

# MARCH 8, 2026

## THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

### St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church

720 East Beach Boulevard, P. O. Box 1529, Long Beach, MS

Phone: (228) 863-1610, Fax: (228) 868-6068

[www.saintthomaslb.org](http://www.saintthomaslb.org)

Office Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00am - 4:00pm

Pastor: Fr. Satish Adhav (228) 863-1610 [FrSatish@saintthomaslb.org](mailto:FrSatish@saintthomaslb.org)

Parochial Vicar: Fr. Braxton Necaie (228) 863-1610 [FrBraxton@saintthomaslb.org](mailto:FrBraxton@saintthomaslb.org)

Deacons: Ernest "Buddy" Vancourt and Jerry Dubuisson



### ADORATION:

#### Wednesday:

9:00am to 5:00pm

in the Chapel

5:00pm to 6:00pm

in the Church

#### Friday:

7:00am - 5:00pm

in the Chapel

### ROSARY AND DIVINE MERCY CHAPLET

#### Monday - Friday

Recited 35 Minutes

Before Daily Masses

### RECONCILIATION:

#### Wednesday:

5:00pm

#### Saturday:

3:00pm - 3:45pm

or by appointment

### JOIN OUR PARISH!

To join our St. Thomas family,  
please visit our website or scan the QR code.



Complete and submit a registration form.

Paper forms can be found in the office  
or in the back of the Church.



### MASS SCHEDULE:

#### Monday - Thursday and Saturday

Mass: 6:30am

in the Chapel

#### Monday-Thursday:

Mass: 8:30am

#### Wednesday:

6:00pm

Charismatic Mass

#### Friday:

Mass: 6:30am

#### Saturday:

4:00pm Vigil Mass

#### Sunday:

7:30am, 9:00am,  
11:30am, and 5:30pm

#### Holy Days:

Vigil Mass 6:00pm

#### Holy Days:

(Watch the Bulletin  
for Mass Times)

### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The people of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Long Beach form a community of faith dedicated to Catholic Teaching and Tradition. We welcome God's children of all ages to worship with us. Through prayer, education and formation, we are called by Jesus to bring hope and healing for life eternal to all people. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we strive to use our personal and communal gifts to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

# HAPPENINGS THIS WEEK

## SACRAMENTS

### Baptism

Annie Nguyen 832-794-5309

[anniemsu@yahoo.com](mailto:anniemsu@yahoo.com)

### Marriage

Contact the office at 228-863-1610 at least six months in advance of the planned wedding date.

## FAITH FORMATION

### OCIA Director

Dave Gauthier 228-596-8835

[rcia@saintthomaslb.org](mailto:rcia@saintthomaslb.org)

### SRE Coordinator

Dave Gauthier 228-596-8835

[religiouseducation@saintthomaslb.org](mailto:religiouseducation@saintthomaslb.org)

### Youth Ministry

Kaitlynn Claret 228-236-4899

[youthministry@saintthomaslb.org](mailto:youthministry@saintthomaslb.org)

## MUSIC MINISTRY

### Liturgical Music Director

Lauren Hymel 228-863-1610

[music@saintthomaslb.org](mailto:music@saintthomaslb.org)

### Bell Choir

Tyler Brandon 228-424-2970

[music2@saintthomaslb.org](mailto:music2@saintthomaslb.org)

### Lifeteen Music

Timothy Raborn

[Tim@raborn.org](mailto:Tim@raborn.org)

## CHARITABLE

### Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Darlene Barry 404-630-6624

[svdp.president@saintthomaslb.org](mailto:svdp.president@saintthomaslb.org)

## OTHER CONTACTS

### Altar Server

Steve Hymel

[altarserver@saintthomaslb.org](mailto:altarserver@saintthomaslb.org)

### Good Shepherd Showcase

Bitsy McDonald 228-669-3750

[svdp.member@saintthomaslb.org](mailto:svdp.member@saintthomaslb.org)

### Maintenance

228-863-1610

[maintenance@saintthomaslb.org](mailto:maintenance@saintthomaslb.org)

### Prayer Chain

Martha Johnson

[prayer@saintthomaslb.org](mailto:prayer@saintthomaslb.org)

### Secretary

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### Bulletin Editor

Lori Lea Sawyer 228-863-1610

[bulletin@saintthomaslb.org](mailto:bulletin@saintthomaslb.org)

**DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES SUBMISSION**

**IS THE TUESDAY BEFORE THE**

**PUBLICATION DATE.**

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE**

**BULLETIN EMAILED TO YOU,**

**PLEASE CONTACT**

**LORI LEA SAWYER**

## SUNDAY, MARCH 8

7:00am – 12:30pm

10:10am – 11:20am

11:30am – 12:30pm

12:30pm – 1:00pm

4:15pm – 5:15pm

6:30pm – 8:00pm

6:40pm – 8:00pm

## MONDAY, MARCH 9

6:30am – 7:00am

8:30am – 9:00am

9:00am – 11:00am

9:15am – 10:30am

9:30am – 12:30pm

3:30pm – 6:00pm

6:00pm – 7:30pm

6:30pm – 8:00pm

7:30pm – 8:30pm

## TUESDAY, MARCH 10

6:30am – 7:00am

8:30am – 9:00am

9:00am – 12:00pm

2:00pm – 4:00pm

5:00pm – 8:00pm

5:15pm – 6:45pm

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

6:30am – 7:00am

8:30am – 9:00am

9:00am – 5:00pm

9:15am – 11:15am

11:00am – 12:00pm

11:30am – 1:30pm

5:00pm – 6:00pm

6:00pm – 7:00pm

6:00pm – 7:00pm

6:00pm – 8:00pm

7:00pm – 8:00pm

## THURSDAY, MARCH 12

6:30am – 7:00am

8:30am – 9:00am

9:30am – 12:30pm

2:00pm – 4:00pm

5:45pm – 7:00pm

6:00pm – 7:00pm

6:00pm – 8:00pm

7:00pm – 8:00pm

7:00pm – 9:00pm

## FRIDAY, MARCH 13

ALL DAY

6:30am – 7:00am

7:00am – 5:00pm

5:00pm – 7:00pm

6:00pm – 7:00pm

## SATURDAY, MARCH 14

ALL DAY

6:30am – 7:00am

8:00am – 12:00pm

11:30am – 12:00pm

12:30pm – 2:00pm

3:15pm – 3:45pm

## SUNDAY, MARCH 15

ALL DAY

ALL DAY

10:10am – 11:20am

11:30am – 12:30pm

4:15pm – 5:15pm

6:30pm – 8:00pm

6:40pm – 8:00pm

FINAL Good Shepherd Showcase in the East Foyer - Before and after Masses  
Sacramental Preparation – Parents Meeting in the REC  
OCIA First Scrutiny in the Church  
Baptisms in the Church  
Life Teen Music Practice in the Church  
Bible and Beers in the REC Multi-Function Room  
Life Teen/Edge Meetings in the Life Teen/Edge Rooms/Community Center

Mass in the Chapel

Mass in the Church

Book Club Meeting in the REC Library

She Shall Be Called Woman Morning Session in the Church/Community Center

Society of SVdP Offering Help in the REC SVdP Offices

Set-up for Evening She Program in the Community Center

She Shall Be Called Woman Evening Session in the Church/Community Center

OCIA Mass in the Chapel on the Creed

Youth Band Practice in the Church

Mass in the Chapel

Mass in the Church

Quilters Meeting in the REC Multi-Function Room

Homeschool Band practice in the REC Multi-Function Room

Cub Scouts Den Meeting in the REC SRE Classrooms

Young at Heart Line Dance in the REC Multi-Function Room

Mass in the Chapel

Mass in the Church

Adoration in the Chapel

Lectio Divina in the REC Library

Mass and Anointing of the Sick in the Church

Lunchkins in the Community Center

Adoration, Praise/Worship, Confession/Intercessory Prayer in the Church

Charismatic Mass in the Church

OCIT Meeting on the Second Floor in Meeting Room 204

Cub Scout Pack Meeting at the Pavilion

Ladies' Auxiliary Meeting on Beatline Road

Mass in the Chapel

Mass in the Church

Society of SVdP Offering Help in the REC SVdP Offices

Home School Band Practice in the REC Multi-Function Room

Music Ministry Practice in the Choir Rehearsal Room

Men's Bible Study in the REC Library

New Wine Meeting in the REC Multi-Function Room

Knights of Columbus Meeting in the KC Room

Cursillo Ultreya Meeting in the Choir Rehearsal Room

Life Teen DBYC (Day 1 of 3)

Mass in the Church

Adoration in the Chapel

KC Fish Fry in the Community Center

Stations of the Cross in the Church

Life Teen DBYC (Day 2 of 3)

Mass in the Chapel

Society of SVdP District Meeting in the REC Multi-Function Room

Memorial Funeral Mass in the Church

Funeral Reception in the Community Center

Reconciliation in the Church Confessional

Life Teen DBYC (Day 3 of 3)

St. Joseph's Altar Set-Up and Clean-Up in the Community Center (Day 1/6)

Sacramental Preparation – Parents Meeting in the REC

OCIA Second Scrutiny in the Church

Life Teen Music Practice in the Church

Bible and Beers in the REC Multi-Function Room

NO Life Teen/Edge Meetings

# PRAYER IS POWERFUL! PLEASE PRAY WITH US.

Robert Adam; Theresa Adam; James Badon; Cinnamon Barry; Pat Bond; Susan Bush; Bryan Carrubba; Sarah Carrubba; Donald Clausing; Jova Clay; Rowan Dumont; Lori Dunaway; Linda Frost; Dave Gauthier; Bette Johnson; Kathy Johnson; Rachel Lerma; Mary Schepens Levens; Kenneth Ray McDonald; Dee McKenna; Diane Moudy; Sr. Cecilia Nguyen; Dayne O'Neal; Sheri Paulson; Peggy Rester; Stephanie Rester; Donna Levens Schmidt; Agnes Marie Seal; Teresa Seymour; Robert Shirley; Ann Sizemore; Belinda Tipton; Penny Tripp; Jim Westmoreland; and all others in our parish and community in need of healing, physical or spiritual.

If you know of someone who is homebound, in a hospital or care facility and would like a visit from Father Satish, Father Braxton, Deacon Buddy or Deacon Jerry, and/or their name on the bulletin prayer request list, please call the Parish Office at 228-863-1610 or email [bulletin@saintthomaslb.org](mailto:bulletin@saintthomaslb.org) or [secretary@saintthomaslb.org](mailto:secretary@saintthomaslb.org) with the person's name, address, phone number, name of hospital or care facility and room number. Names will appear in the Bulletin for 4 weeks unless an extension is requested. Please keep us informed.

## PRIEST MASS ASSIGNMENTS AND MASS INTENTIONS (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Sun 03/08	7:30 AM	Fr. Braxton	🎂 Donna Levens Schmidt
	9:00 AM	Fr. Braxton	🙏 St. Thomas Parish and the People of the City of Long Beach
	11:30 AM	Fr Satish	❤️ Cancer Ministry Prayer List
	5:30 PM	Fr. Satish	🙏 For our Seminarians
Mon 03/09	6:30 AM	Fr. Satish	Mass in the Chapel
	8:30 AM	Fr. Braxton	✝️ Thomas and ✝️ Marcella Tuttle
	6:30 PM	Fr. Satish	🙏 OCIA Mass in the Chapel
Tue 03/10	6:30 AM	Fr. Satish	Mass in the Chapel
	8:30 AM	Fr. Braxton	✝️ Nancy Williams
Wed 03/11	6:30 AM	Fr. Satish	Mass in the Chapel
	8:30 AM	Fr. Braxton	❤️ Paul Mustacchia
	11:00 AM	Fr. Satish	❤️ Anointing of the Sick Mass in the Church
		Fr. Braxton	
	6:00 PM	Fr. Satish	🙏❤️ Charismatic Mass
		Fr. Maxwell	
Thu 03/12	6:30 AM	Fr. Satish	Mass in the Chapel
	8:30 AM	Fr. Braxton	✝️ Andrea Miller 🙏 and the Miller Family
Fri 03/13	6:30 AM	Fr. Satish	🙏 Long Beach First Responders
	8:30 AM	Fr. Braxton	🎒 Mass at St. Vincent de Paul School
Sat 03/14	6:30 AM	Fr. Braxton	Mass in the Chapel
	4:00 PM	Fr. Clyde	🙏 For our Beloved Priests during this Lenten Season
Sun 03/15	7:30 AM	Fr. Satish	✝️ Michael Necaise
			✝️ Raemi Gundlach
	9:00 AM	Fr. Satish	🙏 St. Thomas Parish and the People of the City of Long Beach
	11:30 AM	Fr. Satish	✝️ Nancy Williams
	5:30 PM	Fr. Braxton	✝️ The Souls in Purgatory and the Souls in Danger of Hell



🙏 Baptism 🎂 Birthday ✝️ Deceased ❤️ Healing 🎒 School Mass 🙏 Special Intention ♂ Wedding Anniversary

### Income for 02/28/26 - 03/01/26

Regular	\$22,854.25
Building Restoration	\$5,082.00
Capital Campaign	\$4,200.00
Pickle jar	\$203.05
Special Collection	<u>\$170.00</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$32,509.30</b>

**THANK YOU  
for your generosity!**

### Pray For Our Clergy

Sun 03/08	Father Anthony Arguelles (Retired)
Mon 03/09	Father Charles Arthur Father Philip J. Audet
Tue 03/10	Father David Milton Maria Augustin, H.G.N
Wed 03/11	Father Mike Austin
Thu 03/12	Father Sergio Balderas Father Greg Barras (Retired)
Fri 03/13	Father Hyginus Boboh, SSJ
Sat 03/14	Father Tommy Conway
Sun 03/15	Father Ruben Covos Father Joe Dilettuso (Retired)

# IT'S YOUR CHURCH AND "U" ARE NEEDED!

Join us Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 a.m.

## St. Thomas Church Clean Up Day for Easter



ALL AGES  
WELCOMED!

COFFEE & DONUTS  
PROVIDED!

BRING YOUR RAKES, GLOVES,  
WHEELBARROWS, YARD TOOLS  
AND JOY IN YOUR HEART!



Thank you

Thank you to all of  
St. Thomas Parish  
for your kind  
and powerful prayers.  
I remember all of you in  
my prayers as well.

Ray McDonald

She  
Shall Be  
Called  
Woman



SEASON TWO  
TEN VIRTUES of MARY

EVERY MONDAY  
Morning sessions  
at 9:15AM  
or  
Evening sessions  
at 6:00PM

It's not too late  
to join us!  
Register below  
and choose  
Morning or  
Evening Session



## ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC CHURCH

### KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

FRIDAYS DURING LENT  
from  
FEBRUARY 20<sup>th</sup>  
through  
MARCH 27<sup>th</sup>  
5:00PM - 7:00pm  
in the  
Community Center



## LENTEN FISH FRY

Dine-In or Carry-Out  
\$12 per plate

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Visit [signup.formed.org](http://signup.formed.org)  
and Select our Parish by Zip Code (39560)  
**OUR PARISH HAS A FORMED SUBSCRIPTION!**



Dear Friends,

The St. Joseph's Altar is a Sicilian tradition dating back to the Middle Ages. Sicily is a rocky island with erratic weather conditions which brought either droughts or torrential rains. A lengthy famine seized the island and the dry, cracked earth yielded no life-giving crops. The starving farmers had only their deep faith remaining. They prayed to St. Joseph, the patron saint of Italy, to intercede to God for them.

Their prayers were answered as rains came down upon the crops and coastal fishermen pulled in abundant catches where there had been no fish. These poor farmers and fishermen wanted to pay homage to St. Joseph for answering their prayers. An altar was constructed containing fruits from the harvest and fish from the sea. The tradition continues as a labor of love and devotion on the feast day of St. Joseph, March 19th.

At first the altars were erected in family homes, usually in thanksgiving for favors granted, such as deliverance from the ravages of war or the healing of body or spirit of a loved one. When the Sicilians immigrated to the United States over a century ago, they brought this custom with them. These altars flourished in places where the Sicilian people settled. The tradition continues today in the New Orleans area and many parishes in the Diocese of Biloxi.

As you know, there are many Sicilian families who are members of St. Thomas the Apostle. We brought the tradition back to St. Thomas Parish last year and are planning on continuing this beautiful tradition of thankfulness every year!

Please see a list of items that we need for the St. Joseph Altar which will be on Thursday, March 19, 2026 at 11:00am.



# Help to Honor St. Joseph

by bringing food items for the *St. Joseph Altar*

Drop off at the Parish Office or Bring to the Community Center by Monday, 3/16 • Tuesday, 3/17

## Bags of Fresh Fruits or Vegetables

- Lemons • Oranges • Apples • Bananas • Squash • Zucchini
- Cauliflower • Broccoli • Bell Pepper • Onions • Carrots • Potatoes
- Packages or Boxes of Uncooked Spaghetti Noodles/Pasta
- Uncooked Rice
- Gallons of Sweet or Unsweetened Tea

Many of the items will be used the day of St. Joseph Altar on March 19.

Any items left over/not used will be donated to Mercy Cross Center in Biloxi which provides meals for those in the area who are homeless.

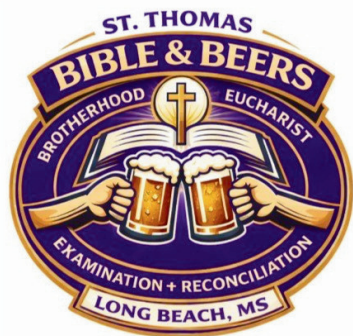
School of Religious Education  
Monthly Newsletter  
March 2026

## Stations of the Cross

3rd, 4th, and 5th Graders will lead the parish in a Living Stations of the Cross on Good Friday morning, April 3rd. Preparation (assignments, costumes, scripts, rehearsals) will take place during SRE class periods in March. Participation is open to parish children outside the SRE program.

**First Reconciliation**  
March 20, 4:15, in church for final preparations, fish dinner and Stations of the Cross  
March 21, 10:00, in church for First Reconciliation.

**Cheerful Giving for March**  
Your donations of granola bars, or meal bars, will be included in meal kits for the homeless in our community.



"BEHOLD, HOW GOOD AND PLEASANT IT IS WHEN BROTHERS DWELL IN UNITY!" (PS 133:1)

### A Lenten Men's Group at St. Thomas

Bible & Beers is a men's gathering for brotherhood and formation through prayer, Scripture, and honest Catholic conversation—helping men grow as Catholic husbands, fathers, and friends. Each week includes a short video, guided discussion, and fellowship.

What about the BEER? B.E.E.R. stands for:

- B – Brotherhood
- E – Eucharist
- E – Examination (of conscience)
- R – Reconciliation

These four pillars guide our Lenten focus as men striving to grow in faith together. (Yes—beer is also part of the fellowship)

What to Expect:

- Video Series: Dr Tim Gray's *Into the Desert: A Lenten Study on Prayer (FORMED)*
- A relaxed, respectful environment – no experts, no pressure
- Guys gathering over a beer to share, learn, and grow together
- Beer is part of the fellowship and helps create a relaxed, brotherly environment. **Faith, Prayer, and discussion always come first.** Moderation is expected and non-alcoholic drinks are welcome. **BYOB**

**WHEN:**  
Sundays during Lent  
(2/22, 3/1, 3/8, 3/15, 3/22, 3/29)

6:30-8:00 PM  
(after evening mass)

**WHERE:**  
St. Thomas SRE building

**WHO:**  
All Catholic Men 21+

**LIMITED SPACE!  
PLEASE RSVP:**

**Pyke Van Dalsem  
(228) 343-0373  
pyke.vandalsem@gmail.com**

## GOOD SHEPHERD SHOWCASE IS CLOSING

With grateful hearts, we announce the closing of Good Shepherd. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul started Good Shepherd as a service to our parishioners in 2013. After much prayer and reflection, we made the difficult decision to close. It has been our honor to serve our parish families by providing religious items and gifts that have supported your faith journey.

We are deeply grateful for your faithful support and friendships; what a blessing to us!

Our last time to open will be March 7th and 8th. All items will be 25% to 75% OFF original price.

*Rest in Peace*

ANDREA ANN MILLER

WILLIAM "BILLY"  
FREDERICK TRUAX, III

## STATIONS OF THE CROSS



JOIN US EACH FRIDAY DURING LENT, BEGINNING FEBRUARY 27 THROUGH MARCH 20, FOR THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN THE CHURCH. TOGETHER WE WILL PRAYERFULLY WALK THE PATH OF CHRIST'S PASSION AND REFLECT ON HIS GREAT LOVE FOR US. FOLLOWING THE STATIONS, A MEMBER OF OUR FAITH FAMILY WILL SHARE A BRIEF AND INSPIRING PRESENTATION ABOUT THEIR CONVERSION STORY—HOW AND WHY THEY EMBRACED THE CATHOLIC FAITH. THIS FRIDAY, SCOTT GRADY WILL SHARE HIS UPLIFTING AND FAITH-FILLED CONVERSION STORY—AN INSPIRING TESTIMONY TO GOD'S TRANSFORMING LOVE. COME RENEW YOUR HEART THIS LENT AS WE DEEPEN OUR JOURNEY THROUGH PRAYER, REFLECTION, AND THE INSPIRING TESTIMONY OF FAITH IN ACTION.

**SAINT STANISLAUS**

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## THREE PILLARS OF LENT



PRAYER



FASTING



ALMSGIVING

# DAILY READINGS

**March 8, Sunday**

**Third Sunday of Lent**

**First Scrutiny of the Elect**

First Reading: Exodus 17: 3-7

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 95: 1-2, 6-7, 8-9

Second Reading: Romans 5: 1-2, 5-8

Verse Before the Gospel: John 4: 42, 15

**Gospel: John 4: 5-42**

**March 9, Monday**

First Reading: Second Kings 5: 1-15

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 42: 2, 3; 43: 3, 4

Verse Before the Gospel: Psalms 130: 5, 7

**Gospel: Luke 4: 24-30**

**March 10, Tuesday**

First Reading: Daniel 3: 25, 34-43

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 25: 4-5ab, 6 and 7bc, 8-9

Verse Before the Gospel: Joel 2: 12-13

**Gospel: Matthew 18: 21-35**

**March 11, Wednesday**

First Reading: Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 147: 12-13, 15-16, 19-20

Verse Before the Gospel: John 6: 63c, 68c

**Gospel: Matthew 5: 17-19**

<https://www.catholicgallery.org/mass-reading/daily-mass-readings-2026>

**March 12, Thursday**

First Reading: Jeremiah 7: 23-28

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 95: 1-2, 6-7, 8-9

Verse Before the Gospel: Joel 2: 12-13

**Gospel: Luke 11: 14-23**

**March 13, Friday**

First Reading: Hosea 14: 2-10

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 81: 6c-8a, 8bc-9, 10-11ab, 14 and 17

Verse Before the Gospel: Matthew 4: 17

**Gospel: Mark 12: 28-34**

**March 14, Saturday**

First Reading: Hosea 6: 1-6

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 51: 3-4, 18-19, 20-21ab

Verse Before the Gospel: Psalms 95: 8

**Gospel: Luke 18: 9-14**

**March 15, Sunday**

**Fourth Sunday of Lent**

**Second Scrutiny of the Elect**

First Reading: First Samuel 16: 1, 6-7, 10-13

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 23: 1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6

Second Reading: Ephesians 5: 8-14

Verse Before the Gospel: John 8: 12

**Gospel: John 9: 1-41**

## BACKGROUND ON THE GOSPEL READING

On this Sunday and the next two Sundays, we break from reading the Gospel of Matthew to read from John's Gospel. The Gospel of John is the only Gospel not assigned to a particular liturgical year. Instead, readings from John's Gospel are interspersed throughout our three-year liturgical cycle.

In today's Gospel, the dialogue between Jesus and a woman from Samaria is among the most lengthy and most theological found in Scripture. The most startling aspect of the conversation is that it happens at all. Jesus, an observant Jew of that time, was expected to avoid conversation with women in public. The animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans should have prevented the conversation as well. The woman herself alludes to the break from tradition: "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" Yet Jesus not only converses with the woman, he also asks to share her drinking vessel, an action that makes him unclean according to Jewish law.

The initial conversation between Jesus and the woman is better understood if we consider the importance of water, especially in the climate of Israel. At first, the woman understands Jesus' promise of "living water" in a literal sense: "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." With no running water, the daily trip to the well by the women of the community was of paramount importance. The women of the town would have traveled to the well in the early morning, but this woman came to the well at noon, the hottest time of the day. The timing of her visit is a clear sign that she is an outcast within the Samaritan community. We learn in her conversation with Jesus that she is an outcast because of her "many husbands."

Behind the conversation lies the animosity and rivalry between the Jews and the Samaritans. Samaritans shared Jewish ancestry, but Samaritans had intermarried with foreigners when they lived under the rule of the Assyrians. Samaritan religion included worship of Yahweh, but was also influenced by the worship of other gods. When the Jews refused Samaritan help in the building of the Temple at Jerusalem, the Samaritans eventually built a temple for themselves at Mt. Gerizim (the same mountain mentioned by the woman at the well). Like the Jews, the Samaritans believed that a Messiah would come.

The high point of the conversation is when Jesus reveals himself to her as the Messiah. His answer to the Samaritan woman's questions about worship is meant to predict a time when worshiping in truth and spirit will become the way to worship. After the conversation, the Samaritan woman becomes a disciple. Even though she is an outcast and not a Jew, she returns to her town to lead others to Jesus and to wonder whether she has found the Messiah. The Samaritan townspeople return with her to meet Jesus for themselves, and many are said to come to believe in him.

The significance of the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman has many levels. The first is personal: The woman is herself converted to belief in Jesus as Messiah because he knows her sin but speaks with her just the same. The second is social: Having come to know Jesus as the Messiah, the Samaritan woman becomes an evangelist to her own people. The third level of the story is educational: Jesus uses his encounter with the Samaritan woman to teach his disciples that God's mercy is without limit. The disciples return from their shopping quite confused to find Jesus talking with a Samaritan, and a woman at that! But the conversion of the Samaritan townspeople is a foretaste of the kind of open community that will be created among those who believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

## FAMILY CONNECTION

Lent is a season for repentance. It is a season during which we are called to reflect upon and to live deeply the promises of Baptism. The well and the conversation about water immediately recall for us the Sacrament of Baptism. As the Samaritan woman was converted and sent on a mission because of the conversation about water, we too are converted and sent by our Baptism to preach the good news of Jesus to others.

Take this opportunity to reflect upon the importance of Baptism with your family. If you have photos or other mementos of your family's Baptisms, bring them out and take some time to recall the day of Baptism and its importance to you and your family. Create a prayer table that includes these mementos and a bowl of holy water. After you have spent some time talking about Baptism, invite everyone to listen carefully and prayerfully to today's Gospel. Read John 4:5-42 together. Ask how Jesus' meeting with the woman at the well is like Baptism. (Jesus knows the woman's sin and forgives her. The woman comes to know Jesus as the Messiah. The woman invites others to meet Jesus.) Pray a prayer of blessing for each member of the family that God will help each one live the promises of his or her Baptism. Pray together the Lord's Prayer.

<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/sunday-connection>

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