

## "I Thirst" John 19:28-29 Laetare Midweek (Lent 4 Midweek) 2022

The text is from Saint John's Gospel, read a few minutes ago.

Our Lord, in the last extremity of exhaustion, thirsted greatly. He had been suffering severe blood loss from various wounds inflicted as early as the previous night. His Body was now drenched in Blood from the scourging and the crown of thorns and the nails. It is no wonder He felt severe dehydration.

We see here the mystery of the Word made flesh. He allows Himself to be limited by human weakness. He did not need to be thirsty. With the almighty power within Him, He could at any time put Himself beyond any physical need. He could simply say, "I do not want to thirst," and the thirst would end.

But not our Savior. The Son of Mary lets Himself suffer. That is why He came. He is thirsty because He is in His state of humiliation, and He is in the state of humiliation because He greatly desired to save us. An omnipotent Son of God who never suffers will not save mankind. But our Redeemer suffers and thirsts. The Christ of God, anointed to die on Calvary, does all this for us.

He is truly the prophesied Messiah. He is aware of Scripture, and intentionally acts to fulfill it. Even such a seemingly insignificant action as asking for a drink is important.

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So He consciously acts to fulfill Psalm 22, which says, “My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue sticks to My gums.” The last word, מִלְקוֹחַיִם can mean jaws or roof of the mouth, but the meaning is the same regardless. The dryness of mouth that came with His intense labor and suffering was very severe. King David prophesied this, and Christ fulfilled it.

Here we also see that Christ is like Samson, hero of the book of Judges. When Samson killed a troop of Philistine soldiers, he became very thirsty. So also the mightiest Hero of all, after He conquered death and satan and all his demon hosts by His death on the Cross, also cried out with thirst.

In Psalm 69:21 it says, “In My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink.” Here we see the action of the Roman soldiers foretold, as they dipped a sponge and put it on a stick to give Christ sour wine. The Creator of all things in human flesh deserves the very finest wine, aged to perfection, made from the best grapes. Yet He receives vinegar instead. He deserves to sip from the finest crystal, yet must suck on a dirty sponge instead.

Still, no complaint escapes His lips. He is fulfilling His own Word. He is satisfied in what He does because His greater thirst is to redeem us. Therefore He receives the sour wine without complaint.

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After all He has done for us, we in turn should be filled with a godly thirst. Psalm 42 says: "As the deer cries out for fresh water, so cries out my soul, O God, for You. My soul thirsts for God, the living God." He is the living Fountain which is the only way for the thirst of our parched souls to be quenched.

Again Psalm 63 says, "God, You are my God; my soul thirsts for You. My flesh longs for You in a dry and parched land, where there is no water." This world is a desiccated desert. Apart from the oasis of the holy Church, there is only a multitude of religions that lack the moisture of God's grace. A man could wander from spiritual philosopher to wise guru for years without ever satisfying the true thirst.

Only the Triune God gives the water of life. He pours out the gracious washing of Baptism to His saints. He washes away every sin through His mercy. From His believers come streams of living water, which are the Holy Spirit.

We return again to this living water whenever we come to Confession or hear the Word taught or receive the Body and Blood of Christ.

All this is because Christ was crucified for us. He says, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink." That is to say, Christ has become

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the Fountain of Life by dying for us lost sinners. He gives life because He is the one who gave His body into torture and death. All other religions can give no water of life, because they have no Savior slain for men. They teach only the works of the flesh, as if a man, by trying hard, can satisfy his own thirst. That is to offer vinegar to a thirsty man. Only by receiving water from the One who gives it can we be satisfied and live.

To make us safe, He had to be put in danger. To satisfy thirst, He had to become thirsty. To give life, He had to die.

This is the true and only Savior. All thanks and praise and honor and glory be to Him. Amen.