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The Taste of Water

It's an honor for me to be here and to enjoy the presence of God among all the friends, brothers and sisters from all over the world. I want to begin with a question, "What is the taste of water?" Everybody drinks water. But can you write down the taste of water? And try to explain it to people? That is our dilemma. We are trying to make what is intangible, tangible. We are trying to place the Spirit of God into a frame, where we tell people, "This is it." We try to make it tangible so we can touch it. And here we need to ask ourselves why we need to do that. I don't have an answer, but I hope that by discussing with you we can find a solution.

When information marries the soul, there is a kind of feeling of a sense of belonging. It becomes knowledge.

When knowledge matures, it becomes a vision.

When vision incarnates it becomes action, and through our activities in life we gain experience.

EXPERIENCE, NOT JUST INFORMATION

And when we share experience, we share life. Then we start to talk about our experience. We start to talk about life. And when people were able to connect with God, and dwell in him (not only knowing him, but dwelling in him), those people were able to have that experience and communicate it to the others. And at that moment they became examples for people. Those are the people that we look up to... I think Brother Roger is one of them. People were able to see in him an example that tells about God, that tells about the life that he lives. So it's not about information: that's the mistake that we always fall into, trying to make information the main thing. But the Christian life is about experiencing the moment of being in God and God being in you. And this is the great feeling that we are always trying to live in.

Since we live in a fast-changing mode of life, a superficial attitude for dealing with things becomes a very clear characteristic of daily living. Our inner senses have been under strong pressure to be trained to the mode of hollowness through the ability to see and not act, to hear and not react. Of course all of you know about that little thing which is called remote control, where from a distance you just push a button and then the scenery is changed, everything is changed. We are able to see something and then, in one simple touch, everything is changed. Our inner senses have been trained all these years to be able to see and not see, to hear and not hear. It's the authority of the age. The power of the age. The dominions that dominate us. And the story of the good Samaritan is, still, a very clear sign for us that we can be revived, and see something else. That I want to see, and react, I want to hear and feel. And this is the point that we are lacking. We are in great need of

making a change in our own style of life. We need to have a counter-training for us, one of indwelling, feeling where we are and who we are.

As we live in a world marked by a great hunger for information that is delivered in a variety of platforms, the message of God is sometimes compromised. People become more dependent on social media and networks to gain information. Experience is becoming less and less something to be gained, and doubts are increasing due to the different interests and directions of those who deliver information. The stories become distorted, and the image of God becomes blurry. "Who is God?" Brother Roger was able to stand firm in these waves of doubts. He was able to advocate reconciliation and minister for the truth. We are not called to be spokespersons for God, but rather be his sons and daughters, to show his image in us. We are called as Christians to advocate for the truth, and biblical truth is the most important in our lives. Biblical truth is the message of belonging to God. It's not only a matter of having information about God. The difference is to dwell in and know him, and then to speak about him.

A MESSAGE OF PEACE FOR ALL

The Gospel truth was never meant to be restricted to any particular ethnic group, culture, or mode of delivery. Instead it is open to the whole universal audience, like we have here and so many others outside in the cities around us. We need to have them also listen to the Word of God. This message has a clear content: love, hope and salvation. And these needs are still valid down to this moment; the whole world needs to see and feel this love, hope, and salvation. We are reminded in John 16:33 that the Christian message in essence is peaceful and can provide healing for the stress, anxiety, and panic of everyday life: "In me you may have peace; in the world you may have tribulations. But be of good cheer: I have overcome the world."

This is the message that every Christian must carry on, to give peace and reconciliation for all. So the message of reconciliation is a duty for every Christian: "Now all things are of God who has reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:18.) It's a duty. It's a responsibility. And this responsibility has to come from our own experience of relationship with God.

The world of the 21st century often presents a certain narrative and understanding of life marked by fear, anxiety, ego-centrism, loneliness, aggression, enmity, and so on.

The Christian responsibility is to present a counter-narrative to this kind of life. It is a style of living that is able to heal the world through understanding the Word of God. The message of forgiveness is one of the most powerful messages that the Christians will always carry. The message of forgiveness will always be the crown of the spiritually profound style of life that communicates the unconditional love of God in us.

WE CAN'T MAKE IT WITHOUT GOD

The world is in need of the Christian message delivered with integrity, love and credibility. And the message of the gospel is entrusted to us, to live it and communicate its meaning to the whole

world. The whole world needs love and acceptance, tenderness and wisdom, in order to help humanity become more human. To be able to humanize our humanity. That means we will not be able to make it without God. Without being united with him, in him, for him, we would never be able to do it. And that is the key issue that I touched upon when I asked you earlier, "What is the taste of water?" Christ is like this jar of water, that we can always look at and be happy with, but we cannot by any means explain what the taste of water is. We may always talk about Christ, but look, we are like this clay vessel. Sometimes we have some water in us, but we can always stand next to him. And then we will say we are with him. Can you explain what kind of relationship that could be? Have you ever tried to communicate with someone from behind a glass screen? Have you ever tried to see and experience that feeling, when you love someone so much, and then there is a glass screen between you. You try to touch the hands, and the hands meet each other, but there is no feeling. We don't feel their pulse, feel the warmth there. We are not in Christ.

And when the water of Christ is not inside us, we try to meet other people. And what happens when we meet? We become two individuals, we have our needs, our ego-centrism. "Yes I will give you something, and you will give me something." We exchange some benefits, even Christmas cards. If I send you one, you will send me one back.

But what about if someone were to give and the other did not respond? What would happen then? We may, as Christians, say, "Yes, go the second mile." It's good to go the second mile, and then I would say, okay, I give you more and more and more. And what if I give you everything and then I'm empty? What do you think that person would do? Becoming empty, searching for love, fishing for love. Sometimes we have to go and buy love. We have to go to the big supermarket of love, and buy some, if we can find it, and sometimes we don't. We have to pay. What kind of payment will we have? We will pay from our values. I have to let go of things. I have to put on a mask that pleases people. And here there is a call for clarity, for truth. Biblical truth tells us, "Take off your mask, you are much more beautiful that way."

And I want to show you how you are much more by putting yourself in Christ. Here [*he gestures to the cup next to the jug*] you are not standing in the jug. I want to put you in. And let us see what will happen to you when you are in Christ [*he puts the cup in the jug of water, and the cup floats*]. Oh, that's great. And you float! You float! You are in Christ, but Christ is not in you. What happened to you? You are still empty. A lot of us who are working on and in the Church, we have Church projects of the Church; we have Church enterprises. God has become a project for us. God has become an enterprise for us.

LET HIM IN!

Come on. Go to the depths. Go in. Open your heart. Let him in. Let him inside you. And here, let me tell you, you just need one little thing: Bow down before the Lord. Bow before the Lord and he will fill you, He will lift you up high. And it's very strange, with just one touch, you will be kneeling down and [*he knocks the cup over so it fills with water and sinks*] you will get in! It's very strange. It's there, he wants you. He will open his arms to you. Just don't stay outside. The only thing I want you to notice here, do you think there is something that happens to you when you are in? Now here, you are in Christ and Christ is in you. The fullness of Christ is in you. What happened to you here? Do you see the difference? You became bigger. You became much more. And much more means you are able to love more than you think you were able to love.

Just one small thing: without him you are not able to forgive. If this person here is full, he will give to the other person. From where? From the Main Source. The Main Source will never be empty. You will give and fill the others. You will fill the whole world with your love and you will never be empty. And that's where we are. This is what we should be. The other will give or not. It doesn't matter. You are full. And when you give, you give from the Main Source. You will acquire a great experience of being in Christ and Christ being in you. And then you become much more. You become bigger. Your mind will become bigger so that you will understand beyond what is tangible. Then you will understand the taste of water; you will understand what it means to live in Christ.

You will, at the same time, have a power in you. God has given authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and to defeat the whole power of the enemies. You will not be afraid anymore. You will change. Something will happen in you and you will become much more. And this "much more" is simply to give you responsibility. If you are in Christ, you will find, yourself, that you are called. We are all called to have responsibility. It is a responsibility to love and communicate love to the others. To communicate forgiveness. To declare it. When the Community of Taizé communicated forgiveness, that was a message to the whole world. The whole world was talking about it. The first day they stood up and gave forgiveness. That's a very important message. If we are not able to do it, then where are we? Where do we stand, in here or floating? [*gesturing to the jug*]

A RESPONSIBILITY FOR SOLIDARITY

We have a responsibility for reconciliation and a responsibility to promote justice for all. A responsibility to stand in solidarity with those who suffer. A responsibility to empower the weak and marginalized. It is our responsibility to show the joy of being in God, to show the tenderness that prayer can create in us, to show the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, to show our identity of being sons and daughters of God. And this is where we have to stand, and it reminds us of what St. Paul has given us in Ephesians 4. This is the effort that all of us would have to show. It's the "effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (I'm reading from Ephesians). "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope." (Ephesians 4:3-4) And we were all called to the one hope. We need to show our identity of being Christians. Whatever we do, whatever we have, this is what we should do. Dwell in Christ, and Christ is in us.

I gave you this analogy, this image, to remind you always. You can use it in your contexts, you can use it when you speak, you can use it with youth, you can use it wherever you like. It's yours, not mine. But please, show the love of God for every person. Be firm, be certain, of the faith you have. This is exactly why monasticism through the ages has been the backbone of the Church. The Church has always been empowered by the faith and certainty of the monastic tradition. I will stop here, and I thank you all for your communication with me, because I have seen that in you. Thank you so much, God bless you.