

Third Sunday of Lent (Scrutiny Year A). Belonging

You probably noticed that today's readings were from year (A)... although we are in year (C), the reason is because today we start our scrutinies. The 3, 4 and 5th Sunday of Lent are Sundays in which we address our elect, we ask them to go deep into their hearts and to uncover their **deepest longing**. I believe that scrutinies are not just for our elect, but we all need to go deep into our hearts and uncover our deepest longings. Since the gospel reading was much longer than usual, Fr. Ken asked me not to torture you for too long, so you are in luck as I had a two-hour homily, but I will be brief.

One of the many consequences of original sin is **distortion**. Our vision of things, our desires, and needs have been distorted and at times disordered. Human beings are a combination of a physical body and soul, if you remove the soul from the body, you have a corpse and if you remove the body from the soul, you have a spirit. The human person has different needs, some are physical, some are spiritual. At times our distorted vision can make us see these needs from a disordered perspective, meaning that we might confuse a physical need with a spiritual need.

In the book of Exodus, we heard the story of the people of Israel at Massah and Meribah, they wanted to stone Moses because they were thirsty, they felt like they were going to die of thirst. They had a physical need and were seeking satisfaction, they were longing to physically quench their thirst. **But something tells me that their thirst was not just physical.**

Today's gospel tells us the story of the Samaritan woman who met Jesus at the well. She was surprised that a Jew was talking to her and asking her for a drink of water (as Jews didn't associate with Samaritans) they didn't belong together. In their discussion, it was

scrutinized, uncovered that she was in need of living water, her distortion had her convinced that she was physically thirsty, but come to find out her thirst was a spiritual thirst, **she was thirsty for belonging**. She could have been physically thirsty, but that thirst was nothing compared to her spiritual thirst, **so much so that she left her water jar behind** and went to share with others the good news... **What was the good news? that they were all called to belong.**

Her deep longing was to be a part of the community, to be a part of the body, to be accepted. This was the same thirst that the rest of the Samaritans had as the gospel tells us that when they came to Jesus, **they invited him to stay with them** and he did. They wanted to be a part of the community; **they didn't want to be marginalized.**

Our elect are coming to us today and are asking to be a part of the community, they want to belong, they are thirsty to be part of the body of Christ. Baptism quenches our thirst for belonging as it unites, it makes us part of the one body and our elects are longing for it. **But how about you, what is deep in your heart?** Are you accepting others around you?

Unfortunately, at times we segregate, we separate, we feel part of a particular group or community and we fail to accept others. Our thirst for belonging at times blinds us to the fact that we might separate ourselves and form groups that exclude others because **they might not be like us, not think like us, not look like us, they are not in my circle**. Jesus came to knock down walls, to break the barriers, to include not exclude, to unite not separate. The letter to Galatians states, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all **one** in Christ Jesus" and today we heard from the letter to the Romans... Christ, while we were still helpless, died at the appointed time for the **ungodly**... Jesus **didn't separate or discriminate, why should we?**