



Water is such a commonplace element! It falls abundantly out of the sky; it rises up from the ground; it surrounds us in the sea; it fills our rivers and lakes; and all free of charge! Yet a rich man who is truly thirsty will willingly hand over a sackful of diamonds in return for a

single cup of water. Nothing can live without water. Thirst is tormenting agony. Lack of water means the desert, sterility, death. Yet also, water is dangerous. Even a little can drown us. Too much water out of control can bring devastation and destruction; it can overwhelm even cities.

Holy Scripture frequently takes the image of water as a symbol for all God's blessings and gifts, or, as in Noah's flood, for the chaos that follows man's rejection of him and his law. Our dependence on water is a good and natural image for our total dependence, for everything, on God. We deceive ourselves if we think we can establish our own security apart from God, through our wealth, or power, or technology.

Yet beyond our physical needs and material dependency, we all have a deeper need, and a more radical

dependence. We need God: we need to live in friendship with him, in communion with him. We were made for that: without it we cannot be happy. In Holy Scripture water also stands as a symbol for the satisfying of that need; for the slaking of that thirst; for the strictly supernatural life that comes to us as pure gift, from God alone.

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is a day for us to give thanks to God for all his wonderful gifts. We thank him above all for the gift of his Son our Lord Jesus Christ; for all his redeeming work; for the gift of our baptism into him.

I would like to invite all of us here today to give thanks for our own baptism, whether you can remember it or not. Let us all recall that when we were baptised, we were given a compass bearing which will orientate us to our true North. To Jesus Christ, the Way the Truth and the Life, who will lead us on the right path, and finally lead us home to God. This compass bearing is something many people today are searching for, but find so elusive. Let us recommit ourselves to Christ in whose name we were baptized. With joy let us draw living water from Christ, the well of salvation.