



March 12, 2023  
**Third Sunday of Lent**  
*"Give me a drink." John 4:7*



Dear Friends,

One of the things that we absolutely cannot live without is water. Our bodies and our earth are largely made up of water. After nearly six years of drought, we in California understand how precious a gift is water. The abundant amount of rain and snow that we have received this winter, despite causing some problems, is still a blessing.

This month marks the thirtieth anniversary of World Water Day. This day is observed to raise awareness about the importance of water and educating people about conserving it. Clean water, like the air and earth, belongs to everyone. Everyone has a right to have clean water.

Unfortunately access to clean water is not readily available. We do not have to think just of Africa. We only must look to Flint, Michigan to know it's true. We must resist those who would commodify water as another product to be bought and sold. Water is one of God's precious gifts. We need to understand that we have the power to waste it and the power to conserve it, and we have the responsibility to share it.

Traveling through the desert the ancient Israelites knew what it was to be thirsty. In their thirst they grumble against Moses. They accuse God and Moses of bringing them to the desert only to die of thirst. In response to their shortsightedness, the creator of snow and rain will bring water from a rock, demonstrating that nothing is impossible for God. There are no limits to God's love but can they and we trust it. God provides for both our physical and spiritual needs.

In our passage from John's Gospel the Samaritan woman comes to the well at the hottest part of the day. She was also alone, not in the company of other women. The time for women to draw water at the well is in the morning. These details tell us that she was considered an outcast. Yet she was not exempt from thirst. Jesus would know these cultural signs. In his physical thirst he dares ask her for water. He did not have a rope and bucket to draw out the water. Then the Samaritan woman engages Jesus in a conversation.

It was unusual for an unchaperoned woman and a man by himself to engage in conversation. Not only that, but she was also Samaritan, and he was Jewish. There was no love between these groups. Neither seem to be bothered by the social norms. Not only does she speak to Jesus, but she talks about traditionally male subjects: religion and politics. In their thirst they both bridge the social gulfs between them. It reveals the important role of women and Samaritans in John's community.

Jesus reveals that he has another thirst. He thirsts for her faith in the God who transcends all the barriers of religion, gender, and culture. When Jesus promises her 'living water' she immediately accepts. Her encounter with Jesus becomes a source of life and hope that bubbles up within her. She becomes a river that channels the love of God out to others. Immediately she goes back into the town square (a traditional place for only men) and there she proclaims Jesus. She found hope in Jesus the Living Water, and now awakens the same hope in us. She understands just as water is important to natural life, the Living Water is to eternal life. In our baptism we were immersed in the Living Water. May we become channels through which that life flows out to all.

Peace,

*Fr Ron*

*Esta carta está en español en el sitio web: [www.anne.church](http://www.anne.church)*