

HOMILY 3RD SUN LENT YRA 2017

Did you know that the human body is made up of 50-75% water? And without water you will die in less than a week. Water is extremely important to our physical bodies. God is at least as important to our spiritual lives. Is something missing from your life? Maybe it is a relationship with God.

The first reading and Gospel reading have this imagery of water. Jesus asks the Samaritan woman for a drink of water. He is talking about physical water. Then he tells her that he can give her living water where she will never be thirsty again. Now he is talking about spiritual water, but she does not get it at first. I think he is making the point that he is as important to her spiritual life as water is to her physical life. I would like to expand that comparison a little bit. What if you are physically thirsty? What if you read about water; put a picture of water on your wall at home; listen to a talk about water; join a study group to learn about water; join a discussion group to hear other people's experience of water; sing songs about water. Eventually you have to drink the water or you are going to die of thirst. We do all of these things in our religious practices, and they are all good, but eventually you are going to have to experience God in your life to have a full spiritual life.

That is what happened in the Gospel reading. The Samaritan woman first calls Jesus sir. Then Jesus tells her the things that he knows about her, and she calls him a prophet. She interacts with him a little longer and finally concludes that he is the Messiah. She develops a relationship with Jesus over the course of this conversation. It is a process, and she concludes that Jesus must be the Messiah. She goes from being an enemy of Jesus, Jews and Samaritans were bitter enemies, to spreading the news to her friends that she thinks she has found the Messiah. But things do not end there. She told them to go meet Jesus. They do, and he stays with them a couple of days. They come to believe in Jesus, not just because of what the

Samaritan woman told them, but because they interacted with Jesus and developed a relationship with him. If we are going to have a full and healthy spiritual life, we have to have a relationship with God.

Do your spiritual practices fall short of that relationship? Having a relationship with God is much like have a relationship with people. Personal prayer is the primary vehicle for developing a relationship with God. You have to spend time with God. You cannot have a relationship with someone unless you spend time with them. You have to talk to God. If all of your prayer is reciting words written by someone else, it would be like trying to have a relationship with someone and only talking to them through a third party. You have to listen to God. Did you ever try to have a relationship with someone who just talks and talks and talks and never gives you a chance to say anything? You cannot have much of a relationship with them, it is very one sided. Your relationship grows and develops over time. The relationship grows stronger and closer over time. Think of people you have known for years. These relationships are much different than the relationships you have with someone you just met. If you have a relationship with God, it must lead to a change in your behavior. You have to love and serve God by loving and serving others, and this is never finished. We can always be better lovers. Just like the people that you love in your life. If you love someone, you can tell by your behavior. You treat them special. You do things for them to show them that you love them. You want to please them. You avoid doing things that will hurt their feelings. And sometimes you do things for them just because it is what they want you to do. Same with God.

Is something missing in your spiritual life? Maybe it has to do with your relationship with God.