

A reflection on the second week of Lent

For you my soul thirsts. Ps. 63

Just as the wasteland symbolizes desolation of spirit, water symbolizes restoration and life. Jesus was baptized in the flowing waters of the River Jordan and was tempted in the hot, dry desert. Lent invites us to look within and to be aware of our desert places, our fears and our great thirst to be in the presence of God, now and forever.

The roads Jesus walked were hot and dusty. Once, walking through the region of Samaria, tired and thirsty, Jesus sat down by Jacob's well. He asked the Samaritan woman who was there to draw water to give him a drink. He was tired and thirsty and not afraid to admit it. He revealed his vulnerability. Their intense conversation encouraged the woman and her neighbors to be open to God's presence among them. He was among Samaritans and did not reject them. He knew the woman's history as a sinner, and he welcomed her service. He opened the door to her transformation. In return for water from the well, Jesus offered her the water of eternal life.

At the wedding feast in Cana, when the wine had run out, Jesus saved the day for the bridegroom's family by the miraculous sign of turning the ordinary water in six stone jars into fine wine. As a result, his disciples began to believe in him and to recognize through such signs the power of God's presence active in their lives.

For caregivers, water is always needed—as a cleansing agent, an essential part of the healing process, and to satisfy thirst. Pediatricians caution anxious parents of sick infants to keep the child drinking to avoid dehydration. Very old patients who can no longer drink without choking are provided thickened liquids. Wounds must be cleaned to be treated. IVs must be constantly monitored to keep patient fluids optimal. Even the sound of a fountain's running water helps anxious people to be calm.

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When we thirst for meaning, God is with us. When we search for eternal life, there God is also—the Good Shepherd, Loving God and Holy Spirit. God leads us by the still waters and refreshes our souls.

You set a table before me ...

You anoint my head with oil ...

My cup overflows ...

I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

The music, by Margaret Rizza and Kevin Duncan, is from the album "Her Music for Piano," Kevin Mayhew Publishers.

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