

In the survival component of Naval Aircrew Training, for three days we lived off the land in the high desert outside of San Diego. There wasn't an awful lot of food to eat - bugs, cactus, some desert plants.

Our instructors weren't really concerned whether or not we ate very much. In the classroom portion of our training, we learned that a healthy person can go for as many as eight weeks without food.

On the other hand, we were strongly admonished to NEVER let our canteens run dry. In fact, stationed throughout the survival course were big tanks of water. We were always encouraged to not only drink when we had water, but to keep our canteens topped off when we would set out for the next excursion.

Without water, an average human can live for somewhere between three to five days.

In today's first reading from the Book of Exodus, we hear about the Israelites grumbling in the desert that they have no water. Oddly, this is not the first time they have been in this predicament. The first time they were without water, God's power was shown through Moses and Aaron; and this time as well, God's power provides the water they need.

Throughout the 40 years that Israel wandered in the desert, quite often their first recourse in a difficult situation is to grumble and complain against God and Moses. Despite God's repeated showing of mighty deeds and miracles, it seemed their hearts remained hardened to faith in the God who was actively saving them every day.

In the Gospel, we hear the story of the Samaritan woman at the well. Jesus asks her for a drink, and she engages him in a bit of an argument.

In this story, the woman at the well begins in doubt and grows to faith.

At first she fails to realize (1) who Jesus is, (2) what he is offering her, and (3) how she can get what he's offering.

In the second reading, St. Paul speaks on Faith, Hope, and Love - and how this should not only change our relationship with God in Jesus Christ; but how it should permeate and transform not only our lives and actions ... but our very being.

We too, often miss out on the miracles in our own lives but not recognizing God's presence in our lives, the grace he offers, and how easy it is for us to receive that grace.

Sadly, a person can live their entire life without tapping into the infinite graces poured out on every one of us every moment of our lives. And while that separation from God doesn't affect the material aspects of the physical life. Eternal life without God is NOT pleasant at all; nor is it something that we should wish for ourselves or for anyone.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us pray that we may be more attuned to who Jesus Christ is in our lives - as well as the areas of our lives that we may have blocked Him out of - and the areas of our selves where we desperately need His saving action. Let us recognize the surpassing value of what he offers us through the graces poured out in the power of the Holy Spirit; and the spiritual mechanism of the Sacraments that provides us with infinite quantities of the supernatural virtues of Faith, Hope and Love - the spiritual food and drink we need to transform ourselves from who we are into who we are called to be - daughters and sons of God the Father, redeemed in Jesus Christ, and filled with the living water - the power of the Holy Spirit.