

**Fr. Nick Dant's Homily, Saint Matthew Catholic Church, Indianapolis**  
**Third Sunday of Lent, First Scrutiny, March 6-7, 2021, Cycle A**

Water and our need for water, and baptism are the central focus of Lent and Easter. Ever since the very early days of the Church, when Lent developed as that season for preparing the catechumens for Baptism at Easter, the spiritual discipline of this holy season centered on baptism—being immersed into the mystery of Jesus' life, passion, and death, which leads to Resurrection and eternal life.

Our Lenten journey-retreat we embarked on is out into the desert, where in our need, in our nakedness before God, we experience that deep human thirst which can only be quenched by Jesus, who is the true living waters. Out in the desert, as we read in our first scripture passage from Exodus, the ancient Israelites cried out from their bodily thirst for natural water. They “grumbled again Moses, saying ‘Why did you ever make us leave Egypt? Was it just to have us die here in thirst....’” God satisfies their thirst with cold, ever so sweet, water from a rock, which Moses strikes. However, the life granted by natural water, water we can acquire at the turn of a faucet whenever we so desire, that life is only temporary. Our deep thirst is for a life that is eternal, and only Jesus, the true living waters, can give life that laughs in the face of death. Jesus tells the Samaritan woman at the well: “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.”

Why we, the already baptized, need to go on our Lenten journey, year after year, as well as the catechumens making the Lenten trek, is to reawaken within ourselves that yearning, that deep thirst we have for more, for a more that is beyond anything this life can offer us—a life which only Jesus can give us! During Lent, out in the desert, fasting and praying, we once again come to our senses and realize we are nothing without Jesus. For in, by and through the waters of baptism we are immersed into Jesus, who is eternal life itself. Lent should re-awaken in us, who are already baptized, our joy that we live in eternal life NOW! Through the waters of baptism we went down into the tomb and died with Jesus, and rose to new and eternal life. We, the already baptized, need Lent before we celebrate Easter, just as much as the catechumens preparing for baptism, because over the course of the year we do grow indifferent to the Good News of our new life in Jesus, due to the distractions of our comfortable lifestyles. We become indifferent; we become apathetic, and to be honest we tire of the challenge of walking in the footsteps of the Risen One; for to live the life of Jesus means to live against the grain of our culture and society.

Our catechumens, like the ancient Israelites out in the desert, thirst! They thirst for those eternal waters that bring eternal life. They thirst for what we already enjoy; they thirst for Jesus and His Risen Life. Beginning with this 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent, and continuing over the next two Sundays of Lent, we pray over and with our catechumens as they make their Lenten journey to those waters of eternal life in Baptism. Through our prayers we call scrutinies, we help our catechumens deepen their thirst for Christ! We pray that their thirst deepen so much that by the time they come before the baptismal font at the Easter Vigil, they cannot wait to enter the waters of baptism and have their thirst quenched by the Risen One, who is the true eternal waters.