

STUDY UNIT 3

Group Facilitator's Guide For the SNJM Associates' Study of the SNJM Corporate Stand on Water is a Human Right

FIRST MEETING

REMINDER: As the facilitator, you are encouraged to “read” your group and make any adjustments to this guide you feel will be beneficial for them. This guide is merely a suggestion for the presentation of the study materials. Of course, it will be helpful to prepare yourself for meetings by reading through the materials ahead of time. Even though the guide suggests that your group read much of the material aloud at meetings, they may gain an even better understanding of the topics of study by also reading the materials ahead of time. You are certainly free to suggest any approach you feel is best for your group. If you have questions or suggestions regarding this guide or the materials, please contact Susan Friesen at susan_friesen66@msn.com.

Introduction: Remind your group that SNJM Associates are learning about the three SNJM Corporate Stands. We've completed study units on immigration and human trafficking, and now we're moving on to the final topic of water as a human right. All three of these stands address important present-day social justice issues, and are directly related to the seven principles of Catholic social teaching.

Prayer: To “set the stage” for the study of water as a human right, ask your group to find the following in their study materials packet:

1 - A Prayer for World Water Day

Divide up the reading parts according to what usually works best for your group.

Begin the study of the SNJM Corporate Stand on water as a human right: Everyone find:

2 - Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary - Educational Material for the Corporate Stand on Water is a Human Right and Public Good

This document is the primary resource for our study of the SNJM Corporate Stand on water. It was produced in 2008, so it may be a bit dated, but it gets right to the heart of the matter of water as an essential human right. Taking turns reading aloud, try to cover the following:

- The first four paragraphs of the letter to Sisters and Associates on the second page (with handwritten signatures on the bottom of the page)
- The notes on the definitions of the more significant terms used in the document on p. 4
- The “Corporate Stand Statement” on pp. 5-7

- The first paragraph of the “See” section on p. 8, then skip to p. 11 to read about “The Great Lakes” and “Oregon”. In the “See” section of the document, Holy Names Sisters share their experiences and the reality of the water issues in the various areas where they live and work.

Encourage your group to read the rest of the “See” section (pp. 8-12) on their own. Ask them to read and reflect on the questions on p. 13. They will have the opportunity to share their reflections at the next meeting.

Closing Prayer: Read the last part of *1 - A Prayer for World Water Day* together again.

SECOND MEETING

Prayer: Begin with:

3 - Water Prayer [has an illustration of a water faucet in the upper right hand corner]

If your group enjoys singing, *Wade in the Water* may be found in the *Today’s Missal Music Issue* or *Breaking Bread* song book.

Point out the prayer resource:

4 - Prayers Related to Water

Encourage your group to use this resource for personal or family prayer.

Continue the study of the SNJM Corporate Stand on water as a human right: Return to the document:

2 - Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary - Educational Material for the Corporate Stand on Water is a Human Right and Public Good

Begin by sharing reflections on the questions on p. 13, then take turns reading:

- The section on “Judge” on pp. 14 and 15. Discuss the reflection questions on p. 16.
- “SNJM Heritage on p. 17
- The section on “Theological Considerations” on pp. 18-20. Discuss the reflection questions on p. 21.

Closure: Repeat the “Closing Prayer” at the end of the *3 - Water Prayer*. If your group wishes, end by singing the refrain of *4 - Wade in the Water* again.

THIRD MEETING

Prayer: Ask your group to find:

4 - Prayers Related to Water

Pray the “Intercessory Prayer” (#5 on p. 3), taking turns reading the “Leader” part, if that works for your group.

Finish the study of the SNJM Corporate Stand on water as a human right: Return to:

2 - Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary - Educational Material for the Corporate Stand on Water is a Human Right and Public Good

Take turns reading:

- The “Act” section on pp. 22-23. Discuss the reflection questions on p. 24.

Point out the resources listed on pp. 25 and 26. However, the list was compiled some time ago, so it is likely outdated. There is an additional short prayer service at the end of the document which may be adapted for personal or family prayer.

Look at the following additional documents and resources in the packet and read any of them aloud, as time permits:

5 - Water=Life Campaign Overview from UNANIMA

Pay particular attention to the last two paragraphs of this document, then take a moment to look at the colorful UNANIMA flyer:

6 - Water/Life

We’ve used materials from UNANIMA in our other study units. UNANIMA International is a non-governmental organization (NGO) advocating on behalf of women and children (particularly those living in poverty), immigrants and refugees, and the environment. Their work takes place primarily at the United Nations headquarters in New York, where they and other members of civil society aim to educate and influence policymakers at the global level. They work in solidarity for systemic change to achieve a more just world. Their membership consists of 17 congregations of Roman Catholic sisters (including SNJMs) whose 17,500 constituents work in 72 countries. They bring their voices, concerns, and experiences as educators, health care providers, social workers, and development workers to the United Nations.

UNANIMA is a word composed of two parts: ANIMA, the feminine principle of life, which animates and gives life; and UN, which, combined with ANIMA, suggests the word unanimous, indicating UNANIMA’s desire to work together in a collegial and harmonious way, like with the UN (United Nations).

Point out:

7 - Water: Continuum of Action from the Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center (IPJC).

This is a list of actions people may consider doing to promote and support the cause of water as a human right. We've used IPJC materials in other study units. IPJC is comprised of both men's and women's religious congregations and is headquartered in Seattle, Washington. They have many free downloadable educational resources available on the website.

8 - USCCB Environmental Justice Program & Catholic Campaign for Human Development

This is a statement from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) on environmental justice issues, including water.

Lastly, look at:

9 - The Spring, 2009 issue of IPJC's Matter of Spirit newsletter

This whole newsletter is devoted to water. If there is time, read the "Think Outside the Bottle" article aloud on p. 5. Abstaining from drinking commercially bottled water is a step everyone can take to protest the commodification of a resource essential for life. "Water's Sacred Meaning" on p. 8 is a very interesting comparison of various cultural and spiritual views on water.

Closure: Go back to:

4 - Prayers Related to Water

Pray "A Blessing" together (#6 on p. 4).

**Packet of Study Materials
For the SNJM Associates Study of the
SNJM Corporate Stand on Water is a Human Right**

Contents, in order:

- 1 - A Prayer for World Water Day*
- 2 - Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary -
Educational Material for the Corporate Stand on Water is
a Human Right and Public Good*
- 3 - Water Prayer*
- 4 - Prayers Related to Water*
- 5 - Water=Life Campaign Overview*
- 6 - Water/Life*
- 7 - Water: Continuum of Action*
- 8 - USCCB Environmental Justice Program & Catholic
Campaign for Human Development*
- 9 - Matter of Spirit*

1 - A Prayer for World Water Day*

In his encyclical, *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis writes, “access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity.”

In recognition of World Water Day, let us lift our voices in prayer for all persons who are on the margins, especially those who do not have access to safe water sources.

We pray for the 663 million people who lack access to safe water.

Plant our hearts near streams of compassion.

We pray for the women and children who spend hours each day walking to collect water.

Plant our hearts near streams of compassion.

We pray for the 800,000 deaths per year attributable to unsafe water supply, poor sanitation and hygiene.

Plant our hearts near streams of compassion.

We pray for a reduction in the 38 billion plastic water bottles that end up in landfills every year.

Plant our hearts near streams of compassion.

We pray for greater accountability and transparency when public water systems are threatened.

Plant our hearts near streams of compassion.

Good and gracious God, we pray for humility to see all the ways we take water for granted. Send Your Spirit to change the hearts of those who use water to create strife and conflict. Have mercy on those who are sick or in need because they cannot access safe water. We are thankful for Your gift of water seen in the beauty of waterfalls, placid lakes, rivers that move people and commerce, oceans full of amazing creatures. Give us guidance on how to be better stewards of a finite resource. We ask all of this in Your name. Amen.



*Officially designated by the United Nations in 1993, and observed annually on March 22.

2 - Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary

Educational Material For the SNJM Corporate Stand



*Water is
a Human Right
and Public Good*

**General Administration
Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary
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telephone: (450) 651-8104 - fax: (450) 651-8636
e-mail: snjmga@yahoo.ca**

March 2008

Dear Sisters and Associates,

For several years our SNJM Justice and Peace Network and our representatives at Development and Peace and UNANIMA International have alerted us to the precarious global situation regarding WATER—a basic life necessity. Our latest Chapter has called us to personal and corporate actions which will slow the devastating effects of global warming.

Consequently, over a year ago the SNJM Justice and Peace Network initiated the consideration of WATER as the focus of a second SNJM Corporate Stand. We now urge you to become fully involved in this education stage of the proposed corporate stand "WATER is a Human Right and Public Good."

The research of the Water Committee shows that a number of factors, including over-consumption, environmental degradation, natural disasters and increasing population, are dangerously and quickly affecting the world's supply of fresh water. According to several noted experts, by 2025 as many as two-thirds of the world's population will be living in conditions of serious water shortage. Already, a child dies every 8 seconds from a disease caused by polluted water. According to authors Maude Barlow and Ted Clarke, the "water industry," the privatization of water, has now become the "blue gold" of the 21st century. They note that the World Bank now regards the water industry as a potential trillion-dollar moneymaker for enterprising investors.

The time is right for us to join with others who have already taken steps to preserve the precious gift of water and to speak out against its exploitation for economic profit. So we encourage you to read and reflect on the contents of this booklet and to set time aside in your province/sector and other groups to educate yourselves and to share with others your reflections and insights on this urgent issue.

We ask that each province/sector follow its own corporate stand process and report the results of its vote/decision process to the CLT by August 31, 2008. If 70% of those who vote in each province/sector assent, the corporate stand, "WATER is a Human Right and a Public Good," will be taken by the Congregation.

At this time, we want to thank especially the members of the Water Committee: Claudette Bastien, Mary Annette Dworshak, Sally Duffy(A), Lise Gagnon, Mimi Maloney, Margy Ames(A), Eugenia Masheane, Mary Medved, Marjorie Moffatt, Carole Strawn and Yvonne Massicotte (chair). These materials and the corporate stand statement involved innumerable hours of research and collaboration and are a testament to their commitment to preserving WATER for all of our sisters and brothers throughout the world.

United in our call to interdependence,

Margaret Kennedy, snjm Lucienne St-Hilaire snjm
Jocelyne Latrille snjm Dolores M. Wehle SNJM

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*The human
community
and the
earth
community
form a single
sacred
community ...
Thomas Berry,
CP*



*Water has
been a
source over so
many years
of erosion of
confidence,
of tension,
of human
rights abuses
... That must
stop if we're
going to
be able to
develop
a climate of
peace.*

*Queen Noor
of Jordan*

Notes to help you better understand a few of the more significant terms used in this document ...

"Human Rights" are those basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled, and usually refer to those rights set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

These rights are often described in two categories: civil and political rights such as the rights to life and liberty, freedom of thought and expression, and equality before the law; also economic, social and cultural rights such as the rights to social security, to work, to equal pay for equal work, to rest and leisure, to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being, to education, and to participate in the cultural life of the community.

"Public Good" is a term used in economics which refers to a product that is non-rival and non-excludable.

This means that consumption of the good by one individual does not reduce the amount of the good available for consumption by others; and no one can be effectively excluded from using that good. A private good, on the other hand, is one in which consumption by one person reduces the amount available for others, at least until more is produced. Two examples of public goods include air and national defense.

"Commodity" (Market Commodity) is technically anything for which there is demand, but which is supplied without qualitative differentiation across a given market. When a product becomes indistinguishable from others like it and consumers buy on price alone, it becomes a commodity.

However, in ordinary language it is used to mean any article of trade or commerce.

Commoditization (or commodification) occurs as goods or services become more common to those who wish to buy them, often because they begin to be produced by many firms. For example, goods that were formerly developed by only one supplier and so carried high returns for market participants have now become commodities, such as generic pharmaceuticals and silicon chips.

Source: Free Dictionary on the Web and Wikipedia as written by Catherine Ferguson, Coordinator of UNANIMA International

Source of water graphic: www.reddeluz.com.ar/aguapura/index.html

Need more information about Water issues?
Contact a member of the **SNJM Water Committee** at
snjmh2o@yahoo.com.

Corporate Stand Statement

Preamble

We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice and a culture of peace. Toward this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life and to future generations.

The Earth Charter www.earthcharter.org

Recognizing that the planet we call home is facing dire threats from human activity, we commit ourselves to provide support for a healthy future for the generations after us. Therefore we will engage in corporate and individual actions ... through: education, personal changes in the way we live and corporate stands on issues related to the earth's future.

Acts of Chapter 2006

Water is the source of all life, and a primary symbol in religious traditions... Without water everything dies... {and yet} today, water is threatened almost everywhere on earth ... The world's fresh water resources are finite, and are now becoming market commodities, no longer public goods. Currently, inadequate access to safe drinking water affects the well being of over one billion people, and 2.4 billion persons lack access to adequate sanitation ... No wonder that for persons living in poverty, water has become, in the broad sense of that concept, a right to life issue ... Such a basic human right as access to water cannot be left to the whims of market forces to deliver.

*The Christian Ecological Imperative,
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops 2003*

As "Women of the New Creation" (Acts 1996, 2001), we stood in solidarity with women and children when we took our first congregational corporate stand against the trafficking of human persons. We are now being invited to take a second and related corporate stand to safeguard water, which is a human right and public good. Both the lack of water and the commercialization of water have significant impact on the economic situation of women, making them more easily victims of human trafficking. From an ecofeminist perspective, it is easy to connect the issue of human trafficking and that of safeguarding water for all creation, because neither human persons nor water are commodities that should be exploited for the benefit of a few. We maintain that just as "Women and children are not for sale," **"Water is not for sale."**

We hope that these resources are stimulating sources of spiritual wisdom and support in our struggle to cherish and protect this sacred earth community, of which we are all a part.



Earth, our home needs us to ensure its survival. Women of the earth we participate in renewing the earth by recognizing our interdependence with all creation.

Acts of General Chapter 2001



*When the
poor and
the needy
seek water,
I will open
rivers on
the bare
heights, and
fountains
in the midst
of valleys;
I will make
the wilderness
a pool of
water, and
the dry land
springs of
water.*

Is. 41:17-18

Rationale

Because we know that:

- Access to clean water in sufficient amounts is absolutely essential for human life and health.
- Freshwater is a limited resource: only 2.5 percent of earth's total water supply is clean enough for human consumption and less than 1 percent of that water is usable in a renewable fashion. *United Nations*
- The world's finite supply of accessible freshwater is so polluted, diverted and depleted that millions of people and other species are deprived of water simply to live and we are witnesses to this in every country where we are living.
- A child dies every 8 seconds from a disease caused by polluted water. *United Nations*
- Lack of access to adequate freshwater increases the likelihood of violent conflict between nations. *"Water Wars" by Vandana Shiva*
- The privatization of water services and the marketing of fresh water for profit typically decrease accessibility of clean, affordable water for impoverished persons and countries.
- Water is explicitly recognized as a human right in the General Comment on the Right to Water adopted by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in November 2002. *United Nations*
- John Paul II and the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace assert that access to safe water is an inalienable human right.
- Benedict XVI and the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace at the Fourth World Water Forum held in 2006 assert that water is an essential element for life. www.vatican.va
- The UN has proclaimed 2005-2015 as the International Decade for Action – Water for Life, the goal being "a greater focus on water-related issues" in an effort to halve the proportion of people who are unable to reach or afford safe drinking water and who do not have access to basic sanitation.

Because we believe that:

- Water is a sacred gift: the lifeblood of earth and rightful inheritance of earth and of all species and inhabitants.
- Water is a public good and all sectors of society should be involved in decision making regarding its protection, management and distribution.
- Catholic Social Teaching and our commitment to the Earth Charter call us to take personal and collective responsibility for safeguarding the world's freshwater and ensuring its equitable distribution.

Statement

We propose the following Corporate Stand:

Water is a Human Right and Public Good

The Sisters and Associates of

the Congregation of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary affirm that:

- o Water is a sacred gift that connects all life.
- o Access to clean water is a basic human right.
- o The value of the earth's freshwater to the common good takes priority over any possible commercial value.
- o Freshwater is a shared legacy, a public trust and a collective responsibility.

Therefore, we support actions and policies that:

1. Ensure universal access to sufficient, affordable, safe water for all people, especially the most vulnerable.
2. Protect freshwater as a sustainable, renewable resource.
3. Implement the objectives of the UN Millennium Goals on water.

We oppose actions and policies that:

1. Endanger the world's supply of freshwater.
2. Deprive humans and other species access to adequate, safe water essential for life.
3. Favor the privatization of water as a commodity to be bought and sold for profit when in reality it is a heritage we all hold in common.

NOTE:

This statement is inspired by the campaign on water launched by Development and Peace and by the corporate stand on water taken by the Sisters of the Holy Cross.



*Gospel women
in solidarity
for liberating
action*

*Acts of General
Chapter 1991*



Ecofeminist theology is an effort to recover values, experiences and commitments in an understanding of the way human beings are connected to the ecosystems.

Ivone Gebara, SND

Educational Materials & Resources

SEE

To "See" the reality of a situation is the important initial step in the process of social analysis. We invited several people across the geographic expanse of our Holy Names congregation to share their experience and the reality of a water issue in their area.

Haiti

Finding water is a heavy duty borne by women ...

It is dark; it is 5 o'clock in the morning, and Sylvia is already on the steep, little mountain road, which leads from her house to the common well, where she is going to fetch water for the family. Like thousands of other women and children in Haiti, Sylvia travels so many kilometres a day for drinking water. Few people in this country have access to drinking water, so most of them have to pay the price.

From our inquiry, we learned that a family of six consumes from 10 to 15 "boquittes" of water (7-gallon containers) every day and one "boquette" weighs 30 pounds. Imagine the work this is for the women and children! Even the smallest child of 5 or 6 carries their 1 gallon bucket of water on their heads while accompanying a big sister or a mother in this daily chore.

In Haiti, water is especially critical because infections and diseases spread by contaminated water represent the main cause of death. In the year 2010, the country will have to import drinking water because of the rivers drying up due to deforestation, as well as to contamination and salinity in the underground water.

Lise Brosseau, SNJM

Brazil

Childhood memories of drought and abundance ...

To go back to my childhood in the "sertao" (semi-arid part of Northeast Brazil) and tell about water in a dry land is to see, even today in the people who lived there, the traces of suffering left on them. Most of the year they live in drought. In those days, there was no truck to bring water; we would go to get water with a donkey to carry it back. I would hear people say, "What a hard life!" or hear the questions, "What are we going to eat tonight?" or "Mom, I'm hungry!"

Since my family was numerous, my older brothers would leave to work in the fields very far from where we lived. My dad would try to trade things and always brought something back to eat. My mom was very creative and clever, and always managed to find a way to give us something to eat.

I prefer to remember the times when there was a lot of water, abundance, and green. I loved to play with the corn cobs, they were my dolls and the corn silk was their hair. I also liked eating watermelon out in the field, helping with the planting and harvesting and, of course, eating the watermelon. I miss these things!

Ilza de Souza Ribeiro, SNJM

Manitoba

Lakes sustain us and our way of life ...

Manitoba has 100,000 lakes, or so our license plate used to read. The largest is Lake Winnipeg, the 10th largest lake in the world. This lake receives water from four Canadian provinces and four U.S. states. More importantly it is home to 5.5 million people and 20 million livestock. This economically valuable lake has annual fisheries valued at \$15 million, annual hydroelectric generation valued at \$580 million and annual recreation and tourism valued at \$100 million. As a result of this prosperity, Lake Winnipeg is suffering from poor water quality caused by increased nutrients (i.e., agricultural run-off, household cleaning products and human and animal waste). These fertilizers cause rapid growth of blue-green algae, which causes thick noxious smelly mats of algae to form at the surface. These algal blooms are not only offensive to the senses, but can suffocate fish by reducing oxygen in the water. Blue-green algae can also produce toxins, which can kill animals that consume algal cells when drinking surface water. Some of these toxins can also build up in the flesh of fish and may harm people who consume them.

Perhaps it is the sheer abundance of water in Canada that blinds us to the perils of treating our surface waters as toilets. On some rivers in Europe drinking water intake pipes must be located downstream of effluent outflow from sewage treatment plants. This practice forces people to carefully consider what they dump in water, and who receives water downstream.

I remember an aboriginal fisher in a remote northern Manitoba community telling me that pure water has real value even if it hasn't turned a hydroelectric turbine or produced a single dollar of revenue. To Canadian aboriginal people water is revered as sacred to life and must be treated with respect.

We could all learn to respect the gift of water and reverse the practice of using "dilution as the solution to pollution."

*Robert Fudge, Winnipeg Fisheries Biologist,
husband of Joy Beauchamp, SNJMA*

Lesotho

Water is key to our survival ...

The government has been tirelessly preaching that one of its priorities is access to drinking water for all. To a larger scale, the objective was reached and promises kept. As a result many villagers in the mountains now have a source of drinking water a stone's throw from their house. What a relieving achievement! Without bringing water close to home, people, especially women and girls have to travel many kilometres to fetch water.

Yet despite all this, water demand continues to grow at an alarming rate. This summer the situation is even worse because of the drought. In the past there was barely enough water but now there is hardly any at all. Vegetables wither and die. Farmers are not able to cultivate their land. What to do now?

Nothing on earth is more important to our survival than the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the water we drink. These life-sustaining essentials are being either contaminated or whittled away by humans themselves.

We do not know what will happen. Well water shortage in our country is a result of drought and environmental pollution, especially in the southern districts of the country. If environmental pollution continues, then let us wait for the worst. But if drought is our plight, we can conclude that water for all is not just a mere dream.

Caswell Tlali.

Submitted by Bathilda Heqoa, SNJM



*We are called
to assist
the Earth,
to heal her
wounds and
in the process
heal our own.*

*Wangari Maathai,
African
environmentalist
and Nobel Peace
Prize winner,
2005*



*Water is a
finite resource
... Hence,
many wars
are predicted
before it
becomes
scarce.*

*Organization:
Women &
Society*

Florida

Draining of wetlands and pollution threaten water supply ...

In Florida, a mild climate and extensive coastlands attract an increase of 300,000 residents each year. Land development and the demand for potable water create problems that are compounded as a result of bad decisions from the past. Also, because Florida's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has failed to implement proper regulations, business industry and agriculture continue to pollute our water sources.

Florida has 50,000 miles of rivers and streams and 7,800 lakes. One-third to one-half of the state's area was originally covered by wetlands, but the draining of the Everglades for agricultural and real estate development in the early part of the last century changed the face of Florida. It now lacks these vast wetlands whose evaporation helped produce rainfall. Florida nevertheless has an average of 50-55 inches of rain annually, but the vigorous sunshine at its low latitudes evaporates 30-45 inches of it.

Water, which does not evapotranspire, enters the aquifers. The superficial and intermediate aquifers contain chlorides and sulfates, which make the water unusable. The deep Florida Aquifer is therefore the best source of water, but in the south it is capped by layers of clay, which make its replenishment difficult, especially along the Gulf Coast, where most of drinking water must come from wells.

Every part of the state has its polluters. Near Panama City, a landfill owned by an Alabama company has been depositing aluminum and asbestos, unchecked by the DEP. In central Florida, phosphate mining is contaminating the waters. In the south, the runoff from the dairy and cattle industries adds to the problem. The paving of large surfaces in metropolitan areas also serves to pollute the waters that flow into streams and bays.

Theresa Cecilia Lowe, SNJM

Peru

Preserving water calls us to resist ...

Tambogrande is Peru's lemon capital. The hills in the region are covered with lemon trees, along with mango and other fruit trees. Our cultural identity is tied to the water and the land. When the Canadian company, Manhattan Minerals, wanted to dig an open-pit gold mine and relocate 8,000 persons there was a huge resistance. The mining company said it was a form of sustainable development. How can you say it is sustainable when minerals run out? Agriculture, on the other hand, can be sustainable activity, recalls Liliane Alzamora, of the Tambogrande Defense Front. "It takes lemons and water to make lemonade."

A five-year struggle began with the people organizing picket lines, prayer vigils, ways of putting pressure on stockholders and engaging in symbolic actions. A public referendum, supported by Development and Peace and other organizations, was held. Ninety-four percent of those who participated said "NO" to the mine. As a result, the Canadian company's stock fell by 28%. In the end the government canceled the proposal.

The people of Tambogrande are now trying to develop a sustainable economy. There are still many challenges because as usual, small groups, families and individuals come in to mine for gold, without following any regulations. These small enterprises cause much damage to the environment and to workers. Without constant vigilance, the situation can become worse than ever.

*Yenny Chipana Lima, SNJM candidate
based on an article by Development & Peace*

Great Lakes

World's largest reservoir of fresh water in danger ...

When we, in this part of North America, read or hear about problems caused by lack of water we have a difficult time imagining a life without an abundance of this precious resource. In the past three years or so, water has been emerging as a hot topic in the Great Lakes Basin. It seems we may be at risk of pulling the plug on the world's largest reservoir of fresh water. Only about one percent of this fresh water is renewed each year from precipitation and other in-flows.

There are plenty of laws and charters on both sides of the Great Lakes border preventing the diversion of their water. However, under the supposedly watchful eye of the body charged with the protection of the lakes, the International Joint Commission (IJC), a new body called the Council of Great Lakes Governors and Premiers has developed a plan for diversions. The plan would allow large-scale water exports from the Great Lakes to parched areas of the densely populated United States. The fear is that places like Chicago, if they were to fully utilize their canal systems, could lower the Great Lakes by up to six inches a year. Withdrawing huge amounts of water will undoubtedly cause the water levels to plunge. This would also affect the shipping channels of the St. Lawrence Seaway. Water is the foundation of agriculture and is critically important to industrial activity. This water supply is finite and is indeed already shrinking.

What can we do to prevent huge businesses and large populations from putting their straws into this supply of water? Let us continue to say "NO" to bulk water diversions from the Great Lakes.

Helen Petrimoulx, SNJM

Oregon

Water is a sacred heritage ...

Yesterday I pulled off the road, crossed the railroad tracks, and parked. I rolled my window down and heard nothing, only the occasional song of tires on the freeway. As I crossed the grass and moved closer, nothing sounded. The River is silent; she no longer calls our names as she moves quietly on to the ocean. Closing my eyes, I can hear her thunderous fall from basalt to basalt, from wooden platform to wooden platform. My uncles are still here – John, Gus, Norman, Fred – along with cousins, wives, children, Grandma and Grandpa. As in the photo I have at home, they are lined up, Chinooks in hand, with the basalt, the wooden platforms, the spray and foam from the water, filling the background. The River calls to them, shows off her salmon leaping, twisting and teasing them to catch them if they can. And for years, my uncles did catch them, feeding all of our family.

Then I open my eyes and see the broad, quietly moving water. In the distance, the "damn dam," blocks, funnels, harvesting, not the salmon, but the power, the energy, of her depths as she "falls" over and over for them, for us, who use the electricity she generates. In recent times, some of the dams, the smaller ones, have been removed, allowing the fish to move more easily between birth site and ocean and back again, honoring the rhythm of life. But this is too late for my uncles and cousins. For them the basalt was flooded over, the fishing platforms were washed away. Food no longer came to us from the River. Only John got a boat, fishing the tamed river, but no longer able to provide "real food," salmon, for his family. The River is silent. Fourteen dams control her spirit, the free movement of her waters. Who will speak for the River today? Those who remember her unfettered voice are few.

Sue Woodruff, SNJM



*The Earth does
not belong to
us; we belong
to the Earth.*

Chief Seattle



*Among Arab
Muslims,
the best you
can wish for
someone is,
'God give you
water.'*

*Muhammad
bin Abdulaziz*

Québec

The struggle against privatization of water ...

In Quebec, we have large reserves of drinking water, with our lakes, our rivers and our St. Lawrence River, which travels over 3,000 kilometres: these sources of fresh water are envied by many speculators.

With the Water Safety Coalition, we are able to follow closely the issue of privatization of our water. For example, law 134, voted in Quebec in 2005, created the Public-Private Partnership Agency, which entrusts to a private company the design, construction, financing and/or management of public services for several years. Thus, any local municipality can entrust its system of aqueducts, or sewers or its other means of supplying or of purifying water to a development company.

The presence of the private sector always implies a profit. Private profit always has a social cost, that is, it is the citizens who pay for it in the prices imposed on them. Furthermore, the private sector usually puts up the money at rates that are higher than those which public institutions, cities or governments can obtain.

In Montréal, the cities of Westmount and Côte Saint Luc implemented law 134.

Claudette Bastien, SNJM

Vietnam

Bearing others in mind when building dams ...

According to Maryknoll's magazine "World Watch" (2007), China is planning on building 15 more dams on the Mekong River by 2020, thus affecting fisheries, agriculture, transportation, and water quality. China did not consult its downstream neighbors about these plans.

Building dams for electricity is necessary. There are lots of things that can't be done without electricity. However, our water is not only for producing electricity but also for our daily activities. Thus any government that wants to build dams should consider the impact of that on the surrounding countries and on the people living by the river.

A Sister in the Lovers of the Holy Cross community from Hue, Vietnam, wrote this observation. The Sister shared these words during her English conversation class that I taught in Vietnam during the summer of 2007.

Mary Annette Dworshak, SNJM

Personal Reflection Questions

- 1) Do you have a water-related memory or experience that has helped you to understand how essential water is to life?
- 2) What water issue in your area relates to one of the stories in this section?



Wonder and awe lead to reverence and reverence leads to responsibility. Reverence for and responsibility to the natural world are intimately connected to each other and to authentic religious experience.

*Heather Eaton,
Canadian
theologian*



*No problem
can be
solved from
the same con-
sciousness
that created
it. We must
learn to see
the world
anew.*

*Margaret
Wheatley,
U.S.,
leadership
visionary*

JUDGE

Principles

Development and Peace is one of the non-governmental organizations with whom the SNJM congregation is affiliated. The following six principles serve as the foundation for Development and Peace's efforts to educate and advocate for sustainable development on planet Earth. We have herein included a case study for each principle attesting to the fact that the growing global water crisis is not just a natural disaster. It is also a result of the undesirable effects of a development model based on economic principles that ignore environmental concerns.

PRINCIPLE 1: The Earth is sacred. All life is interconnected and interdependent. Therefore, the Earth's ecological diversity, beauty and health must be protected.

"When drought dries out the seeds in the fields, it brings famine and ruin to the peasant farmers. For Third World women, water scarcity means traveling longer distances in search of water. In Africa and Asia, this can mean carrying heavy vessels an average of 6 km (3.7 miles) per day. There is simply no substitute for this precious liquid, necessary for the biological survival of plants and animals," says Vandana Shiva, renowned environmental researcher and activist. "Our plants, our animals and even our children are in danger because of polluted water," adds Priscilla Achakpa, director of the Women's Environmental Program in Nigeria.

PRINCIPLE 2: The Earth's resources must be shared by peaceful means in an equitable manner that allows current and future generations to meet their needs.

There is a myth that the private sector is a better manager of the Earth's resources. In France, the country where water services are mostly privatized, corruption, fraud and over-billing are just some of the accusations leveled at Suez and Vivendi, multinational water companies. And guess what? Public sector management of water works. In Brazil, 25 of 27 state capitals are served by public water utilities. The residents of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, enjoy excellent water from their efficient publicly operated system, according to Maude Barlow, co-author of *Blue Gold – The Fight to Stop the Corporate Theft of Water*.

PRINCIPLE 3: All people have the right to participate fully and have control over decisions that affect their lives and communities.

The Quebec NGO, Terre sans Frontières (Land Without Borders), works with the people of sub-Saharan African countries to help them have access to drinking water. It accompanies and counsels the villagers while at the same time providing the money necessary for the realization of the project. Terre sans Frontières worked with a Masais tribe of about 15,000 people. "They wished to build a watering place in their village situated in the desert. Finally, by working together, we succeeded in finding water in a mountain about 20 kilometres from there, and we sent the water to the village," indicates Sister Céline Tremblay, the person in charge of the project for East Africa at Terre sans Frontières. "They began building houses near the watering place, whereas before there were simply none there. The arrival of water in the village also led the people to want to construct a mill to make the women's work easier. The Masais also began to plant trees and to do gardening. It was practically a new life which began for these people, and we would never have been able to impose this change," continues Sister Céline.

PRINCIPLE 4: In the interest of solidarity and promotion of the common good, decisions made for the benefit of one community must not violate the rights of other communities.

"Water services" is the general term for the structures and management that make water available to a community. Genuine community participation is key to good water management and democratic decision making. The community that needs the water participates in its management, helping to balance competing needs in the community. It also creates the accountability and pressure needed to keep public water utilities up to standard, and to ensure that government funds public water services, according to Development and Peace.

WaterPartners International, www.water.org, a non-governmental organization, assists many communities with developing water projects and then organizing local water committees to oversee the projects and to educate the broader community about health and hygiene. In one such community – Asgram, Ethiopia – one water committee member, Tigist Sintayeh, reports, "We have had many development efforts in our community in the past; however, I believe this one will work because this is the first time we are seeing that the community is truly involved. And it is us who are in place to solve the problems ourselves. This is new to us and very effective."

PRINCIPLE 5: The value of natural resources for the common good has priority over its commercial value.

The privatization of water is an enormous issue all over the world. Predictions are that by the year 2025, two-thirds of the world's population will not have access to sufficient drinking water. Many multinational companies, especially Suez and Vivendi in France and Bechtel in United States, see this "crisis" for humanity as an economic opportunity. The first big "water war" of the 21st century took place in Bolivia when the World Bank refused to renew a \$25 million loan unless water services were privatized. After the public water utility in the city of Cochabamba was sold to Bechtel, water rates were immediately increased. "What we pay for water comes out of what we have to pay for food, clothes and the other things we need to buy for our four children," said a mother. Her water bill went from \$7.50 to \$30. That money could feed her family for 10 days. The people of Cochabamba protested in massive street demonstrations for days, which eventually led to a general strike that shut down the city's economy and Bechtel was forced to leave the country. As this is being written, Bechtel is suing the government of Bolivia for \$25 million in the World Trade Organization's court, which conducts business in secret, without transparency before the public. (This was reported by the Ecology Working Group of the Justice, Peace and Integration of Creation Committee for the Union of General Superiors in Rome, Italy.)

PRINCIPLE 6: In the extraction, management, and use of resources, human rights must be respected. Preference must be given to the rights of indigenous peoples and those who are marginalized by poverty or because of race and gender.

The environment is part of us. "Communities working together realize many benefits when the environment is sustained in healthy ways. Now fewer trees are cut in the village. There is water, no more contamination and little disease. Species of trees and birds have reappeared. All of these benefits are synonymous with dignity and identity," explains Dona Maria to the 25 people who have come to discuss Cierro del Sur, a project of a mining company that has just bought a nearby mountain to operate a gold mine. Dona Maria and her community want to block this project from happening. She says, "We are proud of our community and we have to protect the environment in its entirety."



*May the wise
person live in
her village
like the
bee collects
the nectar,
without
destroying
the flower in
its color and
perfume.*

*Pali Canon,
500 BCE*



Personal Reflection Questions

- 1) How do these 6 principles resonate with your vision for planet earth and all of creation?
- 2) What do you think of this worldwide movement to privatize water and treat water as a commodity – rather than a public good?

*When rivers
are sick,
so are we.
When they
are being
healed so
are we.*

*"Living
Waters,"
United Church
of Canada*

SNJM Heritage

Our Foundress, Eulalie Durocher, and Water

Two magnificent waterways carried the dreams and the life of Eulalie Durocher: the Richelieu River and the Saint Lawrence River. As a child and as a young woman, Eulalie was filled with wonder at the beautiful river which danced under the blue sky and flowed peacefully, dressed in its myriad of colors in the setting sun. She also marveled at this water that gave life to all the farms it caressed as it passed by.

Transplanted to Longueuil, Eulalie, who had become Mother Marie-Rose, was happy to find herself on the banks of the mighty St. Lawrence River. The countryside, which she admired there, had grown in splendor and strength. She would see that her work of education would prepare youth to respect water when they used it every day in gardening, in growing flowers.

These two waterways inspired Eulalie's mission: to moisten, to quench thirst, to beautify, to heal. Like water, grace gave life to Eulalie's apostolic projects, which finally attained their crowning achievement in Longueuil.

Water spoke to Eulalie, not only of physical life, but also of spiritual life, when in her mission she referred to Baptism, to the Word of God, etc. What a joy it was for Eulalie to meet the expectations of people thirsting for life in their bodies and in their hearts!

Yolande Laberge, SNJM

Our SNJM Commitment and Inspiration

Charism Statement:

In fidelity to the spirit of our Foundress, we are a community of women religious consecrated to God in the Names of Jesus and Mary, who desire to proclaim by our lives the primacy of the love of God. Moved by an active love, we collaborate in the Church's education in the faith, and with a special concern for the poor and disadvantaged.

Education in the faith demands of us active involvement in the promotion of justice. In this spirit and according to the teachings of the Church, our educational endeavors have a special concern for the poor and disadvantaged. We are challenged by the Gospel and by the needs of society to unite our efforts with those around us to attain for all people conditions of life more equitable and more worthy of human dignity.

Constitutions #13,14

In the face of continuing acts of violence against the earth and among people, we seek to intensify our efforts: **to care for our environment**, to eradicate trafficking in women and children, and to build faith communities while maintaining a prophetic voice in the Church. As women of contemplation in action, we encourage and mentor those who wish to share our ministry and charism.

Acts of Chapter 2006

Faced with situations of injustice, violence and exclusion, we will seek courage in the names of Jesus and Mary ... **to use our influence by taking corporate stands for systemic change.**

Acts of Chapter 2001



*Drink only
enough of
this watery
theology to
ease dry and
thirsting
souls.*

Sally McFague



Woven into
our lives is
the very fire
from the
stars and
the genes
from the sea
creatures,
and
everyone,
utterly
everyone,
is kin in
the radiant
tapestry of
being.

Elizabeth
Johnson,
CSJ

Theological Considerations

Scripture

And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the fountain of the water of life without payment." Rev. 21:6

Water scarcity was a harsh reality in the life of ancient Palestine. Rain and dew were the main sources of water. West of the Jordan streams usually dried up outside the rainy season. Access to fresh water was essential to both human and animal life. Migrating groups had to purchase water (Deut. 2:28). Water was sold on the streets of ancient Jerusalem (Is. 55:1). A cup of water offered to a guest or stranger was an expected sign of hospitality (Job 22:7; Mt. 10:42). Living water was flowing water obtained from a well or spring or stream. In biblical imagery, water is life and salvation.

According to ancient Mesopotamian thought, water was the primary cosmic element from which all life emerged. God is the fountain of living waters for Israel (Jer. 2:13).

There is a great story in Genesis 29:1-8:

It tells us of Jacob's arrival at a well in the midst of the desert where there were three flocks of sheep waiting to be watered. Jacob suggested that the people from Haran water their flock right away. But they replied, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and the stone is rolled away from the mouth of the well." What was this all about? A huge stone had been placed over the well, a stone that could only be moved if all of the shepherds helped out. Until all were present, none was able to draw water. It was an ingenious device for community control that ensured equal access and a fair sharing among all the shepherds.

The saving acts of Yahweh for Israel are manifested in the production of water, especially at times in the desert (Is. 35:7; 41:18; 43:19; 44:3). The care and providence of God are expressed as leading one beside still waters (Ps. 23:2).

Water was also used for washing and bathing, refreshment and ritual purification. Jews at the time of Jesus washed their hands before meals (Mk. 7:3) and guests were offered water for foot washing (Lk. 7:44), a service commonly performed by a servant (Jn. 13:5). Water was believed to have curative properties (Jn. 5:1-7).

... for the Lamb on the throne will shepherd them. He will lead them to springs of life-giving water, and God will wipe every tear from their eyes. Rev. 7:17

Catholic Social Teaching

Principles Governing Economic and Social Life

God destined the earth and all it contains for all peoples so that all created things would be shared fairly by all mankind under the guidance of justice tempered by charity.

Gaudium et Spes, no. 69

Water, An Essential Element for Life

The earth and all that it contains are for the use of every human being and all peoples. This principle of the universal destination of the goods of creation confirms that people and countries, including future generations, have the right to fundamental access to those goods which are necessary for their development. Water is such a common good of humankind. The few, with the means to control, cannot destroy or exhaust this resource, which is destined for the use of all.

There is a growing movement to formally adopt a human right to water. The dignity of the human person mandates its acknowledgement ... Without water, life is threatened, with the result being death. The right to water is thus an inalienable right.

*Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace,
to the Third World Water forum,
Kyoto, Japan, March 2003*

Water, Source of Life

As everyone knows, water is immensely important for the earth: without this precious element, it would rapidly become an arid desert, a place of hunger and thirst where people, animals and plants would be condemned to death. In addition to being a condition for life on earth, water also has the power to cleanse and purify ... As a gift from God, water is a vital element essential to survival; thus, everyone has a right to it.

*Message of John Paul II
for Brazil's "2004 Fraternity Campaign"*



*Water is a
fundamental
gift of
creation,
a right for
all of life.*

*Pope
Benedict XVI
at 4th World
Forum on
Water,
March 2006*



*One of
the natural
beauties
most
mentioned
by Allah in
the Qur'an
is that of
'outpouring
water.'*

*Surat al-
Waqi'a, 31*

Faith and Universal Wisdom

The clear message of seeing ourselves from space is that Earth is a whole system and humanity one of its many interdependent species. A regard for all of life as sacred becomes a practical as well as a moral position when we see the critical role that all life plays in maintaining the system.

Frank White, astronaut

We did not weave the web of life; we are merely a strand in it. Whatever we do to the web we do to ourselves. The earth is precious to God and to harm the earth is to heap contempt upon its Creator.

*Chief Seattle,
Leader of the Suquamish and
Duwamish Native American tribes*

The rules have changed, and so has the wisdom that we pass on to our young people ... I think everything is connected and meant to be where it is. It's going to be an adaptation period for every species of animal, whether you are a bug, or a human being or a polar bear.

*Sheila Watt-Cloutie, Inuit,
Winner of the UN 2007 Mahbub ul Award
for Excellence in Human Development,
linked climate change to human rights.*

It is a patient pursuit to bring water from the depth of the ground: one has to deal with much mud in digging before one reaches the water of life.

Sufi master, Hazrat Inayat Khan

The problems we face today, violent conflicts, destruction of nature, poverty, hunger and so on, are human-created problems which can be resolved through human effort, understanding and the development of a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood. We need to cultivate a universal responsibility for one another and the planet we share.

Dalai Lama

Three things are of equal importance – earth, humans and rain ... to teach that without the earth, there is no rain, and without rain, earth cannot endure, and without either, humans cannot exist.

*Rabbis Simon Bar Yochai,
Levi ben Hiyyata
Genesis Rabbah 13:3*

Personal Reflection Questions

- 1) Which scriptural or other reference in this section inspires you to explore further our relationship with all of creation?
- 2) What is involved in viewing the world as an interdependent web of life?



*Plant your
life close to
God, your
work will not
be in vain.*

*Adaptation of
Psalm 1*



*The one
who says it
cannot be
done should
not interrupt
the woman
doing it.*

*Paraphrase
of a Chinese
proverb*

ACT

What Can We Do?

From our experience and study, many of us are familiar with water issues, especially climate change. There are many environmental and advocacy groups already working on these issues. We invite you to get involved!

Individual Action:

1. Contemplate water as a sacred gift that connects all life.
2. Calculate your personal ecological footprint – your impact on earth based on your consumption patterns: www.earthday.net/footprint/ (multilingual)
3. Conserve water, e.g., fix leaky faucets/taps, limit lawn watering and long showers.
4. Become an educated consumer! Investigate one of the resources listed in this booklet.
5. Recycle and buy recycled, environmentally friendly products.
6. Reduce the use of bottled water to absolute necessity.
7. Share information and educational resources with friends, families, and groups.
8. Practice faith-filled citizenship as an informed voter.

Collective Action:

1. Learn and study with others how to defend “water for all” as a human right.
2. Defend in a non-violent manner the right of local communities to manage their resources.
3. Work interdependently with ecological groups that are directly involved in water situations in your area. Invite others to join you.
4. Come to a decision on a visible and concrete corporate action.
5. Find ways in which SNJMs could respond to this major concern and, as Gospel women and men, get more involved in ecological issues.

Take the One-Tonne Challenge¹

We cannot predict tsunamis. We can predict climate changes.

WORD OF GOD:

Do you not see the signs of the times? [Lk. 12:56](#)

SEE:

- Each year, each person produces an average of over five tonnes of greenhouse gases that warm up the planet, pollute the air and water.
- A speed of 120km/h (65m/h) with non-aligned tires increases fuel consumption by 20%.
- A low-flow showerhead saves 60% of heated water.
- If each family replaced one common light bulb with a fluorescent light bulb, it would be the equivalent of 60,000 fewer cars on the road.

JUDGE:

The United Nations confirms that global warming makes the glaciers melt, raises the sea level, increases tropical storms, floods islands, and makes populations and ecosystems more vulnerable.

ACT:

In each house, everyone can take the One-Tonne Challenge. Get 20 points and you will reach one ton:

- Reduce the use of your car by 10% by re-organizing your errands. (10)
- Respect the speed limit at 100 km/h (60m/h). (10)
- Check your tire pressure once a month. (4)
- When buying a new appliance, choose an energy-efficient one. (10)
- Install 5 compact fluorescent light bulbs. Model: Energy Star. (10)
- Install a low-flow showerhead. (4)
- Collect rainwater for the plants and lawn. (1)

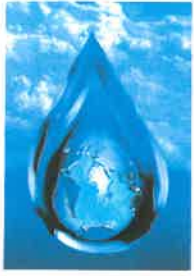
Congratulations to you, who recycle, compost, act for the sake of the planet. For more suggestions, consult the Web site: www.climatechange.gc.ca

¹ From Water Card 9, produced by the SNJM Justice & Peace Network.
Inspired by the Canadian Program for the Kyoto Agreement put in effect on Feb. 16, 2005.



*The future
belongs
to those who
give to the
youth reasons
for hope.*

*Teilhard de
Chardin, SJ*



Personal Reflection Questions

- 1) Describe some activities taking place in your regional or local area to defend and protect water resources. Who is involved and why?
- 2) Having read/reflected/shared, what action(s) are you motivated to take on behalf of water?

*If you think
that you are
too small to
be effective,
you have
never been
in bed with
a mosquito.*

*Betty Reese,
American
author,
officer,
and pilot*

Resources

• Books/Resource Packets on Water Issues

- **Blue Gold – The Fight to Stop the Corporate Theft of the World's Water**, Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke, Stoddart/The New Press, 2002. (French and English)
- **Good News for a Change: How Everyday People are Helping the Planet**, David Suzuki and Holly Dressel, Boreal, 2007. (French and English)
- **Holy Ground**, Sojourners Magazine, A resource packet on faith and the environment. Order at www.sojo.net.
- **The World's Water: 2006-2007 – The Biennial Report on Freshwater Resources**, Peter H. Gleick, Heather Colley, David Katz, and Emily Lee, Island Press, 2006.
- **Thirst – Fighting the Corporate Theft of Our Water**, Alan Snitow, and Deborah Kaufman with Michael Fox, Jossey-Bass, 2007.
- **Water Wars – Privatization, Pollution, and Profit**, Vandana Shiva, South End Press, 2002. (French and English)

• CD

- **One Water**, University of Miami, Modern Media Collaborative, 20-minute documentary, see www.onewater.org. (wordless)

• DVD & VHS Resources

- **An Inconvenient Truth**, Al Gore. Available in DVD. Paramount, 2006. Educational resources for use with "An Inconvenient Truth." Download at www.climatecrisis.net.
- **Sacred Balance**, television series (four episodes, one hour each). Available in DVD and VHS.
- **Thirst**, DVD and VHS, Bullfrog Films, 2004. This 62-minute film looks at communities in Bolivia, India and the U.S. facing the issue of water privatization. DVD version has language choices in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese. Reduced price for nonprofit/activist groups. Order from www.bullfrogfilms.com.
- **Water for Life**, DVD, Catholic Relief Services. Shows the broad picture of water use in U.S., Africa and South America. Order at www.crs.org.

• Power Point Slide Show

- **This is Your Home**, produced by the IHM Sisters of Monroe, Mich. Study guide also available. www.ihm.org/www/justice_peace_and_sustainability/climatechange.asp



Be a
gardener:
dig a ditch,
toil and
sweat, and
turn the
earth upside-
down. Take
this food and
drink and
carry it to
God as your
true worship.

Julian
of Norwich



*Of every
hundred
litres of
water, less
than half
a teaspoon
is fresh water
available for
human use.*

United Nations

• Web Sites

- **Brazil Social Forum-Water**, www.estado.com.br/ext/ciencia/agua (Portuguese)
- **Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops**, www.cccb.ca
See "Documents" section for two pastoral letters, one on water and the other "Christian ecological imperative." (French and English)
- **Catholic Relief Services**, www.crs.org. Education and advocacy information on water and climate change issues.
- **Development and Peace**, www.devp.org
Information on water campaign. (English, French, and Spanish)
- **Earth Ministry** (Seattle, Wash.), www.earthministry.org
Resources for education and advocacy.
- **Ecologist in Action**, www.ecologistasenaccion.org
Look under "temas- agua." (Spanish)
- **Friends of the Earth International**, www.foei.org
Global and local resistance to the control and commodification of water, and climate change. (English, French, and Spanish)
- **Holy Cross Communities**, www.holycrossjustice.org or www.csc.sisters.org. First Web site has a special section of resources related to sustainability and water. (English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese – not all resources available in all languages.) Second Web site has resources in English on water and ecological integrity.
- **In Defense of our Sister Water**, www.ofm-jpic.org/aqua (English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and other languages)
- **Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center** (Seattle, Wash.), www.ipjc.org Has resource lists on water and climate change issues.
- **International Water Working Group**, www.citizen.org
- **Kairos Canada**, www.kairoscanada.org
Ecumenical campaign on Water. (French and English)
- **Musical Review on Climate issues**, www.penguinsonthinice.com
To use with students.
- **Pacific Institute** (Oakland, Calif.), www.worldwater.com
Resources on water issues.
- **Religious Working Group on Water** (U.S.) "Water for All," statement published August 9/07, www.elca.org/advocacy/issues/environment/07-08-09-water_working_group.pdf
- **SNJM Sabbath Space** (Spokane, Wash.), www.educatingforthe21stcentury.org Resources on water issues and global warming.
- **The Learning for a Sustainable Future** www.lsf-lst.ca
Resources for educators. (French and English)
- **Tierra America**, www.tierramerica.net/agua (Spanish, Portuguese, and English)
- **United Church of Canada Reflections on Water**, www.unitedchurch.ca/waterfocus
- **United Nations**, www.unwater.org/ and www.un.org/waterforlifedecade. Web site for the new official United Nations mechanism for follow up of the water-related decisions reached at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Millennium Development Goals. Includes list of UN resources on water issues.
- **United States Catholic Conference of Bishops "Caring for God's Creation"** environmental justice program and resources, www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp
- **Washington State Catholic Conference (U.S.) Columbia River Pastoral Letter**, www.thewsc.org (see "Columbia River") (English, Spanish, and French)

Prayer

Blessing for Water

"With these hands, with this heart, and with the pure intention of God, this water is now blessed, removing and transmuting any impurities forever, and returning them to the light." Amen

Prayer about Water

***"Be praised my God for Sister water who is useful, humble, precious and pure."
As Francis prayed in great gratitude for Sister Water,
we pray in thankfulness for her life-sustaining generosity.***

O Water, in your mysterious beauty you cause the desert to bloom.
One tiny drop spread collected with thousands of drops of water seeds future harvests that will feed us and all creation.
One tiny drop multiplied quenches our burning thirst.
Our bodies, like the body of earth, are over seventy-five percent water.

We are a water people. We are a water planet.

O Compassionate God, Creator who breathed over the waters, we seek forgiveness for our mindless use of water. We beg for wisdom to know how to conserve and cherish water.

We ask healing for the ways that we disrespect and contaminate our Sister.
In times of drought we wait and watch for the gift of rain upon the earth.
We watch and wait for the rain of grace into our souls.

Come free us from hatred, greed, fear and our lack of love for your gifts upon earth. Transform us into living streams of water, flowing green and moist with life, hope and love for earth and all peoples.

We pray this prayer in the name of God, who is gracious Creator,
Jesus, our Eternal Word, and the Spirit who is Wellspring of Wisdom. Amen!

Sister Joan Brown, OSF
Ecological Ministry of the Social Justice Office
Archdiocese of Santa Fe

End the prayer by using your own hands to bless the water, sensing the energy that is coming down through the crown, into the heart, out through the hands and into the water. Hold it for a little while as though you were holding a baby.

Closing Prayer:

O Creator of Living Water, send us out with a daring love for all creation. Challenge us to offer the water of life freely. Give water to all who are thirsty and a thirst for justice to all who are quenched. Immerse us in the water of new life, as you did for Jesus, and send to us the Holy Spirit of peace, justice and love. Amen!

Excerpt from *Water: A Sacred Gift*,
produced by Kairos, a Canadian ecumenical group, www.kairoscanada.org

*In the garden of the soul,
plant the seed of the Word,
and water the soil
with love and humility
and reap the fruits of divinity.*

Sikh Hymn to Water

3-*Water Prayer* - Introduction by Leader

Song (All sing twice): Wade in the Water,
Wade in the Water, Children,
Wade in the Water,
God's gonna trouble the Water.



Reader # 1: by Thomas Merton, from “Rain and the Rhinoceros” in *Raids on the Unspeakable*

Let me say this before rain becomes a utility that they can plan and distribute for money. By “they” I mean the people who cannot understand that rain is a festival, who do not appreciate its gratuity, who think that what has no price has no value, that what cannot be sold is not real, so that the only way to make something *actual* is to place it on the market. The time will come when they will sell you even your rain. At the moment it is still free, and I am in it. I celebrate its gratuity and its meaninglessness.

Response by All (while the Reader pours water):

When the poor and needy seek water, I will open the rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys;

I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. -Isaiah 41: 17-18

Reader #2: “Water as a Human Right,” - by Mary Ellen Howard, Cabrini Connector, 2011

A problem is facing many poor families in Detroit—one I cannot imagine enduring myself—no water. I wouldn't last a week without water in my house. Currently, there are 45,000 households in Detroit without water. This is not Rwanda or Afghanistan or Haiti; this is on my block! For more than a year, a family with three kids down the street from us has been getting their water from the tap at the side of our house, filling buckets and carrying them home. Once a week, they drop off their laundry and we do it for them. Recently at a community baby shower, several mothers reported that they had no water to fix formula for their babies. The social worker at a DPS school-based health center reported that hygiene and odor are major issues among the children because they have no water at home, and cannot bathe or wash their clothes. We cannot be bystanders; water is life, and we cannot cut off life because people are poor. Our faith and our humanity demand that we do something.

Response: *Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?*

-Matt 25:37

Reader #3: **“Water is a Human Right, but Who is a Human Being?”** by Sarah Kendzior,
Aljazeera journalist St. Louis, MO.

Water is a basic human right. Few dispute this. From the Talmud to the Bible to the Quran, from the European Federation of Public Service to the United Nations, societies throughout history recognize water as a public good. To treat water as a commodity instead of a right is an act of violence...

If water is a right for all human beings, who counts as a human being?

Not the poorest residents of Detroit, a city which has cut off water to citizens at a rate of 3,000 per week since the spring, totaling about 125,000 people without water. Local activists estimate that up to 300,000 people—nearly all poor and African-American will ultimately lose access to water. The reason for the cut, officials claim, is that residents cannot pay their water bills which have spiked by 120% in the last decade.

Detroit is one of the poorest cities in one of the wealthiest countries in the world. Detroit is also surrounded by the largest supply of fresh water in the world. The US does not lack for money, and Detroit does not lack for accessible water. What Detroit lacks are people viewed as worthy of the compassion and resources given to their richer, whiter peers. They lack the rights and respect—and the water—most US citizens take for granted...

When rights are considered privileges, only the privileged have rights.

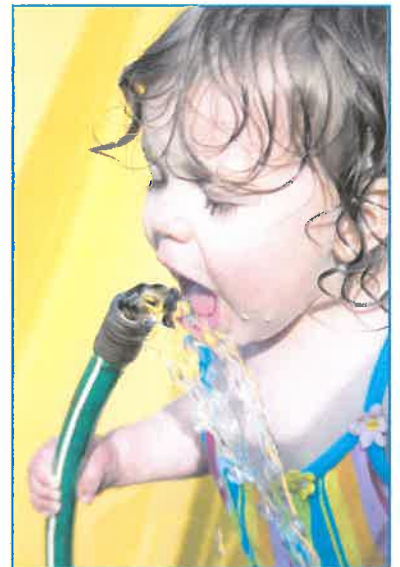
(For the entire article, see: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/07/detroit-water-rights-201472291145350632.html>)

Response: *Everyone who thirsts, come to the Waters.
Let the one who has no money come...*
 -Isaiah 55:1

Pause for Reflection

Closing Prayer (Together)

*God of Life,
God of all those who walk miles for water,
God of those whose only supply is contaminated, bringing death, not life,
May water, clean and life-giving, be available to every living creature.
May that vision move forward.
May your will be done.
Amen*



Closing Song: Wade in the Water—sing twice while blessing each other with the water.

4 - Prayers Related to Water

September 23, 2015¹

1. CALL TO WORSHIP

Dear brothers and sisters, as many rivers merge together into the sea, we have come together to worship our God, the fountain of living water.
As we worship God in spirit and in truth, let our hearts overflow with praise, let us be cleansed by the waters of God's grace and forgiveness.
Let us be refreshed and restored by Jesus Christ who promises us the waters of life through his resurrection. Amen.

2. PRAYER OF ADORATION AND THANKSGIVING

With hearts welling up in praise for God the fountain of all goodness, let us adore the Lord.
God of the deep ocean and the tiny brook, we praise you and adore you for the gift of water that sustains all life.
At this time of worship we remember with thanksgiving the manifold manifestations of your grace through the gift of water.

Leader: We remember the waters of Massah and Meribah and ...

All: We praise and thank you for you are the God of gracious provision.

Leader: We remember the healing waters of the pool of Siloam and ...

All: We praise and thank you for you are a God of ceaseless compassion.

Leader: We remember the baptism in the waters of the river Jordan and ...

All: We praise and thank you for you are a God of transformation.

Leader: Today we worship and adore you, God of provision, compassion and transformation.

All: Let this worship enable us to be responsible stewards of your provision, channels of your compassion and agents of your transformation. Amen.

¹ Found at <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/spiritual-life/prayer-for-everyone/prayers-related-to-sdg6-water-and-sanitation>. These prayers were prepared by the Student Christian Movement India (SCMI) and first published by the Ecumenical Water Network (EWN), a project initiated by the World Council of Churches, comprising a network of churches and Christian organizations promoting people's access to water around the world.

3. PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Leader: God, the very source of life, whose spirit hovered over waters at the time of creation; God in Jesus Christ, who came as living waters to quench the thirsty; God the Holy Spirit, who waters and brings forth the fruit; we come to your presence confessing our attitudes of greed, dominance and insensitivity towards your wonderful creation, and particularly towards water.

All: Let justice roll down like rivers², and let rivers roll out in justice.

Leader: We confess that we have been irresponsible in our use of water, wasting it to satisfy our comfortable lives. In many places we have commodified and privatised water, a natural resource, denying people access to it. In the name of development projects, water sources have been drained or polluted with industrial waste, causing risk to flora and fauna.

All: Let justice roll down like rivers, and let rivers roll out in justice.

Leader: We acknowledge the lack of cooperation between different authorities and organisations to manage water resources fairly. We confess our failure, as faith communities, to address water justice and seek forgiveness for not speaking out for the thirsty and the dying in situations of drought.

All: Let justice roll down like rivers, and let rivers roll out in justice.

Leader: We confess to being silent spectators as many vulnerable communities walk miles every day in search of water for their families. We regret our involvement in the commodification of water, which has resulted in contamination and reduction of water supplies. We come to your presence ashamed of our apathy and insincerity towards the abuse of water and other natural resources, asking you to inspire us to be challenged to conserve, preserve and use water prudently.

All: Let justice roll down like rivers, and let rivers roll out in justice.

4. ABSOLUTION

God who brought water out of the rock,
God who quenched the thirst of those dying in the wilderness,
God who in Jesus gave the living waters so that those who taste them would never thirst,
God who in Jesus died on the Cross thirsty, for there was none to quench his thirst;
Listen to all those who truly confess and grant us forgiveness so that we act responsibly in our use of water, become sensitive to the desperate needs of those without water, and gain wisdom in conserving and preserving water so that rivers roll out in justice among all nations and all peoples. Amen.

² Amos 5-24

5. INTERCESSORY PRAYER

[Set out a glass of clean water, a glass of salted water, a commercially produced bottle of water, and an empty glass. Play soft music in the background.]

Leader: *[Holding the glass of clean water]* Lord, let this glass of clean water reminds us of the available sources of fresh drinking water. Help us to protect this gift. May our lives be so balanced that greed makes way for need and our wastefulness makes way for a commitment to preserve and share.

All: Fountain of life, wash us clean from greed and sin.

Leader: *[Holding the glass of salted water]* Let this glass of salted water remind us of the tears of those whose lives have been threatened by the scarcity of water, compounded by the stigma and discrimination they face. Let those who contribute to exploitative systems and mechanisms, shed tears of repentance and learn to lead simple lives so that others can simply live.

All: Creator of new life, transform us so that we have welling within us, springs of eternal life.

Leader: *[Holding a commercially produced bottle of water]* God of justice, we pray for all those who are resisting those who plunder and pillage our natural resources and threaten the well-being of indigenous communities, and for communities bitterly divided by deceptive offers of jobs and money by large corporations for their water sources.³ We remember all those engaged in preservation and sharing of water, your gift of life. Strengthen these resisting communities, guide them and sustain them in their endeavors.

All: God of justice strengthen these “earthkeepers”.

Leader: *[Holding the empty glass]* Lord we pray for all the communities who are involved in the issue of water justice. Sensitize us, to walk with all the people who lack the water of life. Help us to empty ourselves of all the prejudices and fill us with a vision of solidarity and fellowship so that we can liaise and work with other likeminded people in conserving the gift water.

All: God of justice, give us your vision.

Leader: Lord, we pray for the universal church and its mission and vision. Transform our lifestyles so that, not only in words but in deeds we may be channels of your justice. Let your churches be role models within our communities in conserving water and preserving life in all its fullness. Make your churches work together so that justice will prevail and water will be available for all in our generation and beyond.

All: God of resurrection, make us channels of your living water. We bring these prayers to you in the name of Christ, our Savior. Amen.

³ This part of the prayer has been adapted to reflect current (2016-17) events in the United States and Oregon.

6. A BLESSING

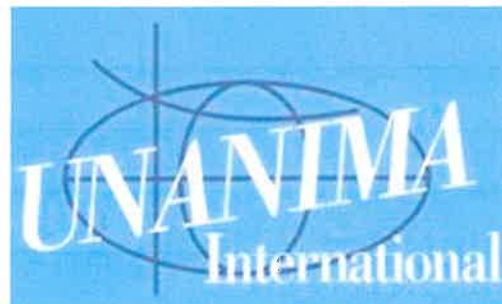
May God, who caused rain to water the face of the earth,
May Jesus Christ, who gives us the water of eternal life,
May the Holy Spirit, who quenches thirst with gifts from the spring of life,
inspire and challenge us to become advocates for water justice,
and bless us all to flow as “justice flows down like water”,⁴
both now and forever more.
Amen.



⁴ Another version of Amos 5:24

5 - WATER = LIFE

Campaign Overview*



Water is not only necessary for producing our food, our manufactured goods, our energy—it is necessary to life. Most organisms first developed in water, and this origin is reflected in the composition of their cells. And while many can live for a significant time without food, most cannot survive without it.

Most of our planet is composed of this sustaining resource. However, relatively little water is available for drinking or other human use; most of it is salt water, and much of the earth's fresh water is either polluted or trapped in ice caps or glaciers.

It has been suggested that nations would be willing to go to war competing for scarcer water supplies. Shifting weather patterns have resulted in droughts in some countries, while flooding occurs in others. Recent migrations in African countries are due to environmental changes that have created shortages—increasing poverty and hunger, and sprouting new populations of “climate refugees.” Global warming has manifested itself in rising sea levels, which may soon cause entire island states to abandon their homes and join the swelling numbers of displaced peoples. In areas of water shortage, women and children are often the ones who collect and provide it to their families and communities—sometimes from sources miles from their homes. The dangers that accompany them as they travel place them as a prime target of kidnapping and trafficking.

Therefore, water is a central concern for UNANIMA—impacting as it does each area of our mission statement: women and children, poverty, trafficking, immigrants and refugees, water, climate change, and the integrity of the earth.

UNANIMA envisions a world where access to life-giving water is a right for all life forms on the planet. We seek to implement a holistic water ethic that takes into consideration not only securing drinking water for all persons no matter their income or social class, but also environmental phenomena like coral bleaching, increased salinity, sand harvesting, and more that prove detrimental to ecosystems both big and small. We affirm that water has its own value and intrinsic right outside its usefulness to humans, and that as a public commons and good, water should not be commodified and must be preserved for all times, not just this generation. Join us in drawing the connections between water and life and discovering venues for advocacy.

* Information found at <http://www.unanima-international.org/what-we-do/campaigns/water-life>



Photo: SSA, Social Justice Office

MISSION STATEMENT

The growing inability of the ecosystems to generate life-giving water and the belief that this situation is irreversible, compels UNANIMA International to promote a water ethic which fosters an awareness of the grave necessity to restore the natural filtering capacity of the ecosystems and which declares that access to life-giving water is an essential right for all life forms.

To this end, UNANIMA INTERNATIONAL collaborates with individuals, groups, organizations and especially with the United Nations to protect this right through education, advocacy, networking and dissemination of materials.



Photo: Martine Ferret



WATER

LIFE

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UNANIMA
International

www.unanima-international.org

May 2010

6-WATER

LIFE

SNJM Associates with e-mail addresses are included in monthly updates from UNANIMA on issues of immigration, human trafficking, and water.

Access to life-giving water is an essential right for all life forms

and the foundation for sustainable development in transport, chemicals, waste management, mining, and patterns of consumption and production.

UNANIMA
International



The waters of the Earth exist in a closed system, in an ever-moving, delicately balanced cycle. The sun causes water to rise as vapour from the oceans, cool, and fall back on the Earth as fresh water, returning to the ocean. Living organisms are active participants in this cycle – absorbing and filtering water molecules – and breathing water vapour. Each life form relates to water in specific, and extremely diverse, ecosystems.

Guarantee access to life-giving water for all life forms now!

Our present levels of water pollution harm the hydrological system, are unsustainable and put all life forms on the planet in peril.

Consider water in the debate:

Transport: Factor the effects of CO2 emissions on the air pollution that affects the water cycle into standards and pricing

Chemicals: Guarantee ecosystems and the environment adequate clean/life-giving water flows, free of toxic materials

Waste Management: Make explicit reference to water in ISWM (integrated and sustainable waste management). Water quality is frequently a casualty in waste management.

Mining: Implement legislation to protect water quality in zones of mining exploitation

Sustainable Consumption and Production: Address water in the sectoral priorities of Europe and North America to make a shift to a more sustainable and fair economy.



Photo: SSA, Social Justice Office



©UN Photo/Martine Perret

7 - Water: Continuum of Action

Awareness	Involvement	Leadership
Calculate your water footprint and compare with the average American. www.h2oconserve.org	Set a goal and begin water reduction in your home, work or church. www.wateruseitwisely.com	Share water saving tips in your church bulletin, business and community newsletters.
Educate yourself about water quality in your area and threats to human and environmental health.	Volunteer with organizations that promote water quality, and protection of aquatic ecosystems.	Distribute educational materials at a church or community fair.
Read and study church teachings related to human rights, care of creation and water.	Facilitate a faith community study group on the topic. Resource: <i>Care for All of Creation: Six Session Process</i> prayer, discussion, stories and action.	Draft a corporate stand or social justice practice statement for your church.
Learn about the growing privatization of public water sources. www.ipjc.org/links/water.htm www.foodandwaterwatch.org	Organize a group viewing and discussion of <i>Flow: For Love of Water; Thirst; Water: Sacred & Profane; Running Dry; American Southwest: Are We Running Dry?</i>	Rally support in your community to use tap water over bottled water and support public water systems. www.thinkoutsidethebottle.org
Read <i>Blue Covenant: The Global Water Crisis and the Coming Battle for the Right to Water</i> , by Maude Barlow.	Start a book group discussion on what responsibilities corporations like Nestlé and Coca Cola have in ensuring public access to local water?	Organize public education/grass-roots organizing on the intersection between private corporations and public water systems.
Understand the central connection women have with water as primary caregivers and household managers. www.un.org/waterforlifedecade IPJC <i>A Matter Of Spirit</i> , Water Issue 2009 — www.ipjc.org/journal	Lead a study group on the World Health Organization, 2005-2015 <i>International Decade for Action Advocacy Guide</i> . www.who.int	Publicize the recommendations for gender equality regarding water management and decision making with a news article or public service announcement.
Learn more about water conflict. www.worldwater.org www.waterwars.pulitzergateway.org	Organize a viewing of <i>River of War, River of Life: The Fate of the Nile</i> . www.unwater.org/worldwaterday	Use the 2009 UN World Water Day materials to increase the commitment to cooperation, not conflict.
Make a personal commitment to support organizations that promote water sanitation education, training and access to clean water for the impoverished. www.water.org , www.water1st.org , www.1h20.org	Hold a water forum. Invite speakers from water advocacy organizations. Collect signatures for the 31st article in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. www.article31.org	Work with organizations that empower local communities in water resource management.
Research current water laws and regulations. www.citizen.org www.epa.gov	Contact your state and federal legislators to address your concerns on water issues.	Advocate for water legislation that protects and sustains human and environmental health. www.worldwatercouncil.org



Books, DVDs and other resources are available from IPJC.

Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center (IPJC) • 206.223.1138 • www.ipjc.org • ipjc@ipjc.org

8 - USCCB Environmental Justice Program & Catholic Campaign for Human Development



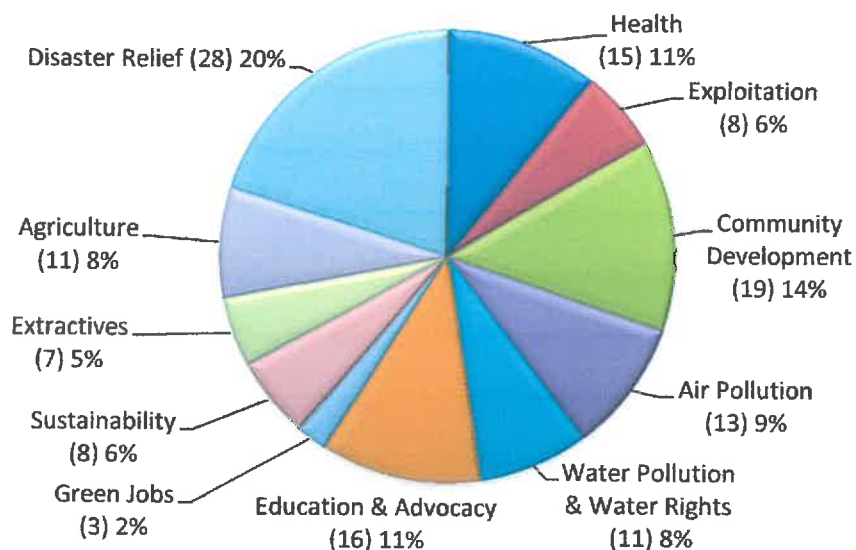
CCHD. Working on the Margins.
Major Environmental Justice Initiatives Funded by CCHD

Summary of Trends

CCHD Supports Grassroots Organizing and Education on Environmental Justice

The USCCB Environmental Justice Program and the Catholic Campaign for Human Development are working together to identify the breadth and depth of CCHD-funded work related to environmental justice. This initiative will help reveal the key environmental issues being focused on at the local level, as well as significant regional and national trends. Since 2000, CCHD has invested over \$5 million in over 75 groups which have undertaken more than 150 projects related to environmental concerns ranging from air and water pollution, to agriculture, extractive industries, green jobs, disaster relief and community development projects. Many of these environmental concerns are related to protecting the health of communities.

CCHD Environmental Justice Issue Distribution



Agriculture

Farming communities rely on local lands and watersheds to provide both food and a way of life. Stewardship of creation is crucial for the well-being of these communities. CCHD-supported groups from these areas address a host of interlocking issues, promoting laws and practices that will sustain the land that sustains the people. Industrial agricultural practices, such as massive confined animal feeding operations, often pollute air and streams with excessive waste. Polluted air and water exposes residents to chemicals that may harm their health. Agricultural groups work to rein in factory farms. When extractive industries such as mining, oil and gas industries threaten to harm land and contaminate air and water, agricultural groups empower local farmers and community residents to fight for the protection of their lands and livelihoods. Through education programs and advocacy, agricultural groups promote and protect family farms, which are much more environmentally sustainable than factory farms. By providing funds to organizing groups in farming communities, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development fosters agricultural practices that preserve the land, air, and water for the people who live from its fruits.

Water

Healthy communities need clean water. Extractive industries, such as coal mining and fracking, threaten the health of communities by contaminating water with dangerous chemicals. Community organizing groups in Appalachia have been fighting to keep their watersheds clean for decades, while the fracking industry has raised new concerns across the country. Factory farms and industrial agriculture also endanger the well-being of rivers and streams. In agricultural communities, the discharge from extractive industries can contaminate local water sources, which are necessary to irrigate crops and raise cattle. Organizers work to protect water resources, as well as the water rights of farmers in places where water is threatened by pollution or scarce, possibly due to droughts induced by climate change. CCHD groups have also helped low-income and vulnerable communities respond to the impacts of man-made disasters, such as water contamination, and attendant economic and health concerns caused by the BP oil spill. The Catholic Campaign for Human Development helps to support healthy communities by supporting the work of those fighting to protect a most precious resource.

Air

Air pollution presents problems to the health of both the earth and the people who inhabit it. Not only do greenhouse gas emissions cause climate change, but toxic pollution from dirty power plants, factories, and refineries make air unsafe to breathe, leading to environmentally triggered illnesses such as asthma, respiratory diseases, certain cancers, and other illnesses that adversely affect public health and children's health. CCHD-funded groups address air pollution on a number of fronts. Groups from Appalachia work to curtail the effects of a major culprit of air pollution, the coal industry. In urban areas and cities like Chicago, groups have worked to pass legislation that requires factories and power plants to reduce emissions of dangerous chemicals. In rural areas, confined animal feeding operations at factory farms release dangerous methane into the air. Agricultural groups work to protect rural communities from the harmful practices of industrial agriculture. Bucket Brigades, that use an air sampling program approved by the EPA, empower everyday citizens to take action. The Louisiana Bucket Brigade trains community members to test the air with easy-to-use buckets. These air testing programs arm communities to advocate for clean air when nearby oil refineries release hazardous pollution into the air. The Catholic Campaign for Human Development supports all of these efforts to reduce toxic emissions in the air and to improve the health of communities across the country.

9 a matter of spirit

This issue: Water

No. 82 Spring 2009



Shiney Varghese is a Senior Policy Analyst with the Minneapolis based Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.

First Steps to Shrinking My Water Footprint

Shiney Varghese

I live in the United States where I have a 24 hour running water supply. I take it for granted that I will have running water whenever I need it—for brushing my teeth or washing my hair, for drinking, cooking or cleaning. I often forget what a luxury it is!

Before coming to the U.S., I lived in a small town in western India called Rajkot. My apartment complex was surrounded by a still developing concrete jungle and promised a regular water supply, which meant that running water was available for an hour each in the morning and evening. I was living by myself, and I would collect enough water in the morning hours to meet my personal needs of the day. I ate my food out often and got my clothes washed outside.

For my neighboring families—with at least four to five members—it was a struggle to meet their water needs. They would often have to resort to water supplied through tankers from neighboring villages—never mind if those villagers were sell-

ing water to the city because it was more profitable than raising crops, or even if it was lowering the water table so low that people without mechanical pumps could

watering our lawns and filling our back yard pools. The average U.S. resident uses 151 gallons a day, compared to less than 15 gallons a day in most African countries.¹

I realize that my daily water use—for drinking, cleaning, cooking and washing—is only a small part of the water I use. Most of the water I use is invisible to me—it is in the food I eat, in the soda I drink and the clothes I wear. It is in the making of the gas I put in my car, in the generation of the electricity I use to light

my home, and in the production of my computer and car. With the exception of my summer vegetables, most of these things are not made or grown in Minnesota, and thus most of the invisible water I use is not Minnesota water. It could be from California, Florida, Australia, or South Africa.

Global Connections

There isn't an easy way to see the connection between my consumption and the water problems that have been hitting headlines. It would be ideal if a specific product or commodity had a label indicating the location of production and/or processing, along with the

continued on pg 3

© WaterAid/Juthika Howlader



Woman gathering water in Bangladesh.

no longer get enough water to meet their basic needs. The impact of urban water use in Rajkot on surrounding rural areas was clearly visible.

Invisible Water

However, the connection between my water use in the U.S. and the global water crisis is not so clear. I live in Minnesota by the Mississippi River. Our public water system provides me with excellent water at a very reasonable rate. The same clean water is used for washing our car,

My consumption may even be directly affecting water scarce regions in Sub-Saharan Africa.



Stephen Gasteyer is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Michigan State University in East Lansing, MI

Water Conflict and Resolution

Stephen Gasteyer

“Our experiences tell us that environmental stress, due to lack of water, may lead to conflict, and would be greater in poor nations.” United Nations General Secretary Ban Ki Moon, January 24, 2008.

Water conflict is the result of groups of people or institutions believing that they are unfairly being denied adequate water resources to meet felt needs or wants. The risk of growing water conflict has increased as population and development have put ever greater pressure on water resources. As Secretary General Ban Ki Moon stated at the 2008 World Economic Forum: “As the global economy grows, so will its thirst. Many more conflicts lie just over the horizon.”

WATER HOT SPOTS TO WATCH

- ◆ Jordan & Litani Rivers (Israel)
- ◆ Nile River (Egypt/Sudan/Ethiopia)
- ◆ Tigris & Euphrates Rivers (Iraq/Syria)
- ◆ Ganges River (India)
- ◆ Carvery River (India)

—Source: Marq de Villiers

Water is, of course, the very essence of life on earth. Without it, it is estimated that we could live no more than three days. Indeed, anyone who has attempted a day or more of fast-

ing during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan understands that as humans we are weakened by prolonged periods without water.

The paradox is that, while our earth is a blue planet, made up mostly of water, 99 percent of that water is salt water, unusable in its natural state for human hydration. People are dependent on fresh water to sustain life—as drinking water, in sanitation, and in economic or productive processes.

Hydrologic Flows

Conflicts over water use tend to be concentrated over water basins. Water flows in natural basins by gravity. Those who live upstream control the flow of water. This can be the basis for water conflicts. For instance, the Rio Grande River is shared by the United States and Mexico. The headwaters of the river are in Colorado and flow downstream through New Mexico and Texas. Because water is siphoned off to support agriculture, industrial and urban development, only rarely does a significant amount of that water reach Mexico, where irrigated farming communities have long suffered drought conditions.

Water Scarcity

Water conflict is generally thought of as the result of biophysical, or natural, scarcity. When there is not enough to go around, certain actors will take measures to ensure that they get theirs. But scarcity is not only biophysical. Scarcity may, in fact, have environmental conditions, social constructions and perceptions.

Environmental conditions involve low annual precipitation, decreasing precipitation over time, diminishing availability of resources, and high variability of resources. Situations of drought involve rainfall below the recorded average. This may persist over multiple years. In places like Africa, climatologists talk of 20 year drought cycles. Indeed, processes of climate change and global warming may have the effect of decreasing rainfall over time.

Social constructions of scarcity involve regulations that can limit

access to water resources. For instance, Palestinians have limits on allowable depth of wells placed on them from the Israeli authorities. This impacts both the Palestinian agricultural production and community development potential.

As the global economy grows, so will its thirst.

While Israel claims to offset this with domestic water supplied by Israel's national water carrier, this source is restricted in the driest part of the year and Palestinians complain that they are asked to pay more than Israeli consumers for the same water.¹

Cultural presumptions and perceptions may also influence the perception of scarcity. For years, the governments of Las Vegas and Phoenix, did little to constrain water use. Businesses flaunted use of water (think of the famous fountains of Las Vegas) and residences had lawns and swimming pools. While there was little natural water in the area, these were certainly not situations of scarcity, indeed these cities became symbols of the misuse of water in the southwestern U.S.²

Technology & Water Allocation

Technology and technological development plays a major role in water conflicts. The ability to construct large dams that hold back and divert water for use by upstream users is precisely the cause of disgruntlement by those downstream. The proposed GAP project in Turkey nearly led to war on several occasions with Iraq,

which worried that the project would restrict water to the Nile and Euphrates.

Technology may also play a role in resolving water conflict. Most frequently, proposals are put forward to increase supply. One example would be the proposed Red-Dead Canal, which would pump sea water into the Dead Sea while generating hydroelectric power for use in desalination. As is often the case, this project does not address the underlying cause of the conflict and may have serious unintended consequences.

Values and Water Use

A critical and often underappreciated aspect of water conflict is that of values. Values may be taken in both its forms: monetary and cultural. Both of these aspects are critical.

Tony Allen argues that the Middle East water conflicts could be solved if the parties recognized the relative value of activities.³ For Israel, he argues, there is little merit in continuing to produce and trade “virtual water” through irrigated agriculture. The value of the water is worth more than products such as citrus, tomatoes, rice, and cotton. The same is true of many of the other conflicts.

The other values that are important are those that respect water as a critical part of the web of life. There are increasing movements to better conserve water. Who lives downstream? What other human or animal communities might utilize this resource? What might we do to preserve and protect this resource for present and future generations? These values will be critical to overcom-

ing water conflict.

As a United Nations Development Program conference on Water Values and Rights stated, there are increasing calls to: “develop a new water mentality by which water use is prioritized as vested human rights and is managed in an economical and ecological sustainable manner instead of being handled as solely a political issue and commercial commodity.”⁴ ~

Read the full text of this article online at www.ipjc.org/journal.

1. Abu Eid, A., “Water as a Human Right: The Palestinian Occupied Territories as an Example” (2007)
2. Postel, Sandra, *The Last Oasis* (Earthscan: 1992) and Reisner, Marc, *Cadillac Desert* (Penguin Books: 1993)
3. Allen, Tony, *The Middle East Water Question* (I.B. Tauris: 2002)
4. UNDP, *Water: Values and Rights* (2005)

“Footprint” from pg 1

water footprint, so that we would know not only the extent of impact but also where the impact is felt.

It is possible that to support the production of my cell phone and my children’s toys, Chinese farmers were denied agricultural water or poor Korean villagers were denied drinking water. I do not know whether in the process of printing colorful patterns on my shirt, water pollution increased in Bangladesh, or whether in the process of growing cotton for my shirt, water tables went down in India. My consumption may even be directly affecting water scarce regions in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Water for Thought

Sometime ago, I came across

an excellent resource, the *Water Footprint Network*. Their website (www.waterfootprint.org) explains the concept of a “water footprint” to help calculate “virtual water”—the water embedded in the many traded commodities and products that countries import or export, and that I consume. Unfortunately our knowledge is still in too preliminary a stage for it to provide the water footprint for complex industrial products such as synthetic clothes, plastics, or electronic equipment. Also, these calculations are still not one hundred percent accurate. But it is a very good first step, and gives plenty of water for thought.

I have been looking for ideas to reduce my water footprint: old style canning and/or freezing of

summer vegetables, reducing the meat and other animal based food items in my diet, shifting to local and/or fair-traded products that are sustainably produced, reducing the amount of processed food I buy and the food I waste, switching to carrying a stainless steel water container, using bio-degradable and less

polluting cleaning products, using public transport and buying less! There is a start for me! ~

1 UNDP: “Beyond Scarcity: Power, poverty and global water crisis” (February 2009)

WATER FOOTPRINTS

Product	Footprint
1 plastic bottle	1.5 gallons
1 cup of tea	8 gallons
1 cup of coffee	37 gallons
1 lb of soybeans	216 gallons
1 lb of chicken	468 gallons
1 lb of cheese	600 gallons
1 lb of beef	1,861 gallons
1 automobile	32,000 gallons

Sources: h2oconserve.org, waterfootprint.org

The Push Toward Privatization of Water

Richard McIntyre

Two-thirds of the world's population—billions of people—is expected to run short of fresh drinking water by 2025. Meanwhile, there is a movement towards the privatization of water for profit.

The World Bank and similar institutions have made loans to developing nations for water service on the condition that they be privately—not publicly—owned and operated. This has opened the door for companies to build inferior water systems and then charge far more than people making mere dollars a day could ever hope to pay.

This contrasts with the road to private control of water in developed nations. Much of our nation's water and sewer system is outdated and in need of upgrades, but many

communities are strapped for cash and unable to make improvements. Instead, multinational water companies, such as RWE, Suez and Veolia, have approached local officials with claims that they can manage the systems more efficiently than the public sector.

Unfortunately, communities all over the world have witnessed the empty promises of economic efficiency

from privatization. In 2005, the government of Tanzania canceled its 10-year contract with UK-based Biwater after two years of poor management and unmet obligations left people without water and the government short about \$3.25 million. In early 2008, an international tribunal ruled that the company must pay almost \$8 million in damages and fees to the state water utility in Dar es Salaam.

Halfway around the world in Ecuador, the Inter-American Development Bank loaned \$40 million to

the government to prepare for International Water Services, a subsidiary of Bechtel, to operate the water and sewer system in the country's largest city, Guayaquil. The local subsidiary, Interagua, dismissed all the workers from the previously owned public utility. The company partially bowed to public pressure by rehiring 20 percent of them the following year.

The phenomenon—and problems—of water privatization is not limited to the developing world. The City of Atlanta gave United Water a 20-year, \$428 million contract in 1999 to operate and manage Atlanta's water and sewer

system. The company overstated the amount of money it could save the city and underestimated the work needed to maintain and operate the system. In over its head, the company cut costs by letting go almost 400 employees. It raised sewer rates an average of 12 percent every year it had the contract. Atlanta terminated the contract in January 2003.

Farther south, New Orleans

was fortunate in that it only flirted with water privatization. The city dropped such plans in 2004 after five years and \$5.7 million worth of

study. The 20-year, \$1.5 billion contract would have been the largest ever awarded in the United States.

These stories illustrate that whether communities sit in the middle of Africa or the United States, the promises of economic

efficiency from privatization come with their own problems and challenges. Fortunately, people across the world

increasingly understand this and are standing up in defense of affordable access to clean and safe water for everyone. ~

Richard McIntyre is the water policy director for Food & Water Watch.

SELLING THE RAIN

"Let me say this before rain becomes a utility that they can plan and distribute for money. By 'they' I mean the people who cannot understand that rain is a festival, who do not appreciate its gratuity, who think that what has no price has no value, that what cannot be sold is not real, so that the only way to make something actual is to place it on the market. The time will come when they will sell you even your rain."

—Thomas Merton,
Rain and the Rhinoceros,
1964

... *water privatization is not limited to the developing world.*

WATER BY NUMBERS

- ◆ Each person needs **5 to 10 gallons** of safe freshwater a day
- ◆ More than 1 in 6 people worldwide—**894 million**—do not have access to safe freshwater
- ◆ Globally, diarrhea is the leading cause of illness and death—**88%** of diarrheal deaths are due to lack of sanitation and safe water
- ◆ Freshwater resources make up **2.5%** of the total volume of water on Earth—of that less than 1% is usable by humans
- ◆ By 2025, **1.8 million people** will be living with absolute water scarcity, and **2/3 of the world population** could be under stress conditions

Think Outside the Bottle

Patti Lynn

Traditionally, water has been regarded by many as a common good to be shared by all. But in the face of the growing global water crisis, some of the world's most powerful corporations are privatizing our public water systems, transforming access to an essential resource into simply another opportunity to profit.

Here in the United States, corporations are privatizing our water, bottling it and selling it back to us at prices

hundreds, even thousands of times what tap water costs. Corporations are poised to capitalize on concerns about water safety and water scarcity. In fact, bottled water corporations have continued to bottle water for profit during drought conditions both in the United States and abroad.

The bottled water industry's environmental footprint is no less significant. The production and manufacturing of the bottled water for the U.S. market consumes the equivalent of well over 17 million barrels of oil each year—enough fuel to run more than 1 million cars for the same time period. This leaves out the energy consumed by shipping that same water across county, state, and even continental divides. The process also generates more than 2.5 million tons of carbon dioxide per year. To visualize these energy costs of the lifecycle of a bottle of water, imagine filling up a quarter of each bottle with oil. What's

more, our oceans and cities are filling up with discarded plastic waste.

Bottled water corporations spend tens of millions of dollars each year to convince us that what comes out of the bottle is different than what flows from the tap. But tap water is much more highly

regulated than bottled water and has more independent oversight by state and federal environmental authorities.

Corporate Accountability

International's *Think Outside the Bottle* campaign is a national effort to support public water systems and encourage consumers and governments to choose tap over bottled water.

Ask

Our members are calling on Coke, Pepsi, and Nestlé to:

- ◆ Reveal the sources and sites of the water used for bottling;
- ◆ Publicly report breaches in bottled water quality comparable to reports by public water systems; and
- ◆ Stop threatening local control of water when siting and operating bottled water plants.

Pledge

The campaign is partnering with prominent restaurants, uni-

versities, faith groups, and tens of thousands of people across North America to make a pledge to use tap water over bottled water and to support strong public water systems.

Resolve

The campaign has worked with leading national mayors to pass a resolution encouraging all cities to phase out taxpayer spending on bottled water and instead invest in strong public water systems. Our public water infrastructure stands to get an infusion of much needed dollars as part of the national economic stimulus package recently signed into law. Building upon our success with mayors, our members and organizers nationwide are calling on their governors to stop bottled water spending and prioritize public water systems.

In the same way that water has been parceled out among bottlers, it can be reclaimed by communities and officials. With continued involvement in these efforts, we can protect our democratic control of this basic human right. When we "think outside the bottle" we help make sure water systems remain under public control and continue to serve and strengthen our communities for generations to come. ~



Patti Lynn is campaign manager for Corporate Accountability's *Think Outside the Bottle* Campaign.





Sr. Rose Bernadette Gallagher, M.M. is a staff member of the Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns.

A Female Responsibility

Rose Bernadette Gallagher, M.M.

Women's lives all around the world are closely connected to water. Women and girls are responsible for collecting water for cooking, cleaning, health and hygiene, and if they have access to land, growing food.

In rural areas, women walk long distances to fetch water, often spending 4 to 5 hours per day carrying heavy containers and suffering acute physical problems. In Nanyangachor, Sudan, the nearest hospital is fifteen hours away by road in dry weather; during the rainy season roads are impassable, resulting in many deaths of women and children.

In arid and drought-prone areas the challenge is compounded, while in urban areas, women and girls can spend hours waiting in line to collect intermittent water supplies at standpipes. The inordinate burden of fetching water inhibits women's involvement in other activities such as education, income generation, cultural and political involvement, rest and recreation.

Pollution and lack of access to clean water proliferate the cycle of poverty, water born diseases and gender inequities. The World Health Organization estimates

that 80 percent of all sickness in the world is attributable to unsafe water and sanitation. The correlation between water and sanitation is evident as maintenance of family health is mostly viewed as a female responsibility.

Extensive degradation of ecosystems, polluted water, contamination of ground water and aquifers, over-consumption of water

As the environment deteriorates, women's livelihoods become increasingly vulnerable.

in rich countries and by the rich in poor countries, as well as the impact of extreme poverty, have all contributed to an environmental catastrophe in the world's water supply. In their roles as caregivers and managers of households and natural resources, women are most affected by the current global water crisis. Women use vegetation and forests for medicinal plants, food and fuel, as well as for income generation, but these ecosystems rely on a healthy water supply. As the environment deteriorates, women's livelihoods become increasingly vulnerable.

"We the women are responsible for feeding our families. The bush has now become a desert shrub in my area and there is nowhere to go to fetch wood. One day, unable to find enough wood, I used some branches to cook. Since the wood was not enough, I cut my plastic bassinet in pieces to fuel the fire... Then I took the wooden bench where I was seated and cut it to feed the fire..." (Satou Diouf, Gadiag, Senegal)

Water and the Millennium Development Goals

The *Water for Life Decade* (2005-2015) recognizes the central role that women play in providing, managing and safeguarding water, and as the main role models within the family when it comes to sanitation and hygiene. It is crucial to ensure the full participation and equal involvement of women and to approach water and sanitation issues from a gender perspective. The benefits and costs of water use can accrue equitably to all

groups, and the creativity, energy and knowledge of both women and men can contribute to making water systems work better. Improvements in access to safe water and sanitation that involve both women and men will lead to multiple benefits in other areas, such as reducing poverty, enabling girls to get an education, and reducing child and maternal mortality. ~

Recommendations

- ◆ Involve women and men equally in decision-making
- ◆ Pay attention to the privacy and security needs of women and girls with regard to the location and design of sanitation facilities
- ◆ Improve access to water for all
- ◆ Accord women equitable access to land and other resources
- ◆ Focus water and sanitation education and training programs on women and men equally

© WaterAid/Marco Betti



Woman gathering water in Tanzania

Story of Hope: The Bakhita Women's Project

The widows of Kaloma—a small town in the Southern Province of Zambia—began their journey to water independence through the simple act of knitting. With the help of a local group of the Sisters of the Presentation, the women formed a knitting club which they named “Bakhita Women,”

after one of the first female African Saints, Josephine Bakhita.

In addition to providing for their own families, many of the women cared for children who had been orphaned in the HIV pandemic. “First of all, we discovered the healing power of sharing stories,” said Presentation Sister Numba Mukeya. “This is how the knitting activity started, as the women shared their stories and helped one another to solve their problems, they knitted.” With the profits from their knitting club, they decided to join their efforts in another venture—farming. They planted maize on four hectares of leased land. Over time, the women were able to meet the basic needs of more than thirty local families.

Eventually they purchased a small farm on which they planted maize, fruit and vegetables. They also planned to build a bore well for irrigation. “But they were advised by the agricultural officer not to put a bore well in that area,” said Presentation Sister Prema Antony, “as it would not have water in the dry months when they most needed it.” Instead, they decided to build a dam to harness rain water and provide a year-round water source.

The women began by digging the

core trench for the dam themselves. They emptied the river bed located on the property line and collected the sand to make bricks. Most of

the manual work was done by the women. They needed to rent machinery to finish building the dam, but before they could raise enough money,

the rainy season began. The heavy rains washed away the core trench the women had dug. “But they did not give up hope,” according to Antony. The next year, they raised the necessary funding to complete the dam project.

Today, the rainwater harnessed by the dam is used by the Bakhita Women for their orchards, vegetable gardens, maize planting, fish farming, and livestock. They also

allow neighboring villagers—who previously had to walk up to five kilometers to find water—to use the water for drinking, household and agricultural purposes. The group owns seven cattle—two of which are used for plowing, the rest for milking. The women are also learning how to raise pigs and goats and have introduced fish into the dam. Fruit trees—mangoes, pawpaw, citrus, avocado, custard apples and guavas—have been planted on the property and some have started bearing fruit.

The dam provides a steady source of water and allows for year round production on the farm. “The group has become self reliant and gained dignity as they take pride and ownership of their project, the work of their hands,” said Antony. “The women can plan for the future as they do not have to totally depend on the rain.” ~

The women can plan for the future as they do not have to totally depend on the rain.



THIS STRAW SAVES LIVES

On any given day, more than 6,000 people—mostly children—die as a result of drinking contaminated water. The makers of the LifeStraw wanted to design a water filter that could be used easily in challenging physical environments, even by children. The LifeStraw turns contaminated water into safe drinking water, just by drinking through the straw. Each straw costs just a few dollars and can provide a year's worth of safe drinking water. The Rotary Club of Fort Lauderdale, Florida makes it easy to donate a LifeStraw to a family in Tanzania, Kenya, Malawi or Ghana. Visit lifestraw.123yourweb.com.



Dr. Gary Chamberlain is Professor of Christian Ethics at Seattle University. His most recent book, *Troubled Waters: Religion, Ethics, and the Global Water Crisis*, was published in 2008.

Water's Sacred Meanings

Gary Chamberlain

Rarely in analyses and conversations about water are cultural, and in particular religious, dimensions brought to light. Yet for billions of the globe's peoples, their fundamental conceptions about the natural world and water are influenced to some degree by religious considerations, whether those are feelings of disdain, indifferent, respect or even love.

Indigenous Peoples

Among indigenous peoples, water has a sacred quality. For the Kogi of northern Colombia, water is *Aluna*, the primordial "stuff" of the universe. Whether for the Kogi or the Salish of the Northwest, the Cree of Eastern Canada, or the Australian aboriginals and the Ashanti of Africa, water is the birthplace of all peoples and of the earth itself.

Hinduism

For Hindus, water is one of the five interdependent, sacred elements of the world—earth,

waters absorb the moral dirt of worshippers. Hindu texts support keeping the waters clean and pure.

Buddhism

Beliefs in the interconnectedness of all things, reincarnation, and the pervasive presence of suffering lead Buddhists to a special mindfulness in relation to the natural world, to water. Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh states: "We should deal with nature the way we deal with ourselves! We should not harm ourselves; we should not harm nature." Water itself is "a good friend, a bodhisattva [Buddha-like person who steps aside from entering nirvana to help others], which nourishes the many thousands of species."

Confucianism

Confucian thought is concerned with proper human behavior and the exercise of virtue in relation to the natural world. The great Confucian scholar Mencius (371-288 bce) sees the law of water and the law of morality as connected; a good ruler would bring order to the world *and* to the water: "The tendency of human nature to good is like the tendency of water to flow downwards."

Taoism

In Taoism one achieves harmony through "actionless action," and the Tao is often viewed as water which does not resist but flows gracefully, eventually bringing changes through its effortless flow. Humans accomplish harmony through the "flow" of their actions in harmony with the rest of nature.

Judaism

In Judaism, God is the source of spiritual drink, nourishment; at the same time, God is the origin of the physical waters that nurture God's people. The exodus story relates the many times Moses used water for deliverance. Rituals emphasize water's power for purification, such as hand washing at the *seder* supper. Water cleanses humanity, bringing humans closer to God.

Christianity

Water figures prominently in the life of Jesus, from his baptism, to his many references to "living waters," culminating in the water that flowed from his side at the crucifixion. Water is powerfully symbolic as an instrument of God's powers of healing, purifying, and cleansing. The "holy" water blessed during the Easter ceremonies becomes the water of purification, used throughout the year at rituals and ceremonies, such as baptism.

Islam

According to the Qur'an, "Allah has created from water every living creature." Water is a symbol of Paradise, a reminder of Allah's gift in a harsh, desert climate. Wells are especially venerated because of water's scarcity. Muslim laws view water as a communal resource. A hierarchy exists among uses: first, the right of thirst, i.e., no one can be denied drinking water since life is involved; then needs of bathing, cleaning, and cooking; next livestock; and lastly irrigation of crops. The very purpose of water is to revive the earth and all upon it. ~



A Hindu ritual involving water.

air, fire, water, and space. The sacred status of rivers implies their place in purifying souls: bathing in the sea, river, stream, or pond grants salvation. The

Ritual & Reflection: The Woman at the Well

Gather a small group for communal contemplation and reflection on the theme of water.

Set Up: Arrange chairs for participants around a small ritual table. Put on the table a cloth, candle, and small bowl of water.

Song: Select a song of your choice, such as *Come to the Water* or *Up from the Waters*.

Reader: Ananda, the favorite disciple of the Buddha, having been sent on a mission, passed by a well near a village, and seeing Pakati, a girl of the Mata nga caste, he asked her for water to drink. Pakati said: "O Brahman, I am too humble and mean to give thee water to drink, do not ask any service of me lest thy holiness be contaminated, for I am of low caste." And Ananda replied: "I ask not for caste but for water;" and the Matanga's girl's heart leaped joyfully and she gave Ananda to drink.

—Gospel of Buddha 76: 1-3

Facilitator: Let's take a few moments of quiet to reflect on the reading. Imagine that you are the woman, the favorite disciple, or the water itself. What does this feel like? Who asks you for water? Or, perhaps you were expecting to hear a different story of the woman at the well. What does this tell you about the human story? After the quiet, I will begin.

Sharing:

One thing that struck you in the story of Ananda or
One insight about water and the human story

Response Prayer:

The time will come when they will sell you even your rain.

—Thomas Merton

Response: *When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I will answer them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. (Isaiah 41:17)*

Sometimes I go without food so that my grandchildren have water. R.

—Hawa Amadu, Ghanaian grandmother.

Entire peoples have been reduced to destitution and are suffering because they lack drinking water. R.

—Pope John Paul II

Facilitator: Let us close by sharing the gift of water. I invite you to take the bowl, put your hands in the water and let the water bless you. Then, pass the water to the person sitting next to you as you say to them, "May your heart leap joyfully at the gift of water." I will begin.

(Adapted from *Peace & Justice Matters*, Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, 2004)

© Jesuit Refugee Services



WORLD WATER DAY

Peace building is the theme of the 2009 World Water Day—March 22. Visit www.unwater.org to learn more about the theme, "Shared Water: Shared Responsibility."

Resources

Websites

H2O Conserve
www.h2oconserve.org
Calculate your personal water footprint

IPJC Water Resource Page
www.ipjc.org/links/water.htm
Links to resources and action ideas

Water Use it Wisely
www.wateruseitwisely.com
Water Saving tips and links to your local conservation agency

Water Wars Pulitzer Gateway
www.waterwars.pulitzergateway.org
Online portal connecting students and journalists on the ground in East Africa.

Books

Barlow, Maude. *Blue Covenant: The Global Water Crisis and the Coming Battle for the Right to Water*. New Press, 2008.

Lohan, Tara. *Water Consciousness*. AlterNet Books, 2008.

Pearce, Fred. *When the Rivers Run Dry: Water—The Defining Crisis of the Twenty-first Century*. Beacon Press, 2007.

DVDs

Flow: How Did a Handful of Corporations Steal Our Water?, Oscilloscope Pictures, 2008.

Running Dry, Chronicles Group, 2005.

The American Southwest: Are We Running Dry, Chronicles Group, 2008.

Thirst, Bullfrog Films, 2004.

Parenting for Peace and Justice

The first IPJC Parenting for Peace and Justice Group is still going strong. For the first two years we followed the PPJ program and met to share dinner, parenting support, our faith, and to build community. We are now in our fourth year. The topics we choose are often related to the 5 themes of the original program—peace, simple living, global awareness, the environment, and diversity—and of our shared

need for insight and support.

For the past two summers we have gone camping and hiking together to get to know each other in a more personal way. One of the greatest

joys has been to watch our kids grow up together. We are a community of support as we strive to live out the values of peace and justice as parents, and we are a community of faith and fun as well. It is truly great to have other parents to call for help who we know shares similar values.

Call today to start a Parenting for Peace & Justice young adult group in your Parish



NWCRI asks: "Who Should Be First?"

Who should have the right to scarce water supplies first, farmers trying to grow crops for their survival, or a multinational corporation? By 2025 industry will account for most of the projected increase in water use. Concerned about water scarcity, shareholders are asking corporations to create comprehensive policies that articulate the company's respect for and commitment to the Human Right to Water.

These policies would include that the corporation will¹:

- ◆ Abide by national laws that give priority to water for personal and domestic uses
- ◆ Ensure efficient use of water so as not to undermine local populations' access to safe-drinking water
- ◆ Provide for environmentally responsible waste disposal
- ◆ Take into account the right to water and involve the community when making decisions about facility-setting
- ◆ Work with government and other stakeholders to ensure that priority is given to water for personal and domestic uses

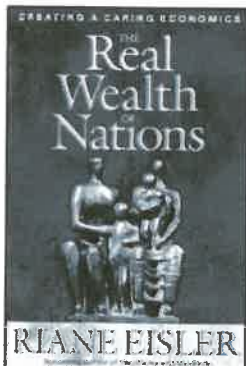
2009 shareholder resolutions include:

Intel Corporation which uses vast quantities of water in its semiconductor manufacturing process and operates in water-scarce areas like Israel and the American Southwest.

PepsiCo whose main ingredient in its beverages is water; in 2003 PepsiCo's water-use license was revoked in Pudussery, India due to claims that its bottling plants were depleting groundwater.

NWCRI is among a coalition of faith-based shareholders in dialogue with **Coca-Cola** regarding its operations in water-scarce of India. Our meetings are focusing on the Human Right to Water.

¹ Institute for Human Rights and Business, www.institutehrb.org



Just Us Reading

Our Spring young adult Justice Book Group begins **March 25**.

We will be reading *The Real Wealth of Nations: Creating a Caring Economics* by Riane Eisler, one of the plenary speakers at the Northwest Catholic Women's Convocation.

Her book asks—how can we create a new economic system that works for businesses, families and the planet?

Join us to read and discuss the book, create community, share ritual and spirituality, and act for justice.

Catholic Advocacy Day

IPJC organized 120 appointments in 40 of the 49 Districts in Washington.



Participants from the 46th District caucus prior to meeting with their legislators.

peace & justice center

Northwest Catholic Women's Convocation IV

DAWNING OF A NEW STORY: RADICAL HOPE

MAY 1-2, 2009—BELLEVUE, WA

Space is Filling Up Fast—Register NOW!

- **Registration Brochures Available**
Call IPJC—206.223.1138
- **Online registration—www.ipjc.org**
- **Registration Fee is \$135**
- **Event Hotel Discount** when you mention the Northwest Catholic Women's Convocation:
Sheraton Bellevue—866.837.4275
Courtyard Marriott Bellevue—888.236.2427



The Convocation is filling up fast! Don't miss this rare and unique event—28 National/International speakers including:

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Margaret Wheatley
Riane Eisler
Ivone Gebara
Paula D'Arcy
John Dear
Brian Swimme
Nontombi Naomi Tutu
Edwina Gately
Margaret Brennan
Jean Shinoda Bolen

Visit our updated website www.ipjc.org

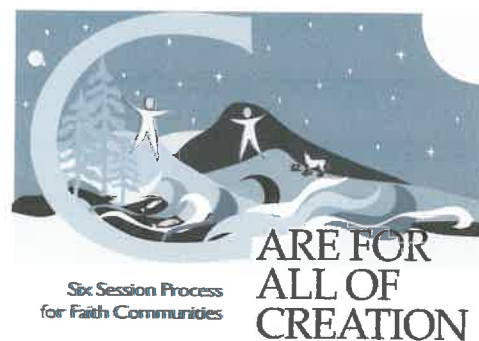
- ◆ Easy Federal Advocacy Action
- ◆ Resource Links
- ◆ Program Offerings

Working to End Human Trafficking

The seeds that were planted in our Fall Human Trafficking Events have started to sprout. Together we can make a difference and stop the demand for human trafficking!



- Bus Ad Campaign launched on 180 Seattle area buses. Contact IPJC for information on starting a bus ad campaign in your City.
- Silent Prayer Vigils on the first Sunday of every month at 1:30pm in Westlake Park, Seattle. Contact IPJC for a "tool kit" to start a monthly vigil in your community.
- School & Parish presentations
- Web Resources



1. Universe Story
2. Global Warming
3. Water
4. Social, Economic, Environmental Interdependence
5. Toxics
6. Greening Parishes

Process includes prayer, education, catholic social teaching, analysis, discussion, signs of hope & action

Price—\$5.00 (60 page booklet)
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Creative Responses to the Water Crisis

Kids Play—Water Pumps

Imagine a playground that not only provides hours of good clean fun...it also provides safe clean water for the local community. The PlayPump water system—a child's merry-go-round attached to a water pump, storage tank and tap—makes this dream a reality. As the children spin round and round, they draw clean water from underground. To date, the non-profit PlayPumps International has installed more than 1,000

PlayPumps in sub-Saharan Africa. "Where we used to get water is a long way from our place," said Trifina Ngwenya of Acornhoek, South Africa. "PlayPump water is better. It is clean and fresh." www.playpumps.org



© PlayPumps International

Native Plants

Native plants need less water, chemicals and pesticides to survive in your yard than exotic species from other locales. Verde Native Plant Nursery is a non-profit in Portland, Oregon that promotes native plants, while also increasing opportunities for low-income people in the "green economy." Verde works with Hacienda CDC, an affordable housing provider, to provide job training to their residents in the training greenhouse. The plants are used on Hacienda CDC properties as well as other wetland restoration and stormwater management projects. Visit www.plantnative.org to learn about native plants.

Shower Challenge

How long is your shower in the morning? The average American takes an 8 minute shower—using 20 gallons of water. Reducing your shower by just one minute could save up to 1,826 gallons a year. A group of young people in Brooklyn, New York—calling themselves the "Brooklyn Green Team"—challenged 160 of their friends to a "5 Minute Shower Challenge" last summer. "Not everyone makes it all the way through without ever cheating,"

according to Green Team member Amanda Gentile, "but they are more aware and hopefully carry those behaviors forward." Contact your local water utility for other water saving tips and for free or discounted low flow shower heads.

Rainy Day Brush-Off

The average American roof sheds more than 700 gallons of water per one inch of rain.

Some people are beginning to use rain barrels to collect rooftop runoff to water plants, lawns and gardens. In Knox County, Tennessee, local artists



and water conservation officials have teamed up for their 2nd annual "Rainy Day Brush-off" to promote the use of rain barrels. More than 60 artists and several student groups have created original works of art on 55-gallon rain barrels. The barrels will be auctioned off on eBay starting May 16th. Proceeds support

community education and conservation efforts. www.waterqualityforum.org

A Matter of Spirit is a publication of the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center

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Oregon Province Jesuits
Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, U.S. Ontario Province
Sisters of Providence, Mother Joseph Province
Sisters of St Francis of Philadelphia
Sisters of St Joseph of Peace, Western Province
Tacoma Dominicans

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Benedictine Sisters of Lacey
Benedictine Sisters of Mt. Angel
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