



Living Water Flowing from the Heart of Christ

"Not rain again!" I inwardly groan. How often are we annoyed at being caught in the rain without an umbrella? More often we take rain for granted. Yet the next time it rains; listen to the falling rain. Listen the pitter-patter as it strikes the ground; listen as it pelts the windows. ***This is living water, the water of life.***

Water is a powerful image. Most of the gospels begin with the Baptism of Jesus. In John's Gospel the first miracle, or "sign," is the changing of water into wine at the Wedding of Cana. Just recently we heard how Jesus washed the feet of the apostles with water. In each of these water is present; yet in each water has a different function or purpose. What might God be trying to tell us about water and about ourselves?

At the Baptism of Jesus water is the instrument of Jesus' baptism. It was after Jesus had been baptized that the presence of the Holy Spirit was seen in the form of a dove and the voice of the Father was heard saying, *"This is my beloved Son. Listen to him."* Water here is a means of experiencing the very life of the Trinity. Could God be telling us more about the power of water?

At the Wedding of Cana Mary notices that the wine is running short. She mentions it to Jesus who says, ***"My hour has not yet come."*** Mary then turns to the servants and she turns to us and says: ***"Do whatever he tells you."*** The servants then fill the huge jars which usually hold water for foot washing. When they draw the water become wine, the head waiter shockingly states: ***"You've saved the best wine for last!"*** What is going on here? Water becomes wine!

At the Last Supper in John's Gospel no bread or wine is present. No institution of the Eucharist occurs instead John shows us Jesus washing the feet of the apostles. Water again becomes a means of experiencing the very life of the Trinity. Remember when Peter objects to Jesus washing his feet, Jesus tells him: ***"If I do not wash you, you can have no part of me."*** Something is going on here. Something similar to the use of water at the Baptism of Jesus.

To really understand the power of water we need to visit the scene of the Crucifixion. We see Jesus die on the cross. A soldier approaches and opens Jesus' side with a lance to be sure that he is really dead. At that moment blood and water explode from Jesus' pierced side. Why? On a physical level blood and water flow from Jesus' body because he is, in fact, dead. The red blood cells had already begun to separate from the plasma.

On a spiritual level God is trying to tell us something about water and something about us. Water was present at Jesus' baptism; water becomes wine at the Marriage Feast of Cana; Jesus washes the feet of the apostles with water. On the cross at Jesus' death blood and water explode from his side. The key to understanding these images is the last words of Jesus: ***"Go and make disciples of all people, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."***

Are we called to become the waters of Baptism? Are we called to become instruments of others experiencing the very life of the Trinity? Are we called to change? Are we called to allow God to change us as the water became wine? Are we called to be the water of forgiveness, the water that washes away division? Are we called to enter into the very Heart of God and allow his love to explode from us as the blood and water exploded from the pierced side of Jesus? Are we called to be the living water of God?