

“...BUT, whoever drinks the water I shall give ...will never... thirst ... (again).”

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

Once upon a time, an American tourist had returned home from visiting the Holy Land. He told this story. He said he was sitting by a well in a field. An Arab woman came down from the hills. Over her shoulder was a large, leather bucket; in her hand, a ball of twine & a very small, leather bucket.

She tied the twine to the small bucket and lowered it into the well. When it had filled, she pulled it up and dumped the water from the little bucket into the bigger bucket. She repeated this process until the larger bucket was filled to her satisfaction. Then she returned to the hills.

A little later, an Arab man appeared. **BUT**... he had nothing to lower into the well. He was, obviously, very overheated and extremely thirsty; so, he got down on all fours, like a dog, and lapped up the water spilled earlier by the woman.

This simple story illustrates a point the woman makes in today's Gospel, which I just read to you from St. John. She tells Jesus:

“Sir, you don't have a bucket and this well is deep. Where would you get this 'life-giving' water?”

BUT--Jesus explains that he isn't talking about physical water to quench physical thirst. He's talking about spiritual water to quench spiritual thirst. Pointing to the water in the well, he says:

“Whoever drinks this water will get thirsty again, **BUT... whoever drinks the water that I shall give will never be thirsty again.”**

The point Jesus is making is: We all have a spiritual thirst, similar to our bodily thirst.

‘What exactly **is** this spiritual thirst we all have, this inner emptiness, this inner need?’ you ask.

Well, I am glad you asked that question!

Old Testament writers referred to it as... **a 'thirst for God.'**

For example, Psalm 42 says:

“As a deer longs for a stream of cool water, so I ...thirst for you, the living God.”

For example, the prophet Isaiah quotes God, saying:

“Come, everyone who is thirsty ...Come to me.” Is.55:1, 3

For example and finally, Jeremiah compared God to a:

“Spring of fresh water.” Jer.17:13

The **‘inner thirst’** we all feel is **a thirst for God.** People have experienced the same **‘inner thirst’** since the beginning of time. Humankind has always known that it didn't make itself. In attempts to honor or please its Creator, its God, primitive people **worshiped** that which they could not understand or explain ...the mysterious, such as the sun, the moon, or fire.

Later in history, as time unfolded, St. Augustine would explain this **‘inner thirst’** by saying:

“Our hearts are made for God, and they will not rest, until they rest... in God.”

To put it poetically, I say:

“We all have a hole in our hearts, a God-shaped hole ...that only God can fill.”

This leads me to address a great tragedy of our times. It is this:

We (this society, this culture)...are trying to fill the **God-shaped hole in our hearts** with something ...other than God! We are trying to satisfy our **spiritual** thirst with something ...other than God.

You see, the human heart has a natural, **spiritual thirst**. **BUT**, instead of helping people satisfy this natural, **spiritual thirst**, in a **spiritual** way, all too often, we (this society, this culture) give the human heart **material things**.

We try to distract **those spiritually thirsting** from what is troubling them, the **woes of life**, the same way we try to distract a crying baby with candy, a rattle, or by making funny faces at it.

Trying to satisfy a spiritual thirst with material things...like gambling, drinking, eating, shopping, electronic obsession, inordinate texting/sexting/all sorts of erotica (digitally transmitted or otherwise) ... the list is endless, is like trying to satisfy a physical thirst with salt water. The more we drink, the more isolated, frustrated, and thirsty we get!

My point **is** ...there's something inside us that material things, alone, **cannot** satisfy. Even great material wealth, alone, leaves us empty. Look to Tiger Woods or so many of the Hollywood-set, like Lindsay Lohan and Charlie Sheen... look to what a mess they've made of their lives.

In the human heart, there's a thirst... no water can quench. There is a restlessness ...no success can satisfy. There's a void... no material object, electronic or otherwise, can fill.

And, this brings me to the 'good news' contained in today's Gospel:

Jesus, and Jesus alone, can satisfy the **thirst** in our hearts.

Jesus, and Jesus alone, can fill the **void** in our lives.

Jesus is the Son of God, come to fill the **God-hole** in each of us.

Jesus is the Prince of Peace & comes to **calm** the restlessness in our hearts.

Jesus is the water from heaven, come to **satisfy** the thirst we feel.

**"Whoever drinks the water that I will give him, will never be thirsty again.
The water that I will give him will become, in him, a spring,
which will provide him with life-giving water
...and give him eternal life."**

I close with this prayer:

**"Lord Jesus, you are the life-giving water for which we thirst.
You are the happiness and success for which we strive.
You are the peace and joy for which we search.
Lord Jesus, our hearts were made for you
...and they will not rest
...until they rest... in you!"**

*May Almighty God, our very Creator...our Abba, bless you,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*