



# CATHOLIC CHURCH of St Ignatius

## A Longing for God

**T**hey were both driven by the same desire, the same driving force that impels everything. Only he steered that longing into fulfillment of his Father's will. She sought to satisfy her yearning in the pursuit of men, in the deception that is purely sexual gratification. Both had a huge thirst. Christ thirsting for her conversion to true understanding of life, she for the God that eluded her.

She was an unlikely, unpromising chance acquaintance. She was a Samaritan from a people who had a long history of enmity towards Jews. She was a woman and a polyandrist one at that. Culture prescribed that they should never meet. But God ignored culture, sin and sex to befriend a well meaning,

lost and lonely stranger.

Moving conversation from water, buckets, mountains and liturgy, slowly the woman was shown what she was really looking for was her true self. She found it in Christ, who showed her everything about herself, and in the process revealed a sympathy for an identification with human desire, human longing for God.

All this is true and genuine evangelization – speaking with a heart that knows the agony of human desire and is not concerned with the tragedy of sinfulness.

May we all learn from this so human scene what it means to bring others to Christ and the Father.

**Fr Gerry Keane, SJ**

## Lived Pain, Fulfilled Pain

**+** Last week, I mentioned I would be sharing personal reflections on pain over the next few weeks of Lent. These usually emerge from the real, felt experiences of life, as is what follows.

Nearing the end of his regency, the young Jesuit receives an invitation to reflect on his experiences in the light of his calling, as he grows hopefully towards deeper spiritual integration.

So I prayed, I recalled, and I felt again. When I began putting the thoughts onto paper and a reflection started to take form, it was pain that emerged as the topic. As I examined how I dealt with these pains, these lines were written...

*“At first I dealt with the pain by trying to overcome it. Then I tried to negotiate through the pain and resolve it.*

*In the low points, I tried to navigate around it, avoiding it. And in earnestness, I even tried to manage the pain by balancing it*

*with the rest of life. Sometimes these attempts worked, sometimes they did not.*

*But as I matured in my spirituality and self-awareness, I began to just live with the pain. In fact, as I allowed my love to grow deeper, I started to live it – I started to live this pain.”*

It was a process I had not noticed, nor planned. It was a sort of spiritual trial-and-error on how to deal with pain, and where the process brought me. From each unsuccessful attempt, I somehow stumbled my way into integrating my pain.

When we live the pain, we open ourselves to its presence in our lives. We embrace it, rather than ignore it, fight it, or attempt to get rid of it. When we manually try to remove pain ourselves, we might cause even more damage, disrupting or deviating the process – or even worse, negating its purpose in the first place.

And we continue living, not just side-by-side with the pain, but the pain becomes part of us. We allow the pain to do its work inside us... transforming us from the inside – the task God has given it.

Anything other than this, we would have prevented the pain from fulfilling its purpose. And prevented ourselves from fulfilling our purpose, our vocations, our destinies.

*“This, in fact, is what you were called to do, because Christ suffered for you and left an example for you to follow the way he took.”* (1Peter 2:21). Pain is a calling, like a seed sown in us. *Seeds agitate the soil they are in.* Pain disturbs us. *Seeds take a lot from the soil.* Pain uses up a lot of our personal resources – physical, emotional, even spiritual. *But seeds transform the soil– they grow into plants if the conditions are right.* As mentioned last week, pain flourishes into love, transforming us – but only if we allow ourselves to truly live it.

Surely, seeds of pain have been sown in each of us already. Do they get to fulfil their purpose... *our calling?* Or do we get stuck on any of the other ways of dealing with pain that our pains remain unfulfilled, never being lived?

**Don Basil Kannangara, SJ**



**Sunday 19 March 2017**

**Third Sunday of Lent**

1st Reading: Exodus 17:3-7

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

Gospel: John 4:5-42

**Monday 20 March**

St Joseph

**Tuesday 21 March**

Liturgy of the day

**Wednesday 22 March**

Liturgy of the day

**Thursday 23 March**

St Turbicus of Montenegro

**Friday 24 March**

Liturgy of the day

**Saturday 25 March**

Liturgy of the day

**Sunday 26 March**

Fourth Sunday of Lent