

“Thirsty? Come & Accept!”

“A teacher gave her class of second graders a lesson on the magnet and what it does. The next day in a written test, she included this question: ‘My full name has six letters. The first one is M. I pick up things. What am I?’ When the test papers were turned in, the teacher was astonished to find that almost 50 percent of the students answered the question with the word Mother.” (Traditional)

On this Mother’s Day, millions of Americans celebrate our Mothers and other surrogates for mothers, such as our grandmothers and women, who have provided nurture and love for our children! Today’s Scripture and Sermon Title aid our celebration because they remind us of the great importance of drinking life giving nourishment. The Sermon Title, **“Thirsty? Come & Accept!”**, and the portion of our Reading, which relates to it, give us the opportunity to tie together today’s celebrating with our own response to God’s Invitation shared in Jesus Christ.

For example, on this Mother’s Day, let’s remember one very special way many Mothers provide for the quenching of their babies’ thirst for a life-giving drink is through breast feeding. Even those mothers, who have not breast fed, have put considerable time and energy into providing their babies with vital liquid nourishment. But, making sure one’s child has the liquid required for life does not come to an end when the child no longer breast feeds nor ceases drinking a formula. Indeed, mothers or other care givers continue to care for and help their children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and other loved ones to receive the food and drink they need for a healthy life. Metaphorically, mothers and other care givers also seek to provide access for their children to receive the spiritual food and drink – to enable and encourage them to come into a New Life and Faith Relationship with our Divine Parent.

Another way our Mother’s Day Celebration connects with the Sermon Title is the Mother’s Day Tea – that time after this Worship Celebration when we seek to honor mothers by joining in a Fellowship – Radical Hospitality Event through which our thirst is quenched both physically and spiritually. Our sharing in the food and drink of the Tea’s refreshments brings us together with a focus on mutual support and encouragement – agape love. Further, with the invitation to this event being open to everyone, it may well become another demonstration of God’s Agape Self-Giving and Sacrificial Love for a guest, who has in other settings experienced rejection, instead of this Radical Hospitality and Welcome.

I believe it would be helpful for us to have a fuller understanding of the context out of which our Scripture originated. The Book of Revelation was written for the members of the early Church – the organized community of the followers of Jesus Christ – the

Body of Christ – the Bride of Christ during the time when Imperial Rome oppressed, attacked, and sought to destroy it. The purpose of this prophetic book was to provide hope, encouragement, and faith in the ultimate victory of God’s Agape Love over the Roman Empire and the powers of evil through the Risen and Returned Son of God, Jesus Christ. The promise of the Risen Jesus’ Return is what provided the persecuted Christians with hope and faith that God’s Agape Love would ultimately be victorious! **In verses 12 and 13 we are told, “*Listen!*” says Jesus. *‘I am coming soon! I will bring my rewards with me, to give to each one according to what he has done. I am the first and the last, the beginning and the end.’*”**

Our Divine Parent and the Son of God, Jesus Christ, radically invite us to metaphorically Come Take and Drink the Water of Life – to Accept the New Life in Christ – to Live as citizens of the Kingdom of God – partial now and fulfilled with the Return of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. **In verse 17, we receive this invitation, “*The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come!’ Everyone who hears this must also say, ‘Come!’ Come, whoever is thirsty; accept the Water of Life as a gift, whoever wants it.*”** Sounds reminiscent of Holy Communion, isn’t it! All of this is offered by God’s Grace – the Agape Love of God in the Crucified and Risen Jesus – expressed in the New Life in Christ – through Forgiveness, Healing, Reconciliation, and Radical Hospitality.

In case we need extra encouragement, **verse 20 reports, “*He who gives his testimony to all this says, ‘Yes indeed! I am coming soon!’ So be it. Come, Lord Jesus!*”** So, it is the promise of the Risen Jesus Christ that he will Return one day to usher in the New Heaven and the New Earth of God’s Fulfilled Kingdom!

The final sentence of today’s Scripture, the last verse of the Book of Revelation, verse 21, and the concluding verse of the Bible is “***May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with everyone.***” This verse reminds us the Agape Love of God – Forgiveness, Healing, Reconciliation, and Radical Hospitality is for everyone! In so doing, verse 21 is very much like the verse from which our Sermon Title came, **verse 17, “*Come, whoever is thirsty; accept the Water of Life as a gift, whoever wants it.*”** God’s Agape Love, our New Life in Christ, and our Life in God’s Kingdom – Eternal Life all come as a “gift” – as God’s act of Grace for whoever wants it!

Let us come Thirsty for God’s Grace and Agape Love! Let us Drink this Water of Life in Jesus Christ! And let us Accept God’s Grace and this New Relationship with God based on our Divine Parent’s Agape Love, which was and is demonstrated in our Savior – the Crucified and Risen Son of God, Jesus the Christ. Amen.