



After the heat of the day, my wife instructs me to water the thirsty flowers that surround our deck. The water where we live is known to be some of the best water in the valley. But on occasion, I like to give these plants a little bit of a boost by adding miracle grow to the watering can, conforming the water to living water or water with nutrients. This added substance increases the flowers blooms which brings joy to my wife! Happy wife, happy life!

Adding miracle grow to the watering can is easy! And we Americans like big rewards with little effort. I consider us to be the drive-through-remote-control generation. This new found comfort is in contrast with my upbringing of being a paperboy, farm hand and apprentice brick mason! In all that early formation, I learned that with much labor came big rewards.

In the Gospel reading today, Jesus says: *“The one who believeth in Me, even as the Scripture said—rivers of living water shall flow out of his belly.”* [Jn. 7:38] Do I believe enough to have living water flow from my belly? Jesus said: *“If ye love Me, keep My commandments.* [Jn. 14:15] By that measure, I know that I fail keeping His commandments and therefore allow tainted water to flow from my belly, poisoning those around me!

And then there is this church thing, sometimes I focus on my needs instead of coming

to the worship service to serve, and I find ways to criticize others! *“Jesus saith to him the third time, “Simon, son of Jonas, hast thou affection for Me?” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Hast thou affection for Me?” And he said to Him, “Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I have affection for Thee.” He saith to him, “Be feeding My sheep.” [Jn. 21:17]* Again I fail! I water His sheep with tainted water, water that has the stench of sin! And I fail to quench His thirsting fruit because of my polluted selfishness. *“Every tree which produceth not good fruit is cut off and cast into the fire. Then surely by their fruits ye shall fully know them.” [Mt. 7:19-20]* Forgive me a sinner!

On this day we remember the birth of the church. It was a time when people risked their lives for their faith! Saint Chrysostom writes: *“What is this Pentecost? The time when the sickle was able to be put to the harvest and the ingathering of fruits was made.” [Hom. 4, P.G. 60:32 (cols. 41, 42).]* What is our mission? By the example set by Christ, it must be service to others first and then our church will be set on a firm foundation!

Well then, how will the church meet my needs? Our Lord answers this very question: *“For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye need all of these things. But be seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” [Mt. 6:32-33]* The comforter has come to perfect our love! So, how do we love?

Feed My Sheep!