

REFLECTION

3rd Sunday of Lent

March 8, 2026

Exodus 17: 3-7

In this text, we find the Israelites in the midst of a severe crisis. They are in the desert, thirsty since there is no water. And their fear swiftly transforms into anger. So, they complain to Moses: "Why did you ever make us leave Egypt? Was it just to have us die of thirst?"

This is certainly not just about water but about trust. God had already freed them from slavery, parted the Red Sea for their swift crossing, and God had fed them with manna. Yet, at the first sign of hardship, they begin to doubt: "Is the Lord in our midst or not?" This is the same question we occasionally pose in our own desert experiences, especially when prayers go unanswered, illness persists, finances are strained, relationships fail, and ministry seems overwhelming. In such daunting situations, we ask, "Is the Lord in our midst or not?" However, despite their complaints and doubts, God does not desert them. God instructs Moses to strike the rock, and water springs from the rock that was hard, dry, and lifeless.

This reading tells us that it is frequently during the dry seasons in our lives that we uncover our actual source. When our customary support systems fail, we discover whether we rely on ourselves or on God. Let us learn to trust God rather than testing Him in our moments of thirst. When we return to our own Massah and Meribah, may we remember that the Rock (God) still offers living water. For the Lord is present in the Eucharist, in His Word, in the community of believers, and even in the wilderness.