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## Third Sunday of Lent March 23, 2014

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### Introductory Rites

#### Greeting

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: *Amen*

P: The Lord be with you.

C: *And with your spirit.*

### Sunday Liturgy Guide for the Church of the Poor in the Spirit of the New Evangelization

**The Church of the Poor is realized through the Basic Ecclesial Communities that declares no one is a foreigner not by legalism but with love, in obedience to the Father.**

The PCP-II reads the phenomenon of faith of our people in this manner: **(13)** “For most of our people today the faith is centered on the practice of the rites of popular piety. Not on the Word of God, doctrines, sacramental worship (beyond baptism and matrimony). Not on community. Not on building up our world unto the image of the Kingdom. And we say it is because the ‘unchurched,’ the vast majority of our people, greatly lack knowledge of and formation in the faith.

**(14)** It is too easy to dismiss them as ‘nominal Catholics’ simply because they do not attend Mass and receive the sacraments on a regular basis. To judge them as Christ Himself would judge them, we have to ask what they do to one another as simple human beings, whether they feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, shelter the homeless. We have to ask how much of the values of the Kingdom they have in faith made their own; how deeply these values move them in their interacting with one another. And so when we see jeepney drivers taking into their homes stranded passengers, dirt-poor farmers sharing food with the more destitute, or lawyers and doctors giving free service to needy

clients, we have to think twice about the depth of faith of those we call ‘nominal Catholics’.

**(15)** If we go by the media reporting today on crimes of violence, graft and corruption, abuse of power, the many grave social ills that plague our nation, we have to wonder about our claims to Christianity. Yet we should not exaggerate our failures. But neither should we minimize them. There is much of the Gospel that has become part of us – compassion, forgiveness, caring, piety – and makes of us a basically decent people. So even as we speak of change and renewal, we see we have a solid base to build on – even among those we call the ‘unchurched’.”

As BEC today, it would be helpful to look into the phenomenon of faith among our members, and see if these words of PCP-II, written some 23 years ago, still ring true today. Do we still consider some of our parishioners “unchurched” because they do not belong to our BEC? Do we deprive them and their children of the sacraments, especially of baptism, and the blessings of the dead, because we think they are “nominal Catholics” and are not with us? How similar to or different from, is our natural human sense of compassion, forgiveness, caring, piety when compared to the compassion, forgiveness, caring and piety which the gospel proclaims? ■

## Introduction and Welcome

Dear Friends: Welcome once again to this celebration of God's life and love which he so graciously shared with us in Christ our Savior. In the Church, in God's Kingdom, there are no strangers and foreigners. Let us therefore greet and welcome one another as brothers and sisters. Turn to your neighbor now and greet each other: Hello, sister! Hello, brother! Hello, friend!

## Penitential Act

P: Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us now turn to God for mercy and forgiveness for the sins we may have committed against our neighbor and against our God.

P: I confess...

A: *To almighty God ... to pray to the Lord our God.*

P: May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

C: *Amen.*

P: Lord, have mercy.

C: *Lord, have mercy.*

P: Christ, have mercy.

C: *Christ, have mercy.*

P: Lord, have mercy.

C: *Lord, have mercy.*

## Collect

P: Let us pray: O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness, who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving have shown us a remedy for sin, look graciously on this confession of our lowliness that we, who are bowed down by our conscience, may always be lifted up by your mercy. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

C: *Amen.*

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

### First Reading: Ex 17:3-7

L: A reading from the book of Exodus.

In those days, in their thirst for water, the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "Why did you ever make us leave Egypt? Was it just to have us die here of thirst with our children and our livestock?" So Moses cried out to the LORD, "What shall I do with this people? A little more and they will stone me!"

The LORD answered Moses, "Go over there in front of the people, along with some of the elders of Israel, holding in your hand, as you go, the staff with which you struck the river. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock in Horeb. Strike the rock, and the water will flow from it for the people to drink."

This Moses did, in the presence of the elders of Israel. The place was called Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled there and tested the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD in our midst or not?"

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: *Thanks be to God.*

### Commentary on Ex 17:3-7:

With this new complaint of the people against Moses, over the lack of water to drink, God finds a new occasion to demonstrate his kindness and mercy. But what is significant in this account is that the provisions of food and water are tasks of women and mothers: God is showing her feminine and maternal care for the people, after this same God, as a male warrior, had led them out of Egypt. But more profoundly: water is an essential element of life; the rock is a symbol of total hardness and dryness in the desert. Between

the old habits (they yearn for the life of slavery in Egypt) and the new ways (the new possibilities of freedom in the desert) the people are simply incapable of discerning anything new: they prefer the old and reject the new. God must intervene: his staff must pierce the hard aridity/rock so that new life could flow again. Or must he strike the hardness of people's hearts so that life may be watered again? It was so, earlier at the Nile River: when God struck, something new was born, and transformation took place. The children of Israel – the people of God – are learning!

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

**Response: (8) If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.**

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD; let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation. Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us joyfully sing psalms to him.

**R: If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.**

Come, let us bow down in worship; let us kneel before the LORD who made us. For he is our God, and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides.

**R: If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.**

Oh, that today you would hear his voice: "Harden not your hearts as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the desert, Where your fathers tempted me; they tested me though they had seen my works."

**R: If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.**

**Commentary on Ps 95:**

A closer look at the psalm would reveal its two parts, namely: (a) the first part is a joyful song (vv. 1-7c) and (b) the

second, a poetic oracle that clearly changes the tone of the psalm (vv. 7d-11). The hymn of thanksgiving gives its reason for a joyous gratitude: God is the Rock of our salvation; he is our guide. Suddenly the tone changes, with the prophetic oracle: Oh, that today you would hear his voice. The reason for this prophetic exhortation is the experience of the past: harden not your hearts as at Meribah. Now Yahweh is speaking; to listen to him is to obey him!

**Second Reading: Rom 5:1-2, 5-8**

L: A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans.

Brothers and sisters: Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God. And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For Christ, while we were still helpless, died at the appointed time for the ungodly. Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: *Thanks be to God.*

**Commentary on Rom 5:1-2, 5-8:**

In this section, Paul continues to explain his idea of justification by faith, but gradually entering into a new language: from a legal and juridic language to one of ethic based on God's love. That is why Paul is able

to leave behind the issue of Jewishness and is now able to embrace the whole Christian community that is justified/redeemed by faith in Christ. If one receives justification by faith, then one is able to reap both peace and hope. The inseparability of peace and hope lies in Christ: his death that saves us from sin is an eloquent proof that God loves us!

**Gospel: John 4:5-42 or John 4:5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-42**

P: The Lord be with you.

C: *And with your spirit.*

P: A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

C: *Glory to you, Lord.*

Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" —For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.— Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink', you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself with his children and his flocks?"

Jesus answered and said to her, "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."

The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

Jesus said to her, "Go call your husband and come back." The woman answered and said to him, "I do not have a husband." Jesus answered her, "You are right in saying, 'I do not have a husband.' For you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true."

The woman said to him, "Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain; but you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You people worship what you do not understand; we worship what we understand, because salvation is from the Jews.

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth."

The woman said to him, "I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Christ; when he comes, he will tell us everything." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one speaking with you."

At that moment his disciples returned, and were amazed that he was talking with a woman, but still no one said, "What are you looking for?" or "Why are you talking with her?" The woman left her water jar and went into the town and said to the people, "Come see a man who told me everything I have

done. Could he possibly be the Christ?"

They went out of the town and came to him. Meanwhile, the disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat."

But he said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." So the disciples said to one another, "Could someone have brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work.

Do you not say, 'In four months the harvest will be here'? I tell you, look up and see the fields ripe for the harvest. The reaper is already receiving payment and gathering crops for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper can rejoice together. For here the saying is verified that 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap what you have not worked for; others have done the work, and you are sharing the fruits of their work." Many of the Samaritans of that town began to believe in him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me everything I have done." When the Samaritans came to him, they invited him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. Many more began to believe in him because of his word, and they said to the woman, "We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

### **Commentary on John 4:5-42:**

This is John's dramatic presentation of the gradual self-revelation of Jesus, full of historical, social and personal challenges wrapped in profound symbolisms and inter-personal dialogue.

The woman, in the Old Testament tradition, can also symbolize and

personify a people. Samaria, after the conquest by Assyria, was repopulated by 5 tribes. Even though they later accepted the worship of Yahweh, each tribe had its own respective gods. One may also consider the complications in the present narrative. To be woman was to be a second class, a mere possession, source of evil, and to be with her alone can be an occasion of sin. This is further made worse by the fact that this woman from Samaria is a foreigner. The drama now unfolds with the woman and Jesus as the protagonists. Jesus provokes the conversation and encounter with the woman. What is he doing? The woman responds by positing the Jew-Samaritan mutually exclusive relationship. Jesus responds by pointing out the ignorance of the woman, but elevating the topic from that of an ordinary water to a living water. The roles now are inverted: from Jesus asking the woman, to the woman now asking Jesus. The woman's recognition of Jesus heightens: from sir to prophet. But this happens after the allusion to the 5 husbands – the 5 gods of the 5 tribes. Jesus then points to himself as the Christ, his person as the New Temple and worship as not defined by places but by the Spirit and truth. The conversion of the woman – of the people of Samaria – now takes place: the self-revelation of Jesus is addressed to and accepted by the woman not by a man, by the stranger and foreigner, the despised race and not by the privileged and chosen Jewish people, by a sinner and not by a saint.

Jesus chooses to reveal himself to the little ones and the least, and makes of them his apostles and messengers. Jesus is recognized by them not just as the ordinary Messiah of Israel but the Super Messiah (Alonso-Schoekel) of all the world!



**Homily: The Church of the Poor is realized through the Basic Ecclesial Communities that declares no one is a foreigner not by legalism but with love, in obedience to the Father.**

Summary of the Sunday Reading Message	Concrete description of the poor people and their situation	Reflection/ Points for reflection/ Call/ Challenge
<p>The Church of the Poor is realized through the Basic Ecclesial Communities that declares no one is a foreigner not by legalism but with love, in obedience to the Father.</p>	<p>Cite instances in your BEC where you considered somebody a stranger and an alien. Why? Cite experiences of your BEC members who as OFWs are treated as foreigners and alien in foreign lands. How do you take this?</p>	<p>What is the difference between the export of fruits and minerals and the export of human beings and labor? Our faith in Christ tells us that the whole world and creation are ours to share.</p>

**Profession of Faith**

A: I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he

suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

**Prayers of the Faithful:**

P: Dear sisters and brothers, let us pray to our Father in heaven to bless us with the communion of love and help us reject the division imposed by the laws of economics and the market. Let our response be: Lord, unite us in faith and love.

**R: Lord, unite us in faith and love.**

L: Let us pray for the Church: that being a Church of the Poor spread all over the world, she may continue to proclaim that faith in Christ may make us see our diversity as a gift to humanity, destined for the enrichment of each one and designed for a profound communion with God and with the whole human community. Let us pray to the Lord.

**R: Lord, unite us in faith and love.**

L: For our Holy Father, Pope Francis I, for the bishops, priests, deacons, for those in consecrated life and for all those who are entrusted with the care and administration of the church as People of God: that they may continue to serve people as migrants, defend the common dignity of human labor and work for the abolition of unjust and

discriminatory laws that perpetuate the unwelcoming attitude to “foreigners” and “aliens”. Let us pray to the Lord.

**R: Lord, unite us in faith and love.**

L: For world leaders and all those entrusted with governance and administration of the goods of the earth: that they may welcome all peoples from outside their lands, promote intercultural dialogue and social integration and abolish laws discriminatory to migrants and migrant labor and inimical to the freedom of faith and religion. Let us pray to the Lord.

**R: Lord, unite us in faith and love.**

L: For all of us: that we may become prophetic advocates of international understanding through dialogue and solidarity and justly oppose globalization designed for business and the market which has caused the marginalization and impoverishment of peoples. Let us pray to the Lord.

**R: Lord, unite us in faith and love.**

L: For our beloved dead: that in the forgiveness of their sins, they may find eternal rest in the heart of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let us pray to the Lord.

**R: Lord, unite us in faith and love.**

L: For our special intentions, in the silence of our hearts. *(pause)*... Let us pray to the Lord.

**R: Lord, unite us in faith and love.**

P: Lord, these are the prayers we present to you today. Pierce our hardened hearts with the staff of your love, and teach us to be willing instruments of your justice, peace and hope so that we can worship you truly in Spirit and in Truth. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R: *Amen.*

## LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

### Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts

P: Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, ....

C: *Blessed be God forever.*

P: Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

C: *May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.*

### Prayer over the Offerings

P: Be pleased, O Lord, with these sacrificial offerings, and grant that we who beseech pardon for our own sins, may take care to forgive our neighbor. Through Christ our Lord.

C: *Amen.*

### Prayer of the Eucharist

P: The Lord be with you.

C: *And with your spirit.*

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: *We lift them up to the Lord.*

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: *It is right and just.*

P: It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For when he asked the Samaritan woman for water to drink, he had already created the gift of faith within her and so ardently did he thirst for her faith, that he kindled in her the fire of divine love.

And so, we, too, give you thanks and with the Angels praise your mighty deeds, as we acclaim:

*A: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.*

### **Acclamation**

P: The mystery of faith.  
*We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.*

(Concluding the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest says:)

Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, for ever and ever.

*C: Amen.*

### **Communion Rite**

The Lord's Prayer

### **Doxology**

C: For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever.

### **Sign of Peace**

P: Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles; Peace ... Who live and reign for ever and ever.

*C: Amen.*

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

*C: And with your spirit.*

P: Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

### **Breaking of the Bread**

*A: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world ... grant us peace.*

### **Communion**

P: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

*A: Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.*

### **Prayer after Communion**

P: Let us pray. As we receive the pledge of things yet hidden in heaven and are nourished while still on earth with the Bread that comes from on high, we humbly entreat you, O Lord, that what is being brought about in us in mystery may come to true completion. Through Christ our Lord.

*C: Amen.*

### **Final Blessing**

P: The Lord be with you.

*C: And with your spirit.*

P: Bow down your heads and pray for God's blessing: Direct, O Lord, we pray, the hearts of your faithful, and in your kindness grant your servants this grace: that, abiding in the love of you and their neighbor, they may fulfill the whole of your commands. Through Christ our Lord.

*C: Amen.*

P: And may the blessings of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit, come down upon you and remain with you forever.

*C: Amen.*

### **Dismissal**

P: Go in peace and glorify God by your life.

*C: Thanks be to God. ■*

Join Fr. Ben Alforque, MSC of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in **GOSPEL BREAK**, a short yet entertaining and insightful discussion of this Sunday's Gospel on YouTube. Visit **gospelbreak.wordpress.com**. Or scan this QR code with your Smartphone or tablet.

