

## Lenten Journey with Henri J.M. Nouwen – Reflection 2

### Introductory Bible passage:

Whoever drinks this water will be thirsty again; but no one who drinks the water that I shall give him will ever be thirsty again: the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water, welling up for eternal life. (Jn 4: 14)

### From the writings of Henri J.M. Nouwen:

O Lord, I heard you speak to the Samaritan woman... What words! They are worth many hours, days and weeks of reflection. I will carry them with me in my preparation for Easter. The water that you give turns into a spring. Therefore, I do not have to be stingy with your gift, O Lord. I can freely let the water come from my centre and let anyone who desires drink from it. Perhaps I will even see this spring in myself when others come to it to quench their thirst.

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In the Eucharist God's love is most concretely made present. Jesus has not only become human, he has also become bread and wine in order that, through our own eating and our drinking, God's love might become our own. The great mystery of the Eucharist is that God's love is offered to us not in the abstract, but in a very concrete way; not as a theory, but as food for our daily life. The Eucharist opens the way for us to make God's love our own.

Whenever you receive the body and blood of Jesus in the Eucharist, his love is given to you, the same love that he showed on the cross. When Jesus is hanging nailed to the cross, totally broken and stripped of everything, he still prays for his executioners: 'Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing'. Jesus' love for his enemies knows no bounds. He prays even for those who are putting him to death. It is this, the enemy-loving love of God, that is offered to us in the Eucharist. To forgive our enemies doesn't lie within our power. That is a divine gift. That's why it's so important to make the Eucharist the heart and centre of your life. It's there that you receive the love which empowers you to take the way that Jesus has taken before you: a narrow way, a painful way, but the way that gives you true joy and peace and enables you to make the non-violent love of God visible in this world.

### Prayer:

As a deer yearns  
for running streams  
so I yearn  
for you, my God.

In you is the source of life,  
by your light we see the light.  
(Ps. 42: 1, 36: 9)

(Adapted from *'Show me the Way – Readings for each day of Lent'* by Henri J.M. Nouwen)