



January 19, 2014

Second Sunday of Ordinary Time

...*"I saw the Spirit, like a dove flying down out of the sky, making himself at home in him..."* John 1:3
The Message translation

Dear Friends;

A few years ago I put a fountain in my garden. I love the sound of the water. It reminds me of St. Francis' *Canticle of the Sun*. There he invites "Sister Water pure and clear, make music for your Lord to hear." The birds love it also. Each morning I switch it on and fill it with the garden hose. Many times a humming bird will come down on top of the fount where the water bubbles up. One magic morning three beautiful humming birds hovered at the top of the fount. They were at my eye level. And for a moment they just stayed there. I froze and held my breath. I just wanted to take in the wonder of it all.

John the Baptist has just such a moment of wonder. He has been faithfully announcing the coming Reign of God. He has been chosen to announce the coming of the One who will change our world. And when John baptizes Jesus, he sees the Spirit come upon Jesus, like a bird hovering over a fountain. Yet the Spirit does not fly away. Instead the Spirit stays with Jesus.

This is such a gentle image. It is also an image of diligence and patience. John could not make the Spirit or God's anointed one, the Christ, appear. No more than we can make a bird appear at a fountain. All he could do is prepare the right environment then wait. Then when the moment arrives appreciate it in all its wonder.

The wonder of Jesus comes to us if we are patient. He comes to us gently and quietly if we learn to be still. He comes to us if we look for him. But we must create the right environment in our lives and hearts to welcome him.

And when the Christ appears, he does not appear as an eagle or lion. He comes as a lamb, the Lamb of God. In front of the cruelty and violence of this world stands a lamb.

Jean Vanier who founded an international network of communities that work with people who have intellectual disabilities writes:

"What can this lamb do? He will break down the walls of fear, of aggression, of violence, of sin which imprison people in themselves and incite them to seek their own glory. He will liberate in each person a new life of communion with God, with other people and with what is the deepest self, sowing seeds for universal peace...when Jesus comes; he comes not as a spectacular God of power, but as a gentle lamb, the chosen one of God, the Beloved. He comes in a very simple way, opening our hearts to people with a gentle breath of peace, a quiet shaft of light, a gentle kiss."

We are baptized in the Spirit which came to live in Jesus. It is the Spirit that prepares a place for Jesus in our hearts. And when the Lamb of God comes, we must be ready to follow him; not in power but in quiet, gentleness and peace.

Peace,

Fr. Ron