

# Fourth Sunday of Lent



# Need

*"I thirst."*

John 19:28

## Opening Meditation (a poem written from the perspective of the Trinity)

### Incarnation

We tried in so many ways  
To communicate our love.  
If communication is not  
What you say but  
What people hear,  
Then what we said  
Was warped and wrenched  
Into distancing prescriptions  
That had no heart.

You asked for food.  
We sent manna.  
You asked for drink.  
Water flowed from the rock.  
You asked for directions.  
Moses brought the law.  
And on and on.  
Still you grew  
More distant,  
More deaf,  
More blind.  
Memories dulled.  
Speech slurred.  
Dreams dissolved  
Into wander dust.

And so we did  
What families do  
When confronted with  
calamity.  
We drew straws.  
Shorty lost.  
He came to share  
Your plight,  
Your fight,  
Your night,  
And point you  
Toward tomorrow.

(Michael Moynihan, SJ)<sup>9</sup>



## Thought to Ponder...

What does it mean that God chose to become human, to have our same needs, desires, and temptations?

### Need

For those of us with a more controlling nature, this is perhaps the most difficult limit of being human—having needs. In God choosing to become a person, living, walking, breathing among us, God chose to have needs—all human needs (food, water, shelter, physical activity, etc.). It is a humbling and radical act that God made this choice. In the book *Mere Christianity*,<sup>10</sup> C. S. Lewis writes, “The Eternal Being, who knows everything and who created the whole universe, became not only a man but (before that) a baby, and before that a foetus inside a woman’s body. If you want to get the hang of it, think how you would like to become a slug or a crab.”

In one of Jesus’ final statements on Earth, he said simply, “I thirst,” or in other translations, “I am thirsty.” This points to the full humanity of Jesus, the suffering that God underwent in human form. The implications of this are huge for our theology—believing in the full divinity and full humanity of Jesus. Yet the implications are also significant for our humanity. What does it mean to have needs and live into that reality? It should affect every area of life: how we purchase things, how we consume, how we take, how we eat, and how we share. We should also remember that we have much to share with those who lack much.

As Christians living in an affluent nation like Canada, our stewardship of resources has an impact not only on our families but on systems all around us. Food and water (especially drinkable water) are finite resources globally. Energy is not only finite but has implications for climate change. Even within Canada, food is not a resource that is shared equitably. And there are many communities, especially Indigenous communities that do not have drinkable water. Food bank usage has skyrocketed over the course of the pandemic and throughout the period of inflation we have seen recently. The way we live out our needs in the world matters to our faith. And following a God who gave up God’s own needs for our sake matters to the way we live out our needs.

**Read the Story:** John 19:28-29

### Questions for Reflection

1. Have you ever been in need of something? What was that experience like?
2. How are needs and wants different?
3. What are some major areas of need in the world today? Try to be specific.

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<sup>10</sup> Lewis, C.S. *Mere Christianity*. New York: HarperOne, 1952.







## Practicing Jesus' 7 Last Words

Choose one (or more) of the following activity options to do this week as you consider human needs.

**Needs inventory:** Come up with a list of needs. In the most basic form that would only include food, water, and shelter. But also consider the other *necessities* for daily life today in Canada—access to the internet, phone, transportation, etc. How much of your money is spent on needs versus wants? This is a great opportunity for kids to see how money is used. Think about an area that you spend a lot of extra money on that is not a need. How necessary is this in your life?

**Bike ride:** Take a bike ride (or walk) around your town or city and try to notice the needs in your geographic area. Does your area have a large population without housing? Are kids in need of food? Are those who are houseless in need of warm clothes? Are businesses closing because of rent changes or supply chain issues? Or do you live in a neighbourhood that has no apparent needs? Perhaps there are spiritual needs not being met? Talk about what you notice as a family.

**Movie night:** Find a documentary that talks about need. It could be a movie that talks about how much food we waste in North America, for instance *Just Eat It*, or one about the climate crisis' affect on water, for example *The Last Drop*, by National Geographic. Or choose one on a topic you are interested in that relates to need. Then spend some time discussing your thoughts around need after watching the movie together.

**Plan of action:** Brainstorm some ideas on what you could do in your community to help meet a present need. Then decide on one need in your community that you want to help support and develop a plan of action to meet that need as a household or community. Sometimes children have great ideas on this; let them take the lead!

## Closing Prayer

We pray for those people who are in poverty;  
Help us to learn how to share what we have,  
Until they sense your abundant supply.

We pray for those people who are thirsty;  
Send us to be messengers to share your living words,  
Until they find the source of life, never to be thirsty again.

We appeal for those people who are in hunger;  
Make us to be your bread, broken for others,  
To share and be shared until all are fed.

Amen.

(From *Liturgies from Below*,<sup>11</sup> Make us to be your bread)



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<sup>11</sup> Carvalhoes, Claudio, ed. *Liturgies from Below: Praying with People at the End of the World*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2020. \*This book has dozens of participants from different organizations globally, but the individual prayers are not credited to particular people, they are collective from individuals associated through the Council for World Mission.