



Society of the Holy Child Jesus
AMERICAN PROVINCE

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Water Practices for Lent **2008**

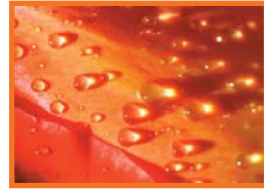
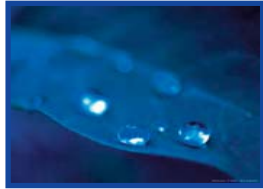
“Praised be my Lord for our Sister Water”
St. Francis of Assisi

In keeping with this year’s focus on water, we asked Terri MacKenzie to revise the water booklet that the American Province used in 2003. This is the new edition, based on selections from each week’s liturgical readings. We suggest you make two-sided copies on tree-free or recycled paper to be used for prayer and reflection during Lent.

Direction 3 Committee

When They Find A Way

POETIC REFLECTION ON WATER FROM THE DIRECTION THREE
COMMITTEE FOR THE SHCJ AMERICAN PROVINCE



When they find a way, they will charge us for rainfall.
Also, a fee for early morning condensation.
Parents
Of impulsive six-year-olds who jump into puddles
Will be severely fined.
The unwashed will habituate to each other's smells.

Sounds of restless water will be faithfully
recorded and safely stored in museums.
For a price, listen to an oar quickly dipped into a stream.
Then the pressured force of water – oh, the water yields to the
movement of the oar, but,
Not silently.
What a sound saved for posterity!
Posterity?
Imagine life forms yet to evolve with no need of water.

If, you can't save water, save memories of water, please.
Not just the sounds, which are infinite,
Memorize her silent depths. Find keepsakes of her sparkling fluidity?
Let your tongue pronounce the quenching, the freshness it easily tasted.
Let your spirit soak in her transparent legacies.
Simplicity. Service. Serenity.
Sacrament.

As water memories flood your soul
Let them quicken and nourish that radical respect you felt as a child:
Dew drops. Raindrops. And squishing socks, if,
You ever stood even one foot in the gutter
As storm waters rushed by.

Remember baths? What floats? What sinks?
Or, The textures of
Bath towels. Dish towels. Paper towels.
Sopping up this treasure.
Or, The clear expression of disbelief:
“That doesn't hold water.”
So, what does hold water? Not, the beaches, not the rivers.
Perry Como never sang:
“Catch the falling rain and put it in your pocket. Save it for a starry day.”

Reverence.

Reverence holds water.
Reverence for each drop.
A reverential heart understands why.
A reverential woman eagerly finds a way.
Reverence.

CATHERINE CALLAGHAN, SHCJ
WITH APOLOGIES TO SAM KEEN: *To A Dancing God*

February 6-9

ASH WEDNESDAY – SATURDAY

“If you ‘go into training’ inwardly, act normal outwardly. Shampoo and comb your hair, brush your teeth, wash your face. . . .” Matthew 6: 17-18

“How Great Thou Art,” S.K.Hine

Planet Earth is 4.5 billion years old; our water (yes, it's the same water) has been here about 3.9 billion years. The average human body is 70% water. Water shapes the land; drives climate and weather; is a vital substance in every living cell of nearly every creature; helps build animal and human communities; shapes politics and policies; provides beauty, majesty, energy, and emotional power; is used in the manufacture of many products; cools and warms us; plays key roles in religious rituals. . . . Scripture contains over 500 references to water. All life that preceded us used the water that is here today; future generations will need this water. Divinity lives and acts in water — Let us rejoice!

Catherine Callaghan's reflection on What Holds Water reminds us of the role of Reverence. Ponder her words. This week and throughout Lent, let us repent the times we have taken water for granted. Let us form habits of wonderment and gratitude for water as we deepen our awareness of its presence in our lives. Pray that reverence for Sister Water will become a hallmark of the American Province and that we'll help others to be nourished from God's wellsprings.

February 10-16

LENT WEEK ONE

“Out of the ground the good God made various trees grow that were delightful to look at and good for food.” Genesis 2: 9

“Canticle of the Sun” (The Heavens Are Singing the Glory of God), M. Haugen

Trees require water to grow, but they also give water. The leaves of an acre of trees can release 8,000 gallons of water into the air in a day! Trees prevent erosion, soak up nutrients before they run into wetlands, and improve the soil. They filter carbon dioxide in our atmosphere and protect biological diversity and endangered species, reduce stress on humans and improve people's moods. Wangari Maathai's 2004 Nobel Peace Prize affirmed that protecting and planting trees contribute to peace. In the US, 100 million trees and 28 billion gallons of water are used for junk mail annually, over half those trees are used for catalogs. The average person in the US receives 40 lb. of unsolicited mail annually; only 22% is recycled.

Visit trees (or plant some!) and thank them for their contributions to your life and to Earth's life systems. Take an action to reduce use of paper made from trees. Examples: substitute cloth for paper napkins and towels; use 100% post-consumer recycled paper or paper from tree-free sources for printer/copy paper, etc. (cf., among many, greenlinepaper.com, livingtreepaper.com, acorndesigns.org, earthloven.com). Get off lists of junk mail (cf. greendimes.com, www.epa.gov/boston/communities/stop_spam.html).

February 17-23

LENT WEEK TWO

“The eyes of God are upon those who stand in awe of the Beloved, upon those who hope for God’s kindness to deliver them from death and keep them alive in time of famine.” Psalm 33: 18 - 19

“The Lord Hears the Cry of the Poor,” John Foley, SJ

Drought and desertification already threaten the livelihood of some 1 billion people in more than 110 countries. Global drought increased 25% in the 1990s, unarguably caused by climate change. Immediate, radical reforms are required to cut emissions that contribute to global warming. The livestock industry accounts for 18% of all greenhouse gas emissions and 9% of CO₂ emissions. It produces more greenhouse gasses than all forms of transportation combined! Animal agriculture is at or near the top of the worldwide list for water usage, water pollution, topsoil loss, air pollution, tropical rainforest destruction, desertification, habitat loss and species extinction

Ask members of Congress, presidential candidates, local and state officials what they are doing to reduce climate change. Learn more about the connection between livestock production and famine, poverty, and drought (Cf. vegsoc.org/environment; UN Food and Agriculture Organization’s *Livestock’s Long Shadow* at fao.org/ag/magazine; Jeremy Rifkin’s *Beyond Beef*). Fasting from meat on Fridays evidently had global benefits no one realized. Why do you think reducing meat consumption is so rarely mentioned as a way to reduce climate change?

February 24-March 1

LENT WEEK THREE

“In their thirst for water, the people grumbled . . . Strike the rock, and the water will flow from it.” Exodus 17: 3 - 7

“Lalolalo - Don’t worry my child,” Our Dear Retreat #15

One in six people in the world does not have drinkable water. About 2.6 billion people do not have water for sanitation. Each day about 4,500 children die because of diarrhea (caused by dirty water) or dehydration (caused by inadequate water). Water use is a pro-life issue! The typical American uses 50 - 70 gallons of water indoors daily; outdoor use (watering lawns and gardens, pools, etc.) brings the statistical total to 151 gallons. (England’s average is c. 45 gallons.) Most people in the United States are not aware of the amount of their direct and indirect (e.g., water used to manufacture goods) water consumption.

Get in the habit of reverently fasting from thoughtless water use. Avoid letting water run or drip without being used for something. Hand-washed dishes needn’t be immersed in water: create a small suds supply and use it for dishwashing; let the rinse water run on dirty dishes to soak them. Your area might have a geo car wash that reduces water used from about 19 gallons to under one gallon per car. Be creative; share ideas. Pray for the children (and their mothers) who will die each day during Lent because of inadequate or dirty water. Each one’s water saving can amount to many gallons each day; multiply that by the people who conserve water. Besides, changing ourselves *does* change all of creation.

March 2-8

LENT WEEK FOUR

*“You bring me to green pastures for rest and lead
me beside still waters renewing my spirit.”*

Psalm 23: 2 - 3

“My Shepherd Is the Lord,” J. Gelineau

“Still waters” are being ruined by pollution. Synthetic chemicals from laundry and dishwashing soaps, chemical pesticides and fertilizers from conventional farming, and chlorine bleaches pollute rivers, lakes, and coastal areas. Phosphates cause large buildups of algae and bacteria that rob water bodies of oxygen, thus choking other life forms. In the Gulf of Mexico where the Mississippi River discharges, the size of the dead zone has more than doubled since 1985 and is now larger than the area of Massachusetts. Polluted water can renew no spirits!

Consider washing clothes and dishes without using harmful chemicals such as phosphates, petroleum, triclosan, or butyl cellosolve. Consider purchasing environmentally friendly products such as Shaklee, Ecover, or Seventh Generation. Lemon juice, borax, white vinegar, and baking soda can be effective cleaning agents. The main benefit of buying organic foods is the reduction of pollution in our water supply. Plan to use more organics products and produce, preferably from local sources. These items might be more expensive, but what is clear, clean water worth? To paraphrase the ad, clear water: priceless!

March 9-15

LENT WEEK FIVE

“And Jesus wept.” John 11: 35

“Come to the Water” (O let all who thirst), J. Foley, SJ

Given the numbers who do not have access to water and the companies that bottle water to sell, given the pollution caused by plastic water bottles and the energy and water used to make them, and given the bottling companies efforts to privatize water, it's not a stretch to imagine Jesus weeping over the use of bottled water (except in emergency situations). About 80% of the 25 billion plastic water bottles manufactured yearly are not recycled. More than 25% of bottled water sold in the US is taken from the same public water systems as tap water. Several cities in the US (Boston, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Salt Lake City) have pledged to stop buying bottled water.

Refillable bottles made from glass, stainless steel, or lined aluminum can be used safely for hot or cold drinks. (Reports conflict about supposedly-refillable plastic bottles, regardless of their numbers.) Water filters can be used to improve tap water, but recycle the filters. Visit www.ThinkOutsideTheBottle.org for seven concise reasons to challenge corporate control of water. Support local efforts/officials in protecting public water systems; oppose privatizing water systems. Thank local politicians for efforts to reduce use of bottled water. Avoiding bottled water has become a nationally recognized issue and might be a relatively easy one in which to involve family, friends, parish, school, and ministry groups.

March 16-22

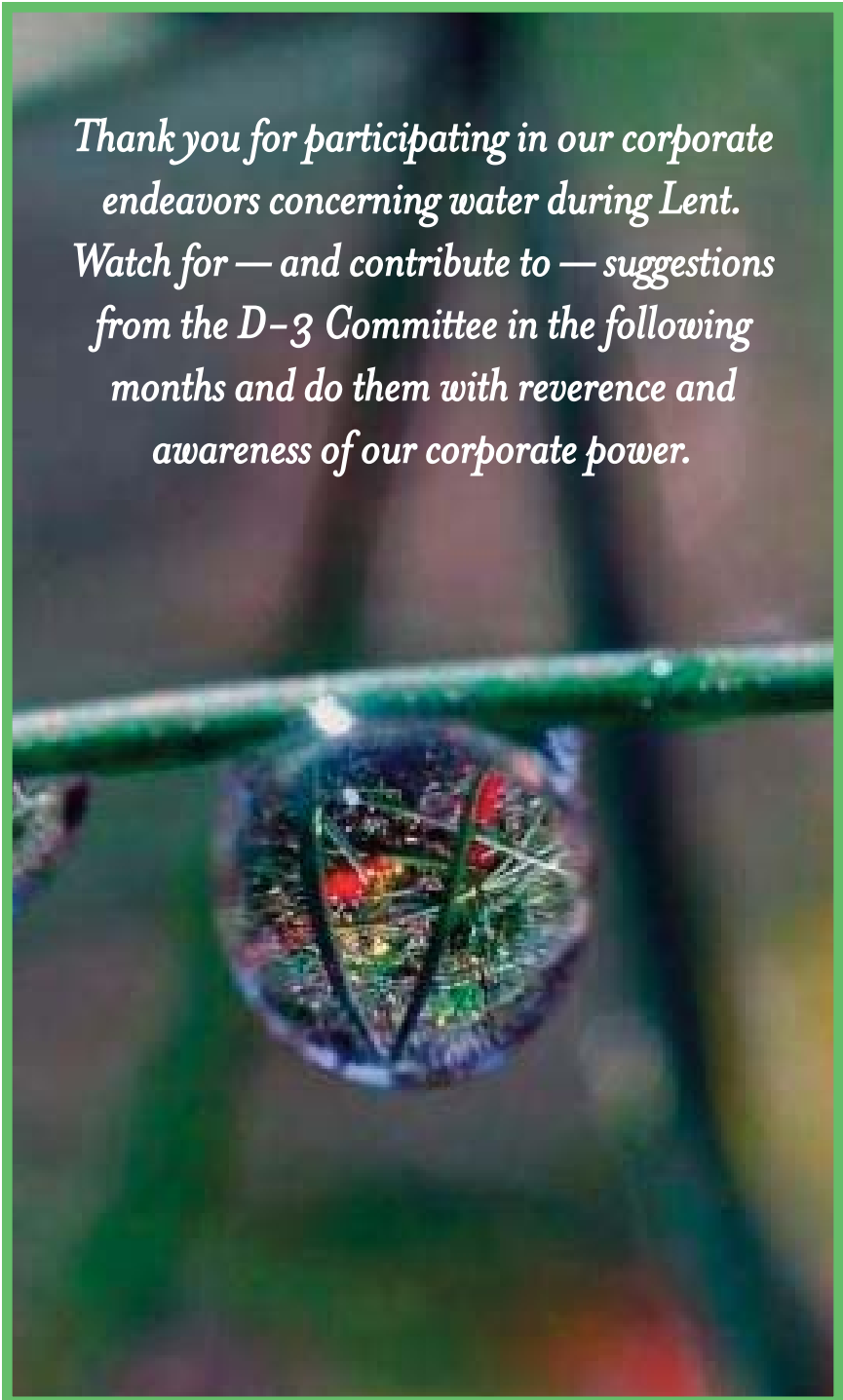
HOLY WEEK

“[Pilate] took a basin of water and washed his hands . . . saying, ‘I’m washing my hands of responsibility . . .’” Matthew 26: 24 (E. Peterson, *The Message*)

“With Joy We Shall Draw Water,” R. Hurd

Someone must accept responsibility for our groundwater and wetlands. Groundwater provides 40% of America’s municipal water supply, is the source of much irrigation water, and is the only water source for most rural Americans. But no national groundwater monitoring system exists in the United States. Lack of wetlands was a major contributor to destruction caused by Katrina. Wetlands mitigate local flooding, preserve water quality, protect species diversity and food chains. One of LCWR’s 2007 Assembly Resolutions was to preserve and renew wetlands and coastlands.

Learn more about wetlands (epa.gov/owow/wetlands). Urge EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson (202-564-4700) to mandate high standards, accurate studies, regular inspections, and honest reporting about the condition of wetlands in the US. Ask members of Congress to support legislation to protect wetlands and coastal regions. Celebrate International Day of Water Holy Saturday. Watch for water references in the liturgy this week. During the blessing of water on Holy Saturday, remember what a blessing Sister Water is to us. Consider her adventures during her billions of years of existence and how the SHCJ might contribute to reverencing and protecting her for future generations. Write an Ode to Water and share it with someone.



Thank you for participating in our corporate endeavors concerning water during Lent. Watch for — and contribute to — suggestions from the D-3 Committee in the following months and do them with reverence and awareness of our corporate power.