

Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

In their hit song, “Let Your Love Flow,” the Bellamy Brothers sing: “Just let your love flow like a mountain stream, and let your love grow with the smallest of dreams, and let your love show, and you’ll know what I mean, it’s the season. Let your love fly like a bird on a wing and let your love bind you to all living things, and let your love shine, and you’ll know what I mean, that’s the reason.” I felt like these thought-provoking words naturally flowed into the imagery of our first reading from the Book of Ezekiel. The reading reveals that as the water flowed from the temple, it brought life, growth, abundance, and healing, to everything it touched.

The first thing that came to mind was that Jesus Christ, is our Living Water. The Good News is that His Living Water is always flowing into our hearts and lives “full blast.” That is the only way He knows how to love us. The big catch is there is a valve on our hearts. On a

daily, or moment by moment basis, we freely decide whether that valve is closed, slightly open, halfway open, three-quarters of the way open, or fully open. The extent that we open the valve of our hearts determines the degree that we allow the love, grace, mercy, truth, and salvation of Jesus Christ to come flowing into our hearts and lives. God is a full respecter and protector of our freedom, but His Living Water is always pushing against the valve of our hearts. Always! He does this regardless of the state of our souls, because He is ever eager to come flowing fully into us and bringing His life, growth, abundance, and healing to every part of ourselves and our lives, that we allow Him to touch. This includes the whole spectrum of who we are. Those parts of us that are a radiant light, a grayish hue, or a black darkness.

The second thought that came to mind is that the love of Jesus Christ flows into our lives through the new temple, His Body, His Bride, the Church. Living water can be ours in abundance through our participation in the Mass, in which heaven unites with earth, especially through our reception of Jesus Christ in the

Holy Eucharist. The Eucharist is the ultimate source and summit of our new life, growth, abundance, and healing. Jesus's living water also comes to us in other life-giving ways: the proclamation of the Word of God and breaking it open through the homily; the sacraments, especially the new and more abundant life we receive through Baptism and the sacrament of reconciliation; the Magisterium of the Church that confirms and sustains us in the truth on matters of faith and morality; and the community of believers that support and encourage us in the faith as we journey through life toward our heavenly homeland.

The church is an irreplaceable and necessary channel for the constant flow of Jesus's Living Water into our lives. Contrary to the popular claim in contemporary Christianity, we need both Jesus and the Church. This is true for the reasons I have shared with you, but the most important one is the Eucharist. We can only receive the Eucharist by sharing in the life of the church. This is a big deal because as Jesus Himself proclaimed: "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you

do not have life within you. Whoever eats My Flesh and drinks my Blood has eternal life, and I will raise Him on the last day.”

The final thought that came to mind was that the Living Water of Jesus Christ comes into our lives through people. In the parable of the Sheep and the Goats, Jesus reveals the remarkable reality that He personally identifies Himself with every person. The practical ramification is that His love flows into our lives through others, and his love flows into their lives through us. May we recognize, receive, and celebrate the Living Water of Jesus that daily flows into our lives through people that we know, love, serve, and encounter.

Now it is time to reflect on the more personal, exciting, and challenging dimension of letting the Living Water of Jesus flow through us into the hearts and lives of other people. It would be helpful at this point to recall some key buzzwords from the Bellamy Brothers song: They sing, “Let your love:” “flow,” “grow,” “show,” “fly,” and “shine.” We will be more inspired and motivated to make this a living reality if we also keep in mind their words: “And let your love bind you to all living things.”

From our Catholic Christian perspective, we are all inherently bound together because we share the same Heavenly Father. We are all members of God's family, and sisters and brothers in Christ, even if someone is a non-believer or does not embrace Christianity. We are called to believe this wholeheartedly and actively integrate this perspective into our daily interactions and personal relationships. In this way, we can more fully and faithfully live out the inspiring and challenging prayer of St. Teresa of Avila entitled, "Christ Has No Body:" "Christ has no body but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are eyes with which He looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good. Yours are the hands with which He blesses the world. Christ has no body now on earth but yours."

Are we ready to take up this daily privilege and responsibility? The Living Water of Jesus Christ flows into the hearts and lives of others through our words of kindness and encouragement; our deeds of charity and justice; our invitation to come closer to Christ and the Church in humility and obedience; our prayers,

sufferings, and sacrifices on their behalf; and our inspiring witness of a joyful, fruitful, and faithful life, in Christ. Jesus is able to do this, to the degree, we open the valve of our hearts.

As we prepare to begin the Liturgy of the Eucharist, may we do so with a new or renewed spiritual awareness, that we are about to receive the full flow, the full blast, of Christ's love as we "Take and eat" and "Take and drink." The Eucharist is the supreme form of Living Water that comes down from heaven and brings life, abundance, growth, and healing, to our weary, resilient, and immortal souls.