC 728, 1999, 2557, 2652** “The grace of Christ is the gratuitous gift that God makes to us of his own life, in- fused by the Holy Spirit into our soul to heal it of sin and to sanctify it.” The Catechism calls it “deifying “ grace! Just to see God, is alone our deepest human desire. But to be one with God! The Catechism teaches that there are four wells of living water (the Holy Spirit) where Jesus meets us.

**Vs 21: CCC 586** While Jesus honors the Temple in Jerusalem, he announces its end, and at the same time a new place where true worship will be done. In Revelations, Christ is the temple and his light fills it.

**Vs. 22: CCC 528, 586** The woman’s epiphany is one of the great evangelical encounters with Christ.
**Vss. 23-24: CCC 586, 728** The woman at the well is one of the rare people to whom Jesus reveals the Holy Spirit, which makes this story particularly poignant.

**Vs. 24: CCC 1179** Worship “in Spirit and in Truth” is understood by the Catechism to mean everywhere the community gathers is the “spiritual temple,” and the CCC affirms the sacredness of the whole earth for this act.

**Vs. 226: CCC 439** Jesus reservedly accepts the title of Messiah because to many it means king in the secular sense.
**Vs. 34: CCC 606, 2611, 2824** The first citation includes an insight into communion; Jesus says, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to accomplish his work.” The prayer of faith brings in the concern to do the will of God. Jesus fulfills his Father’s will and divine plan.

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| **KNOW YOUR****FAITH** | What is grace? What is deifying grace? What is this living water?  |
| **LIVE YOUR****FAITH** | What are your life thirsts?What feeds and sustains your life?  |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Have you ever been so excited by a personal encounter with someone (and Je- sus) that you couldn’t way to share it? Do you have the courage of faith to share your faith with others?  |
| **WORSHIP** | Point out the two points in the encounter where the woman expresses her faith and share how you understand it. How does the whole Samaritan town express its faith? Discuss.  |

 **Gospel**