



Allocutio



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Allocutio: Water turned into wine. What does that mean?

In this Year of Faith I hear it as a call to have faith in the ordinariness of life and its trials and to trust that God will transform our everyday plodding lives into something of great worth. I believe that when Jesus came among us, although he did work signs, he was not happy with a mentality which only wanted to see signs and wonders and the spectacular. What he really wanted from us was faith, that we would have faith in Our heavenly Father and to trust that in the everyday struggle of life God was at work. And, by the way, I note that in the last century the Popes have commented on some of the saints they canonised as being people who did the ordinary things of life extraordinarily well.

I believe that God has given us humans the capacity to bear great fruit, in other words to bring about a transformation of human living, be it in our own family circle or at a global and maybe even at a cosmic level. We can be daunted at normal life which at times can seem so mundane and flat - like water. But actually water is more important than wine. And so the ordinary drudge of life is also more important than the highs. What God is saying to us is to have faith in it and stay with our daily efforts and to let faith, hope and charity lead us.

This is God's world. He made it, we are part of it, it belongs to him and we belong to him. He has built his laws and plans into it all and all we need is to have faith in his Creation and how he made it, to search for his laws and will in how to deal with it, and then to do our best. If we do then he will transform it.

Sadly so many people opt out of faith and try to find solutions in life that leave His laws aside. And so our world is full of death and murder, wars and conflicts, betrayal of friendships and spouses and children. And all it ends up in is leaving people wounded with no energy in their bones.

Take the guy who killed all those children in Connecticut. What energy did he suck out of the parents and relatives and many others by what he did? A person commits suicide and does the same to their family and friends and others. We can see the damage being done in Belfast by those who want to riot. Whereas the ways of God, which call for respecting the life of every person including your own, which asks us to even suffer rather than inflict suffering, all this contributes to life and helps people to give their best energies for others.

Much of what God is asking us, to love everyone with respect, to do our work honestly, to cheat no one, to tell the truth, to utterly respect life from its start, all this makes a real contribution to the total good of the human race. There are of course misunderstandings, mistaken expectations, grievances and so on. All of these call for a real effort by way of listening and working to find resolutions. That is part of the struggle of life and it may be compared to water. But if it is done with dedication that perseveres it can lead to good results, eventually to something akin to wine.

God is calling us also to hope. He would say to us: compare what the trials and efforts of life have led to: new medicines, improved hygiene standards, better communication systems. But if



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you do not listen to my laws and obey them the horizon becomes dark with the threat of war and other disasters and even a short glance at history will provide you proof of that.

But God is also saying to us: above all bring love to what you are doing. There is nothing like love to help transform life. Love is the great ingredient to help life and its processes. A huge question of course is what is love? You learn in life that while a pleasant feeling about someone else might help a relationship, that in itself is not love. But to care for others, to respect them, to put their needs before your own, that can be a real sign of love. I don't know what it took Mary to approach Jesus on behalf of the couple who were getting married. But clearly she felt for them and their troubles and didn't want them to be embarrassed. Real love sometimes cares not just for the physical well-being of people but for their deeper feelings. She did not want to see them suffer a blow from the start. And so again she gives us an example of her concern for others just as she had shown for Elizabeth when she learnt of her pregnancy in her old age and went to help her despite her own situation.

In some places wine can be the symbol of love. Perhaps the miracle is saying that in response to the love in her heart, God responded with a sign of his more abundant love. And I do believe that when we have a real love in our hearts God's grace will be joined to that to help bear and even greater abundance of love.

I do appreciate that at those moments of life which are dull or almost lacking in life we might wonder what it is all about and whether it has any value. Like the way we feel about water. But our Lord today is saying to us that every effort of our lives to live according to the ways of faith, hope and charity will be blessed and that when history has ended all our contribution, no matter how small, will have made the difference. It is then we will be welcomed into the eternal mansions and be fed sumptuously in a life which will be like wine compared to the dullness of water.

Amen.

Fr Paul Churchill