



Marist Province of West Africa

« Sharing is Caring »



LENTEN SOLIDARITY REFLECTIONS :

Third Week of Lent

“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it for me” (Matthew 25:40-45)”

If you wish to support the Marist Solidarity Mission of the Province of West Africa, please contact:

Br Cho Nchang Atzi-nwi

+233256600277 (WhatsApp Number)

chochobr@gmail.com

RISE UP

A LENTEN CALL TO SOLIDARITY

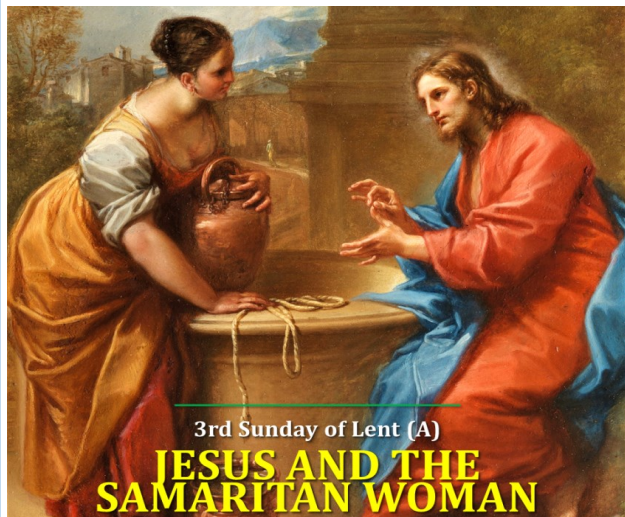
DAY 19: THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

“Theme: Lent, A time of being in Solidarity with others.”

Liturgy - First Reading: Exodus 17:3-7

Second Reading: Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

Gospel: John 4:5-42



In today's Gospel, the dialogue between Jesus and a woman from Samaria is among the most lengthy and most theological found in Scripture. The most startling aspect of the conversation is that it happens at all. Jesus, an observant Jew of that time, was expected to avoid conversation with women in public. The animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans should have prevented the conversation as well. The woman herself alludes to the break from tradition: "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" Yet Jesus not only converses with the woman, he also asks to share her drinking vessel, an action that makes him unclean according to Jewish law.

The initial conversation between Jesus and the woman is better understood if we consider the importance of water, especially in the climate of Israel. At first, the woman understands Jesus' promise of "living water" in a literal sense: "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." With no running water, the daily trip to the well by the women of the community was of paramount importance. The women of the town would have

traveled to the well in the early morning, but this woman came to the well at noon, the hottest time of the day. The timing of her visit is a clear sign that she is an outcast within the Samaritan community. We learn in her conversation with Jesus that she is an outcast because of her "many husbands."

The high point of the conversation is when Jesus reveals himself to her as the Messiah. His answer to the Samaritan woman's questions about worship is meant to predict a time when worshiping in truth and spirit will become the way to worship. After the conversation, the Samaritan woman becomes a disciple. Even though she is an outcast and not a Jew, she returns to her town to lead others to Jesus and to wonder whether she has found the Messiah. The Samaritan townspeople return with her to meet Jesus for themselves, and many are said to come to believe in him.

The significance of the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman has many levels. The first is personal: The woman is herself converted to belief in Jesus as Messiah because he knows her sin but speaks with her just the same. The second is social: Having come to know Jesus as the Messiah, the Samaritan woman becomes an evangelist to her own people.

The third level of the story is educational: Jesus uses his encounter with the Samaritan woman to teach his disciples that God's mercy is without limit. The disciples return from their shopping quite confused to find Jesus talking with a Samaritan, and a woman at that! But the conversion of the Samaritan townspeople is a foretaste of the kind of open community that will be created among those who believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

May God bless us in our every good efforts and endeavours, all the work we do for His greater glory, not only just for the duration of this season of Lent, but continuing on for the rest of our lives. Amen!

DAY 20

MONDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

Liturgy - First Reading: Second Kings 5:1-15

Gospel: Luke 4: 24—30

Theme: Soliarity with the underprivileged



My name is Konan and I am a pupil of class 3 at Centre Scolaire St Marcellin Champagnat Bouaké. I live with my mother and grand mother a few meters away from my school. My mother is not working, and I don't even know the whereabouts of my father. Life has been rather very hard, difficult and challenging for my siblings and I, but God always has his own ways of helping us.

I was enrolled at school by a volunteer called Blanca who came to Ivory Coast for a holiday program organized by the Marist Brothers in collaboration with SED which is a non-governmental organization. She took care of my fees for sometimes and the Marist Brothers in Bouaké have since taken over that responsibility, not only for me but also for my younger brother who is in primary 2.

I am certain that without the benevolence of Blanca and the kind-heartedness of the Marist Brothers I will not have been in the best school in Bouaké because neither my mother or grand mother are able to pay the fees. I am very grateful for the free education that my brother and I are receiving at the moment. I have learning difficulties but there is also a teacher, Mr Omo who is giving me regular lessons at home without any pay. I hope to be a responsible person in society tomorrow and to replicate the kindness which has been show to me. May God send many more kind-hearted persons who can continue to support the under privileged ones in the society.

(Konan—CSSM Champagnat Bouaké)

DAY 21

TUESDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

Liturgy - First Reading: Daniel 3:25, 34-43

Gospel: Luke 18: 21—35

Hello, I am Ricardo, a form two student Lycée-Collège Marie Ke Tal in Koumra. I am 12 years old and I live with my parents but unfortunately, I have just lost my father, so I now live with my mother. I would like to give a small testimony about my school. It is an institution that is filled with generous persons and an amazing level of solidarity between the administration, staff and students.

It was indeed a very difficult, challenging and painful moment when my father passed away on the 10th of January 2023. In fact it is as if it is not real to me but I am really very grateful to all my classmates and staff who paid me a condolence visit after the death of my father. In fact words cant fully express what this gesture of theirs meant to me and my family. My appreciation also goes to the Marist Brothers of the schools who, by their charism and vocation, have contributed to my education. I ask them to accompany me during this difficult moment towards the path of success. Amen.

(Ricardo—Lycée Marie Ke Tal in Koumra)



DAY 22
WEDNESDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT



SOLIDARITY AND SHARING IN ST MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT SCHOOL

Liturgy: Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9

Gospel: Matthew 5:17-19

My name is Anita and I am a student of MCS Buokrom. In the past, I have witnessed firsthand the power of solidarity and sharing. It is something that I believe can make a difference in any individual's life, and it certainly has made a difference in my life. Sharing is caring, and when students share and care for each other, we create a friendly environment that is conducive to learning. By coming together and supporting one another, we make a positive contribution to the school community and build a strong sense of community. One way that my school promotes this sense of community is through student government.

Our school has a student council that consists of elected student representatives. They meet regularly to discuss ways to improve the school environment and create better opportunities for students. In order to help students, develop leadership skills and an understanding of the importance of giving back, our school hosts an annual charity drive such as the Lenten project that I benefited from.

This charity drive allows students to choose a charity to support and collect donations on their behalf. It was a very rewarding experience to be a small part of making such a large contribution to those in need. Another way our school fosters a sense of community is through our unified efforts to raise awareness about issues that impact our students and the community. Last year, my school hosted an assembly focused on career guidance where guest speakers discussed the various career opportunities available to students, including the programs that are available through the Ghana curriculum.

During my time as a junior high student, I have developed a keen appreciation for the sense of community that exists at my school. I know that I am lucky to attend a school where students work together to achieve common goals and create a supportive learning environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging. I am confident that my positive experience at school will be of benefit to me throughout the rest of my life.

(Anita—MCS Burokrom)

DAY 23
THURSDAY OF THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT



Liturgy - First Reading: Jeremiah 7:23-28

Gospel: Luke 11: 14-23

I am Sandrine, a form three-day student of Saint Albert's Comprehensive College, Bafut in the North West Region of Cameroon. When the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon broke out in 2016, I and my entire family were living in Bafut and my father was a teacher. Eventually schools were shut down and things became very difficult for us. However, we stayed on in Bafut and got into farming just to have something to eat. Despite all the difficulties, we stayed on until we had to move out for our own safety. We left Bafut and relocated to Nkwen, one of the neighborhoods of Bamenda town, the headquarters of the North West region. There, my parents did odd jobs just to be able to pay our school fees. Thanks to the intervention of a Marist Brother, we got some support and we were able to survive those tough years. I enrolled in a lay private college in Nkwen. Last academic year, when schools resumed, I began happily until I was diagnosed with appendicitis in December and had to be operated. Some family members, friends as well as the Marist

Brother supported me financially and morally. After the operation and recovery, I resumed school and my teachers and classmates equally offered to help me with the lessons taught when I was not around.

This Academic Year, my father got a job in SACC Bafut and we have since returned to Bafut. It has not been easy after being away for so long. Besides SACC Bafut is no longer what it used to be as many students have relocated due to the anglophone crises. The effects of the crises are still there and life is sometimes tough and challenging but I am grateful for the material and moral support which I continue to receive from the Marist Brothers. This has enabled me to continue my education in SACC Bafut. I remain forever grateful to God and the Brothers for the great spirit of generosity towards those who are undergoing difficulties. It is my prayer that this spirit of solidarity may continue and I pray that someday I will also be in a position to assist other persons in need.

(Sandrine—SACC Bafut)

DAY 17

FRIDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Liturgy - First Reading: Hosea 14:2-10

Gospel: Mark 12:28-34

Theme: Solidarity with the sick

Hello, my name is Aristide and I am a form two student at Lycée-Collège Marie Ke Tal in Koumra. I live in the Bénodjo district and I have been with my father since I was 7 years old. I am really happy to be a student of the Marist Brothers because of the good education that they give to their students and the solidarity which exists in our school.

This spirit of solidarity was manifested when I was ill and did not attend classes for two weeks. A classmate of mine visited me and upon finding out the reason of my absence from school, reported the situation to the school administration. My uncle had travelled for a training and I had not been to the hospital nor taken any medication. As usual, my classmates contributed some money and the Marist Brothers supported as well. They visited me, ensured I went to the hospital and paid for my drugs.

As the saying goes, a healthy individual is indeed a happy person. I was able to resume classes and continue with my education. There are little things indeed in life that we take for granted. The fact that we get up every day in good health is indeed a blessing. The fact that we are surrounded by good persons who love and care for us unconditionally is a greater blessing. May the spirit of solidarity continue to reign in our school and society.

(Aristide Lycée Marie Ke Tal in Koumra)



DAY 18

SATURDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Liturgy-First Reading: 2Samuel 7:4-5,12-14,16

Gospel: Luke 2: 41 - 51

Theme: Solidarity with the sick

My name is Nissi and I am in Form One student in Saint Albert's Comprehensive College, Bafut. I love to be in Saint Albert as It is a mission school built by the Marist Brothers of the Schools with many good values.

One day, I was sick with a high fever and my classmate called the attention of the school nurse. I think that if he hadn't acted swiftly, my health situation will have deteriorated fast. I was carried to the school infirmary where I was able to get medical treatment. This was my an experience of love, care and concern that my classmate Charis, showed to me. We have since become very good friends, helping, and supporting one another.

It may seem I recovered so fast, but the process was rather slow, long and also expensive. In fact after all the treatment I had received, there was a bill to be paid because my health fee was not enough to cover my treatment. This was however sorted by classmates contributed financially and the school administration waved the balance of my health bill.

I came to Saint Albert's College to learn, to study hard and to do well in my exams. I have received more than just that in this beautiful school. The love, care and concern amongst the students as well as the staff and school administration is worth emulating for our society. I hope to pass and make my family proud and one day also become a giver of love, care and concern as a Marist Brother.

(Nissi—SACC Bafut)