

**March 8, 2015**  
**Third Week of Lent**  
**11:00 a.m. - Scrutiny Mass**  
**Exodus 17:3-7; Romans 5:1-12, 5-8; John 4:5-42**

Way back in 1888, a man woke up and, as was his usual custom, read the morning paper to catch up on the events of the day. You can imagine his shock to find a story about his own death! More disturbing was the article described him as a man who had become rich coming up with new ways to kill people through his invention of dynamite.

From that morning on, he vowed to dedicate his life to bringing peace to the world. He left all his wealth and estate to fund the Noble prizes. His name was Alfred Noble.

The woman at the well had a similar conversion experience when she met Jesus as she was coming to the well in the hottest part of the day to collect water. And, in much the same way that Noble's life underwent a radical change, when Jesus introduced her to the living water, she left her water jar at the well and went back to the town to tell everyone that she had met the Messiah.

Now here we are in the middle of Lent each of our readings invite us to meet Jesus and receive the Living Water which the presence of God in our lives.

Today there are people all over the world who are making their final preparations to enter the church at the Easter Vigil.

These people, called the elect or candidates, see something in the Church that they were missing. They see something that we have, perhaps that we take for granted, perhaps that we have ceased to regard as precious. They see something that we may not even know we have.

Today we have two members of the elect, those who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil, who will celebrate the first of three scrutinies that are intended to heal what is weak, defective and sinful, and to protect them from evil and give them strength.

After the Easter Vigil, they and the other candidates will be referred to as *neophytes* – those new to faith.

And the ministry of the neophyte is very special because they will remind us of what we have forgotten. They long to come to the table and by their longing, they help us to cherish more what is offered to us, what we already hold in our hands.

They will inspire us with their enthusiasm for the word and their desire just to be one with us, the community of faith. Like the woman at the well, those to whom we have ministered minister to us and bring us to a deeper faith.

Sometimes there are people who come to the Christian community seeking the face of Christ, hoping for that combination of wisdom and compassion so obvious to the Samaritan woman, and sadly, tragically, they don't find it. Why? Because we forget that we are the face, we are the hands, we are the heart of Christ in this world.

So I ask you who are preparing for the Easter sacraments, please show us and remind us of what is precious and how to love and how to live the message of the Gospel.