

# Third Sunday of Lent

Homily: Fr. Shijo George

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St. Paul tells us today in his letter to the Romans: “Hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.” These are powerful and deeply consoling words for our spiritual life.

In today’s Gospel, we meet the Samaritan woman at the well. She comes to draw water at noon, the hottest time of the day. Normally women would come early in the morning or in the evening when it is cool. But she comes at noon. Why? Because she had a hope — a small and fragile hope — that no one would see her. She wanted to avoid people, avoid questions, and perhaps avoid the shame of her past. This was a false, pseudo hope; a hope built on hiding and escaping. But when she arrived at the well, her plan failed. Someone was already sitting there: it was Jesus. At first, her hope turned to disappointment. She might have thought, “Why is someone here now?” But what was a disappointment became the beginning of her salvation.

Jesus was not there to judge her. He was there to meet her; to speak with her and to offer her ‘living water’. During their conversation, Jesus gently reveals the truth about her life; not to shame her, but to heal her. Slowly, she begins to understand that she is standing before someone greater than a stranger; greater even than a prophet. She is standing before the Messiah.

Then something extraordinary happens. The woman who once came secretly at noon; a woman who wanted to avoid people; the woman who carried shame in her heart, now runs eagerly back to the town with enthusiasm. She goes to the very people she once avoided and says: “Come and see a man who told me everything I have done. Could he be the Messiah?” The woman who once hid from the crowd becomes a proclaimer to the crowd.



Her earlier hope was, “Let no one see me.” Her new hope becomes, “Everyone must see Him.” This is the transformation from false hope to true hope.

Brothers and sisters, this Gospel reminds me of something I experience sometimes when people come to Confession. When someone comes to Confession after many years, they often come with fear, shame, and hesitation. At such moments I often say to them: “Do not worry. Jesus has been sitting at the well of your life all this time; waiting for you.”

Each Confession is a meeting with the Saviour who is waiting for us. It brings us the hope that He is never far away. He is simply waiting for this moment; the moment when we return. In that moment, we meet the Messiah who loves us unconditionally, who forgives us, and who restores everything that seemed lost in our lives.

In fact, in every moment that we feel truly sorry for our actions is the moment when the Messiah begins a dialogue with us, just as He did with the Samaritan woman. If we have the courage to accept the truth and encounter Him, we will discover that Christ is already there waiting for us. That is what St. Paul means when he says: “Hope does not disappoint us.” Real hope is not the hope of hiding from life. Real hope is the hope that comes from encountering Christ.

The Samaritan woman came to the well as a broken woman, and she left the well as a missionary. She came carrying a water jar, but left carrying a message.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus is still waiting at the well of our lives; at the place where we come with our thirst, our wounds, and our struggles. The question is not whether Jesus is there; the question is whether we are ready to meet Him. When we truly encounter Him, our false hopes disappear, and we discover the hope that never disappoints.