

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT 2023

I will give you
living water

Reflection and Prayer for Lent with Sunday readings and a spiritual teacher
from our Catholic tradition - Dorothy Day.

SIGN OF THE CROSS.

Lord, give us the living water that becomes a spring, welling up to eternal life.

FROM THE READINGS

First Reading: And this hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us. We were still helpless when at his appointed moment Christ died for sinful people ... what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners.

Romans 5:5-8

Gospel: On the way he came to the Samaritan town called Sychar near the land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there and Jesus, tired by the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Give me something to drink." His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew. How is it that you ask me, a Samaritan, for something to drink?" — Jews, of course, do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus replied to her: "If you only knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me something to drink,' you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water." "You have no bucket, sir," she answered, "and the well is deep: how do you get this living water? Are you a greater man than our father Jacob, who gave us this well and drank from it himself with his sons and his cattle?" Jesus replied: "Whoever drinks this water will be thirsty again; but no one who drinks the water that I shall give will ever be thirsty again: the water that I shall give will become a spring of water within, welling up for eternal life." "Sir," said the woman, "give me some of that water, so that I may never be thirsty or come here again to draw water." "Go and call your husband," said Jesus to her, "and come back here." The woman answered, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right to say, 'I have no husband'; for although you have had five, the one you now have is not your husband. You spoke the truth there." "I see you are a prophet, sir," said the woman ... The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah — that is, Christ — is coming; and when he comes he will explain everything." Jesus said, "That is who I am, I who speak to you."

John 4:5-19,25-26, from the Sunday Gospel John 4:5-42

FROM Dorothy Day 1897-1980

Dorothy Day gave birth to a baby girl, Tamar, in 1926. Although her partner, whom she loved, was an atheist, Dorothy wanted her daughter baptised into the Catholic Church. For this, she had to become a Catholic herself, and this would mean leaving friendships behind, including her partner.

In 1932, moved to tears by a hunger strike in Washington, Dorothy prayed that God would show her a way to help. She met Peter Maurin who followed the 'holy poverty' of St Francis of Assisi as a way of life. Peter taught Dorothy about Church teachings on charity and justice. He helped her see a world where politics, practical work for the poor and Christian faith were aligned to help those in need. Maurin believed in the conversion of human hearts so that God's vision for the world could be realised and each could become all they were called to be. He saw the Church as vital for realising this vision.

Peter and Dorothy founded The Catholic Worker in 1933 to comment on Christian life in the world. Dorothy, the editor, also wrote and travelled to speak for the poor, alerting others to unjust and demeaning situations. She lived with the poor, respected the dignity of each person and did not judge who was worthy, or try to convert anyone, and kept food for all who asked. Dorothy begged for supplies and labour to help and set up Houses of Hospitality that continue today. Voluntary poverty, spirituality and work for the poor were interlinked. "Your work begins at the kitchen sink," she advised a volunteer. Volunteers were also advised to look for the face of Christ in all, even those difficult to love. Dorothy Day died in 1980, with her daughter by her side. Cardinals, bishops, priests and hundreds of homeless people attended her funeral.

DOROTHY'S WORDS

I really only love God as much as I love the person I love the least.

On Pilgrimage, 1978.

To be humble and meek for love of God – that is beautiful. But to be humble and meek because your bread and butter depends on it is awful. It is to lose one's human dignity.

House of Hospitality Chapter 6

We have all known the long loneliness and we have learned that the only solution is love and that love comes with community."

The Long Loneliness 1952

But more and more I see that prayer is the answer. <https://holyhill.ie/dorothy-day/>

To see the best in everyone around, their virtues, rather than their faults. To see Christ in them!

"On Pilgrimage" December 1948

Going around and seeing such sights [the situations of the poor] is not enough. To help the organizers to give what you have for relief, to pledge yourself to voluntary poverty for life so that you can share with your brothers is not enough. One must live with them, share with them their suffering too.

The Long Loneliness 1952

There is desperate suffering with no prospect of relief. But we would be contributing to the misery and desperation of the world if we failed to rejoice in the sun, the moon, and the stars, in the rivers which surround this island on which we live, in the cool breezes of the bay, in what food we have in the benefactors God sends.

"On Pilgrimage" July-August 1940

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

- **Ask** for God's guidance.
- **Read** the scripture passages and words of Dorothy Day, aloud or silently.
- **Reflect and pray**, stopping to ponder any 'stand out' words or phrases. 10 mins
- **Respond** 10-15 mins
 - Individuals: Write or sit quietly with your reflections.
 - Groups: Share your responses and listen to others. 2-3 mins each
 - o What stands out for you?
 - o What do you want to take with you?
- **Express a hope for the future.**

A PRAYER WITH DOROTHY DAY

O God,
*what we do is very little,
but it is like the little boy with a few loaves and fishes.
Christ took that little and increased it. He will do the rest.
What we do is so little, we may seem to be constantly failing.
But so did He fail. He met with apparent failure on the Cross.
But unless the seed fall into the earth and die, there is no harvest.
And why must we see results?*

Loving God,
*help us to understand that our work is to sow.
Another generation will be reaping the harvest. Amen*

Dorothy Day. Adapted.

