

**March 18-19, 2017**  
**Third Sunday of Lent**

**Exodus 17:3-7          Romans 5:1-8          John 4:5-42**

\*God is always free to do whatever he wants.

\*God does not need our permission nor our approval to offer his grace to whomever he desires in whatever way he wishes.

\*Grace is not limited to our Catholic sacraments.

\*Grace is NOT reserved for perfect people living perfect lives...because they do NOT exist.

\*Grace is usually present side by side with brokenness and sin.

Jesus' visitation to the town of Sychar in Samaria is a powerful reminder that Jesus/God views the world very differently than do most of us. All too often we get caught up in a CLUB mentality...that in order to be loved by God you need to belong to whatever CLUB (organized religion) is the loudest in promoting itself as the ONLY way. In this weekend's Gospel, Jesus has no qualms in visiting the Samaritan village and engaging the Samaritan woman in conversation....a conversation which planted the seeds of faith which grew far beyond just the one woman. In these turbulent times when a them-versus-us mentality is growing in so many places throughout the world, it is crucial for we who strive to be TRUE disciples of Jesus to be open to seeking and finding God's grace wherever it may dwell....in Catholics....in other Christian Denominations....in Jews...in Muslims....in Buddhists....in Taoists....even, as Pope Francis has taught us, in cynics, agnostics and atheists and especially within those labeled as SINNERS. There is nowhere and no one in which the grace of God cannot dwell....our task is to perceive that grace...even if it may appear challenging to our understandings...and grow in our appreciation of the BIGNESS of an eternal God who asks our help in opening people's minds/souls to the light of his love.

Thank you for sharing these final hours of Winter with our Santa Clara community. With Spring's arrival tomorrow we cross one of the 'triggers' by which the date of Easter is determined: Easter is the First Sunday, following the First Full Moon, following the SPRING Equinox. Please take a Bulletin with you on your way home so that you can keep informed of upcoming opportunities and schedules. Please mark your calendars for our Parish Reconciliation Service on Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup> at 7pm....a great opportunity by which to experience God's grace and mercy ....no matter who you are or where your life has led you! Happy St. Joseph's Day...especially to the Italians among us...may you be blessed with abundant food and festivities....and for those of you who are Italian only by diet, please know that you are loved. FKB