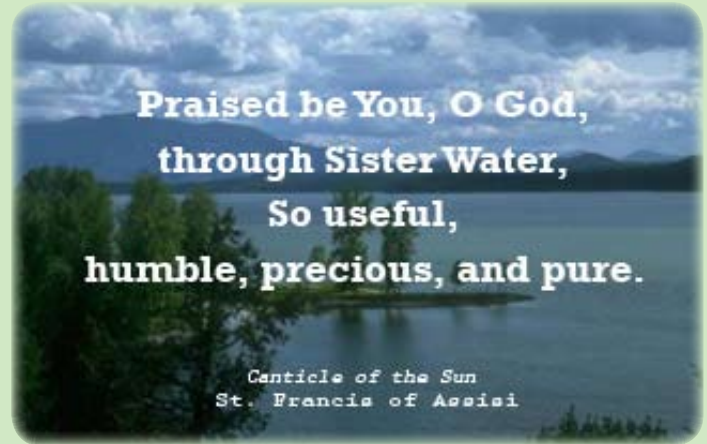


Water: A Gift to Treasure

In Concert
with World Day of Water

Theme Water, which sustains and surrounds all life, is a resource to be celebrated and protected.

Environment If possible, celebrate at the shores of a river or lake. When indoors, arrange space with a circle of chairs and table in the middle. On the table have a clear bowl, a large pitcher of water, and a clear glass for each participant.



Introduction

(Begin by listening to the sounds of water from the lake or river. If indoors, slowly pour the water from the pitcher into the bowl so all can see and hear.)

(Leader) Water, a precious gift that surrounds us and sustains all life, is a resource we too often take for granted. Let us in this time together allow the gift to flow through our beings in appreciation and attention to our respect for this gift.

Let us listen to our Scriptures. (Choose participants to read each Scripture passage.)

Readings

Reader 1

In the beginning...a mighty wind swept over the waters....God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered into a single basin, so that the dry land may appear." And so it happened: the water under the sky was gathered into its basin,...and the basin of the water God called 'the sea.' (Genesis 1)

(All) Praised be You, O God, through Sister Water,
So useful, humble, precious, and pure.
(*"Canticle of the Sun," St. Francis of Assisi*)

Reader 2

...[T]here was the well of which Yahweh said to Moses, "bring the people together, and I will give them water." Then it was that Israel sang this song: "Spring up, O well!" -- So sing to it. (Numbers 21)

(All) Praised be You, O God, through Sister Water,
So useful, humble, precious, and pure.

Reader 3

You visit the earth and water it,
make it abundantly fertile.
God's stream is filled with water;
with it you supply the world with grain.
Thus do you prepare the earth:
you drench plowed furrows,
and level their ridges.
With showers you keep the ground soft,
blessing its young sprouts.
You adorn the year with your bounty;
your paths drip with fruitful rain.
The untilled meadows also drip;
the hills are robed with joy. (Psalm 65)

(All) Praised be You, O God, through Sister Water,
So useful, humble, precious, and pure.

(As the following is read, one person gives each one present a glass, and a second person pours water to fill each glass.)

Reader 4

Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, amen, I say to you, will surely not lose one's reward. (Mark 9:41)

(All) Praised be You, O God, through Sister Water,
So useful, humble, precious, and pure.

Reflection Time

(Leader) You are invited to reflect on the water you hold before you. How does the gift of water bless your life. (Silent time)

(Start around the circle asking each person to speak one line from the following prayer.)

We call you ocean.

We call you sea, gulf, strait, bight,
bay, lagoon, river, falls, creek,
stream, lake, pond, spring.

We call you rain.

We call you pool, puddle, snowflake,
glacier, dew, mist, cove, channel, inlet,
cascade, brook, tributary, bayou, tarn,

H₂O.

We travel your powerful currents
to meet our relations.

We flood our rice fields.

We bathe our children.

We cleanse the dead.

We baptize, we purify, we do ablutions,

We immerse in the mikvah.

We heal with you — Holy Water.

We remember to protect you.

We remember to protect you.

We remember to protect you.

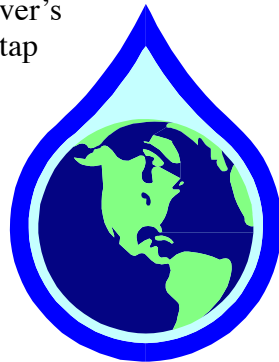
We remember to protect you.

(“prayer to protect water” by *Claudia L'Amoreaux*;
from *World Prayers*)

(Leader) We plan our cities near water; we bathe in water; we play in water; we work with water. Our economies are built on the strength of water transportation — and the products we buy and sell are all partly water, in one way or another. Our daily lives are built on water and shaped by it. Without the water that surrounds us — the humidity of the air, the roughness of the river's current, the flow from the kitchen tap — our lives would be impossible.

In recent decades, water has fallen in our esteem. No longer an element to be revered and protected, it is a consumer product that we have shamefully neglected.

Eighty percent of our bodies are formed of water, and two thirds of the planet's surface is covered by water: water is our culture, our life. (from *World Water Day 2006*)



I invite each of you to take a slow sip from the glass of water you hold. Imagine its origin from the most pure source, refreshing and life-giving.

Taking a second sip, imagine the water coming from a polluted source: repugnant in taste, filled with disease laden bacteria, death-threatening as you drink.

Now turn to the person on your right. Share a few words of your experience in these two sips of water.

Let us now pray for healing of our waters as we remember ways of misuse and neglect.

Litany of Healing

(Alternate Sides)

(Side 1) 1/3 of our rivers, 1/2 of our estuaries, and 1/2 of our lakes are too polluted for fishing or swimming. We pray for those dedicated to restoring the purity of our waters.

(All) O God, send out your life-giving breath upon our waters.

(Side 2) 31 countries suffer from water scarcity. Global consumption of water is growing at more than twice the rate of human population growth. We pray for people who this moment thirst for clean water.

(All) O God, send out your life-giving breath upon our waters.

(Side 1) Freshwater animals are disappearing five times faster than land animals. We pray for wisdom in protecting the gift of animal life in our waters.

(All) O God, send out your life-giving breath upon our waters.

(Side 2) Large amounts of irrigation water are wasted due to evaporation or run-off. By switching from flood irrigation to drip irrigation farmers can reduce water use by as much as 60 percent. We pray for farmers that they are gifted with respect and care for the waters they use.

(All) O God, send out your life-giving breath upon our waters.

(Side 1) Climate scientists believe global warming is likely to cause severe droughts. In North America, global warming could shift the jet stream, making storms miss most of the continent. We pray for wisdom for these scientists, for ourselves, and for our political leaders that necessary actions will be taken to protect our water sources.



(All) O God, send out your life-giving breath upon our waters.

(Side 2) In the 21st century, our water is becoming a commodity. Some want to profit from it and others are ready to go to war over it, but every form of life must have it. We pray for the grace to do our part in becoming educated

and in promoting water conservation, water as a fundamental human right, and water democracy.

(All) O God, send out your life-giving breath upon our waters.



Closing

(Leader) Turn to the person on your left and share one act you do or plan to do toward preserving and protecting our gift of water.

Prayer “The Waters,” *Ohenton Kariwahtekwen -- Iroquois Thanksgiving Address*

(All) We give thanks to all the waters of the world for quenching our thirst and providing us with strength. Water is life. We know its power in many forms — waterfalls and rain, mists and streams, rivers and oceans. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to the spirit of Water.

Ritual

(Play music with water sounds or the song “Come Drink Deep” by *Carolyn McDade, Rain Upon Dry Land*)

(Leader) As we leave, you are invited to come to the table (or lake, if outdoors), pour the water left in your glass into the bowl (or lake) as a sign of your commitment to act for the preservation of our waters.

Dip your hand into the water and bless the one next to you as a prayer of unity and strength in living out this commitment.