

CHALLENGE: To make room for God at the center of our lives.

God is love & we've been made by love for love:

to be loved

to be loving

Nothing less will Satisfy us!

FIRST READING: God himself speaks:

Come to the water – a symbolic symbol of the Spirit.

Come to me that you may have life.

All else fails to Satisfy – will never be ENOUGH.

not material things

not passing pleasures

not recognition or promotion

NOT EVEN MINISTERIAL SUCCESS.

To make room for God at the center of our lives

requires the DE-CENTERING of ourselves.

Self-centeredness comes naturally and is provoked

by dwelling on the past (the wounds dating back to childhood, the failures etc.)

by uncertainties and fears about the future

by present problems and challenges.

Left to ourselves, the DE-CENTERING OF SELF is impossible.

We need a HIGHER POWER, the power of the HOLY SPIRIT.

In the MIDDLE AGES there was developed what Fr. Robert Barron reminds us

was called THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE depicted in glass or stone or wood.

(Now get the game show out of your minds, Vanna White...)

In the MEDIEVAL WHEEL OF FORTUNE:

1. At the top of the circle is a crowned person, next to whom the word: REGNO – I am reigning.

2. Moving clockwise along the rim there's a person who has LOST HIS CROWN and is TUMBLIN DOWN next to whom there is the word: REGNAVI – I have reigned.
3. At the bottom of the wheel there is a PAUPER, dressed in rags, next to whom the words: SUM SINE REGNO – I am without a kingdom – I have no power.
4. Moving up on the left we come to AN AMBITIOUS PERSON climbing to the top, next to whom the word: REGNABO – I will reign.

WHO IS AT THE CENTER OF THE WHEEL – the still point?

Jesus who in the Gospel just proclaimed stood up and exclaimed:

LET ANYONE WHO THIRSTS COME TO ME & DRINK!

He is the source of LIVING WATER – the HOLY SPIRIT.

The LESSON is obvious:

to avoid being DONE IN by the ups and downs of life

WE MUST MAKE ROOM FOR GOD in Christ by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

AT THE CENTER OF OUR LIVES WE MUST MAKE ROOM FOR GOD.

So centered:

we are FREED from our selfish selves to live

not in the FLESH

but in the SPIRIT

AGAIN & AGAIN we need to pray for and to welcome the gift of the Spirit:

to be centered in love

to be loving

to live in the Spirit & to follow the Spirit's lead

We need a higher power to embrace the way of

LOVE

JOY

PEACE

PATIENCE

KINDNESS

GENEROSITY

FAITHFULNESS

GENTLENESS

SELF-CONTROL.

By LOVE here is meant:

not erotic love/romantic love

not the love of friendship

not the love of affection (e.g. parents for their children)

but AGAPE – love which recognizes the intrinsic dignity of every person

Agape love means that no matter what people may do to us

by way of insult, injury, humiliation,

WE WILL NEVER SEEK ANYTHING BUT THEIR HIGHEST GOOD.

By JOY here is meant:

not the happiness that might come through COMPARISON & COMPETITION

WINNING OVER OTHERS

but the happiness that comes through CONTRIBUTION –

giving oneself to a purpose other/greater than oneself

giving oneself as gift in self-donation & self – oblation.

This joy is a reality of the Spirit and shares in the Spirit's immortality.

PEACE here

does not mean simply the SERENITY enjoyed when there is no conflict
 within us
 around us

but stands for the Hebrew SHALOM which for the Jewish people means
 PERSONAL FULFILLMENT through COMMUNION with God.

Three C's

Commune – shared space

Community – shared principles/values/purpose

Communion – about relationships that transcend time & space

life share with God & each other

in mutual love to the point of mutual indwelling

participants while distance become inseparable

PEACEMAKERS – those who bring personal fulfillment to one another
 through communion with God/communion in love.

Quickly the others:

Patience – from the Latin pater – the capacity to suffer/bear/endure
 in a way that is humanizing.

Kindness & Generosity – goodness – good as gold

- “shirt off one's back

Faithfulness – reliable & trustworthy

Gentleness – tamed to be considerate

Self-control – the discipline required of athletes/athleticism

- God's athletes – hammered & honed

to live the human values of the Gospel.

MAKE ROOM FOR GOD AT THE CENTER OF OUR LIVES

to be loved and to be loving – nothing less will satisfy us.

COME HOLY SPIRIT fill our hearts with the fire of

love, joy, peace, patience, etc.