

In a video made to commemorate Catholic Schools for the 2010 Bishop's Charity Ball, about one minute into the video there are three principle individuals. Perhaps most notable is your's truly - myself - with an aspergillum ... the small hand-held broom-like device for sprinkling holy water. Second is an elementary school boy holding an umbrella. And third is his high-school-aged brother standing next to him - outside of the umbrella. In the video, I am dousing the older and younger brothers as only a close-range aspergillum can do.

The purpose of this awkward but somewhat scientific experiment was to demonstrate what we heard in the Letter of James - what could be called the "Faith vs. Works" discussion. Judging from the content of this letter, "Faith vs. Works" has been debated since the earliest days of the Church.

The first thing the younger brother does while holding his umbrella is to tell his brother that he's getting wet. Which is followed by a second round of dousing.

Next the younger brother tells his older brother that Jesus loves him and that God loves him. Followed again by another round of dousing.

Last, the younger brother steps over to his brother covering them both with the umbrella, and the last round of dousing is much less wet for both the older and younger brother.

Living the Christian life requires both Faith - one of the three supernatural virtues received at Baptism; and works - that is actions that demonstrate that Faith is active in the life of the Christian.

Or as St. James says it near the end of this reading:

*For just as a body without a spirit is dead,  
so also faith without works is dead.*

Our own imitation of Jesus Christ requires this two-fold conversion - receiving the spiritual gifts from God that transform who we are; as well as the outward action seen in the works of charity and mercy that one performs according to their state in life as well as their means.

Let us pray to be filled with the life of Christ both spiritually and actually - that we might be both listeners of God's Word as well as do-ers of the Word in our lives.