

Good Friday
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March 30, 2018
Is 52:13-53:12; Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9; Jn 18:1-19:42

Jesus declares that he is thirsty twice in the Gospel according to John. On the first occasion, he meets a Samaritan woman at a well; tired after a morning's journey, he asks her to draw up water that he may quench his thirst. In response to her incredulity that a Jew would speak to her, Jesus reveals that if she knew who he was, she would ask *him* for a drink, and he would provide living water. Jesus has sought out the woman, St. Augustine notes beautifully, because he is thirsting for her faith.

He expresses that same thirst on the cross, but here his desire is to quench our thirst for a life free of dust and death. To thirst is to experience pain, a burning sensation of anguished desire so dominant that all other thoughts flee before it. Far too many in our world still suffer from physical thirst as Jesus did at the well and at the cross. Far too many of us, I imagine, experience that thirst as an anxious worry of unworthiness to approach the Lord of life, and an awareness, for some numbing, for others gnawing, of what we have done and what we have failed to do. We look upon our crucified Lord as dying for our sins indeed, but we regard ourselves as too fractured to contain any divine life, too unlovable to receive water from the fountain of mercy.

Yet this is why the Son was sent; this is why God so loved the world: having desired to share our experiences of mortal weakness, Jesus' work is finished when He hands over the Spirit, and sends forth from the temple of His body rivers of blood and living water.

That gesture of immeasurable, sacrificial love is the Lord's way of telling you that He thirsted so that you would want to drink that living water—in gratitude, in love. He suffered so that you would be vivified by the waters of Baptism unleashed from His pierced side. He willingly

laid down His life so that you could be nourished by His own blood and flesh, crucified but risen, and offered to you as food and drink for the sacramental journey of your life. The Greek word for “thank you,” after all, is *Eucharisto*.” That is the perfect response to our Lord today, who has loved us to the end, and assured us that this blood and water, channeled to us by the Church, will prepare us for the glorious beginning with Christ which awaits us at our end.