

3rd Sunday of Lent (A)

March 8, 2026

“The Bible”

Young Michael, a little before his 18th birthday, stopped by his dad’s office after school one day with a special request. “My birthday is next Tuesday, dad, and if you love me, you’ll buy a new car for me.” His father looked at him, and Michael continued, “If you really love me, you’ll get the car I’ve always wanted.” The next morning at breakfast, his father asked, “Michael, yesterday when you stopped by my office, you didn’t mention the kind of car you wanted.” Michael replied, “You know, dad. A red Porsche.” The boy’s father replied, “How much does it cost?” Michael replied, “Ninety-two thousand dollars, dad. Don’t let me down.”

Tuesday came, and as was the family’s custom, they celebrated Michael’s birthday with a meal and cake. As they enjoyed their cake, Michael’s siblings handed him their gifts. His mind, however, was on something else. Finally, Michael’s father handed him a small rectangular parcel. When he ripped it open, he discovered it was a Bible. Disgusted, he stood up, pushed the chair from the table, and rushed from the dining room. He went up to his room, slammed the door, and threw the unopened gift against the wall. He refused to speak to anyone.

Just before lunch the next day, Michael’s father suffered a massive heart attack. Michael rushed to the hospital to be with his father. For seven hours, Michael sat at his unconscious father’s bedside, replaying the events of the past night over and over again in his head. When he took a break to get some food, his father died, and Michael was devastated.

When he arrived home, Michael went over to the unopened gift in his room, and opened it. On the inside cover, an inscription read: *“Dear Michael, within these pages, you will find the answers to all of life’s questions, and the secrets to all of life’s successes. With love on your eighteenth birthday. Dad.”*

As tears streamed down his face, Michael opened the Bible, and discovered a bookmark. He removed the book mark and stared with openmouthed amazement at a check . . . for ninety-two thousand dollars. His father had given Michael everything he needed and wanted. God satisfies all our desires in His own way.

A great man once said: “The Bible is the most widely read, studied, translated, printed, sold, gifted, distributed, and quoted” book ever written or published. “It is the best selling book of all time. . . . In the Bible, we discover the depth and generosity of God’s love, as well as his desire to soothe humanity’s yearning for truth and happiness” (Kelly, 95). The Bible is a collection of *stories*, like the miracle of Cana, *questions*, like “What must I do to attain eternal life?”, and *prayers*, like the Our Father.

There are many water stories in the Bible, including the first moments of creation when the Spirit hovered over the waters, Noah and the Great Flood, the crossing of the children of Abraham through the Red Sea, the baptism of John in the Jordan, and water poured out from the side of Christ on Good Friday.

Today, we hear the familiar account of the Samaritan Woman. This foreign woman, forced to come for water at the hot time of day because she was shunned by society, came for a bucket of natural water. At Jacob’s well, she discovered Jesus, who offered her the “*living water*” of grace and salvation. It is one of the great conversion stories.

The two went back and forth in a sacred dialogue. It took time for her to understand, but gradually, open to the Holy Spirit, she allowed the “*living water*” of grace to flood her soul and change the course of her life. She became a disciple and a messenger of Jesus, leaving to announce the arrival of a man “*who told me everything I have done*” (Jn. 4:29). Jesus, the soul reader, was the “soul savior” of this nameless Samaritan woman.

Lent is a time to open our dry souls to receive the living waters of grace. The Scripture, which must be approached with reverence and awe, can change our desert dryness into moist pastures of life.

Let’s spend time with Scripture this Lent, reading, meditating, reflecting, and living the Word we hear. Choose a book and spend some time with the crucified Savior who wants to save you as he saved the Samaritan Woman. “Pick up a bible and begin a fabulous new adventure in your spiritual life this Lent” (Kelly, 110). It will turn out to be the most meaningful part of your day. God bless you.