

In fasting: strive to drink “the water that I shall give him» (Joh4 :14)

April, 2, 2024

Fr. Benjamin Al-Moharraqe



In His teachings, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ addresses the human soul which He created out of nothing and in a way that we can comprehend. The Samaritan woman came to the well to get water which means she knew the importance of water.

The Lord addressed her at the level of her nature, offering her the grace and divine gift of living water, in comparison with earthly water, He said to her: *“Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life”* (John 4: 13-14).

Here, the water has two meanings:

Firstly, water is ordinary, physical which only quenches the thirst of the body for a while. The body drinks, then thirsts, and so on. Whoever drinks and runs after the lusts of the world thirsts again because, *“All the rivers run into the sea, Yet the sea is not full; to the place from which the rivers come, There they return again.”* (Ecc 1 :7).

Secondly, water is spiritual and divine as it quenches man's thirst forever, because man is created in the image of God, and only divine grace will fully quench or satisfy him. The soul drinks and quenches no longer feeling thirsty however, asks for more to grow in grace.

Water symbolizes the grace of Holy Spirit, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ says: *“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink, “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water”* (Joh7 :37, 38).

The Book of Revelation says: *“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb”* (Rev 22: 1). The river of water is a sign of the gift of the Holy Spirit that

renews our nature (Titus 3:5). This river of water (Holy Spirit) which is sent from the throne of God (Father) and the Lamb (Son).

Saint John Chrysostom says, “The Bible sometimes calls the grace of the Holy Spirit ‘fire’ and sometimes ‘water’ showing that these names do not describe His essence but His work. For the Holy Spirit is neither visible nor composite, nor can it be composed of various substances”. (Sermons John 1:32).

The Holy Church is blessed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit as it says in the Book of the Song of Songs, “*A garden enclosed [Is] my sister, [my] spouse, A spring shut up, A fountain sealed*” (Sol 4 :12)

“A garden enclosed”: Its resources are from within, and they have no need for anything from the outside. The water of life is from within, therefore, we ought not seek it outside the circle of our hearts. He disperses so we do not need anything else. A fountain that does not decrease, but always in abundant; for the gifts of the Spirit to man are limitless and God does not give the Spirit by measure (John 3 :34).

The Holy Spirit, who quenches the soul, transforms its wilderness into a fruitful paradise and washes away the filth of the soul, “*For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit*” (Jer17 :8). The living waters, which are the "gift of God", when they settle in the soul of man become a living active force, inhabiting the temple of man reviving and renewing him.

We can get this living water: when we first feel the need for it, this is how the Samaritan felt this need, “*Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw*” (John 4:15). Then we confront ourselves with the reality of our lives, what hinders us from getting this water? Just as Jesus did with the Samaritan, who confessed and acknowledged the truth of her matter when He said to her, “for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly” (John 4 :18). Confronting ourselves is the first step to the beginning of a true life with Christ to be satisfied with “*living water.*”

May we be among those whom Christ has been blessed by saying: “*Blessed [are] those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled*” (Matt 5 :6)

Whoever accepts Christ with a sense of spiritual thirst quenches is satisfied with “living water” and even overflows on others and rivers of living water flow from his loins. The Holy Spirit is the only water that quenches the thirst deep within the human heart. The prophet David says, “*My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?*” (Psa 42 :2). This is a cry for life, like the cry of thirsty for water for life. Here God is the life-giving water.