

## Exodus 17: 3 – 7

The people are journeying through the desert to the south of modern Israel, whose very name (Negeb) means 'dry', and they are consequently 'tormented by thirst', being forced to encamp where there is no water at all. Their faith in the Lord and in Moses' leadership failed. On this occasion the Lord allows Moses to remedy the situation, but their failure is marked by the two placenames. For us, there are moments when our experience of God appears non-existent in the midst of the trials and tribulations of life. We are spiritually dry. The temptation is to complain and to fall away from the Christian faith because 'it is not working'. At times like this we are not to follow the example of the rebellious Israelites but place our dryness into the hands of God in prayer and trust.

### The Litany

The Litany is a form of prayer consisting of a series of petitions to which the people respond. Pope Gelasius in the fifth century introduced a litany into the Mass of which the Kyrie Eleison alone survives. Two hundred years later the pattern of the Litany for the Western Church throughout the Middle Ages was established under Pope Sergius in form of The Litany of the Saints, and it is from this that the roots of other litanies can be found. Today we are so used to singing or saying Litanies in many different forms that we often take this unique form of prayer for granted. During the Lenten season we are asked to make space in our lives to prepare ourselves to meet Christ anew at the Easter Feast. Perhaps we should take time to pray the Litany one day each week as part of our preparations?

## Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2026 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent Gospel: John 4: 5 – 42



The Christian life begins in Baptism. Through the waters of the Font, we can share in the death and resurrection of Christ. In today's Gospel, Jesus offers living water to the Samaritan woman at the well. He knows her story even better than she does, yet her first reaction is to simply think of his gift in physical terms, that it will be the end of a repetitive and awkward chore of drawing water regularly from the well. Yet the water he gives is the living spring, welling up to eternal life. We cannot live without water, and we cannot truly live without Christ. As Moses in the desert struck the rock and brought forth living water, so Christ, buried in the cave in which his dead body is placed, brings forth the Resurrection life. Through the living water of baptism, we are adopted and forgiven, that we may be fed with the pilgrim's food of the Holy Eucharist.

### From today's Collect

We beseech thee, Almighty God: look upon the hearty desires of thy humble servants, and stretch forth the right hand of thy majesty, to be our defence against all our enemies.