

(English translation)

January 2002

Word of Life

‘For with you is the fountain of life’ (Psalm 36:9).

... This Word of Scripture tells us something so important and vital that it can be an instrument of reconciliation and communion.

First of all it tells us that there is only one source of life, God. It is from God, from his creative love, that the universe is born and he makes it the home of humankind.

It is God who gives us life with all its gifts. The Psalmist knows the harshness and dryness of the desert and what it means to have a spring of water with all the life that flourishes around it. He could find no better image to sing of creation that springs like a river from the heart of God.

And so a hymn of praise and gratitude wells up from the human heart. This is the first step to take, the first teaching to grasp from the words of the Psalm: to praise and thank God for his work, for the wonders of the cosmos and for human beings fully alive who are his glory and who alone in creation can to say to him:

‘For with you is the fountain of life.’

But it was not enough for the Father’s love to pronounce the Word through whom all things were made. He wanted the Word himself to take on our flesh. God, the one true God, became man in Jesus and brought to earth the spring of life.

The source of every good, of every being and of every happiness came to dwell among us, so that we could have it, so to speak, within hand’s reach. ‘I came,’ says Jesus, ‘that they may have life, and have it abundantly’ (Jn 10:10). He has filled with himself every bit of time and space in our existence. He wanted to stay with us always, so we could recognize him and love him in the most varied guises.

Sometimes we find ourselves thinking, ‘It must have been amazing to live at the time of Jesus!’ Well, his love has invented a way of remaining with us, not simply in one small corner of Palestine, but in all places of the earth. He makes himself present in the Eucharist according to his promise. And there we can go for nourishment to feed and renew our life.

‘For with you is the fountain of life.’

Another source where we can draw the living water of the presence of God is our brother, our sister. Each neighbour who passes by, if we love him or her, especially any in need, cannot be thought of as someone to whom we do good, but as someone who does good to us, because they give us God. In fact, by loving Jesus in our neighbours (I was hungry ... I was thirsty ... I was a stranger ... I was in prison [see Mt 25: 31-40]) we receive in exchange his love and life because he himself, who is in our brothers and sisters, is its source.

Another wellspring rich with water is the presence of God within us. He always speaks to us and it is up to us to listen to his voice, which is our conscience. The more effort we put into loving God and our neighbour, the louder this voice becomes and drowns out all the others. But there is a privileged moment when, as at no other time, we can draw on his presence within us. It is when we pray and try to go into depth in a direct relationship with the one who dwells in the depths of our soul. It is like a deep stream of water that never runs dry, that is always available to us and that can quench our thirst at any time. All we

have to do is to shut out for a moment everything else from our soul and recollect ourselves, and we will find this spring, even in the midst of the driest desert. And we do this to the point of finding that union with him where we are aware that we are no longer alone but together, the two of us: he in me and I in him. And yet, through his gift, we are one like water and the spring, the flower and its seed....

The Word of the Psalm reminds us that God alone is the source of life and therefore the source of full communion, peace and joy. The more we drink from this source and live on the living water that is his Word, the more we will come close to one another and live like brothers and sisters. Then the words that follow in this Psalm will come true: 'in your light we see light,' the light that humanity awaits.