

Prayer Vigil for the Care of Creation June 23, 2019

Responsorial: *(Adapted from Psalm 104)*

♪For with you is the fountain of life, in your light we see light.

All life sprang from the water. Earth was covered with water like a blanket – even the mountains. Then the water flowed into the places that were made for it.

♪For with you is the fountain of life, in your light we see light.

The earth is full of living things. Look at the rivers and the oceans-- so big and wide! They are filled with all kinds of life. There are creatures large and small—too many to count!

♪For with you is the fountain of life, in your light we see light.

The streams provide water for all the wild animals. Wild birds come to live by the pools; they sing in the branches of nearby trees. The rains come down on the mountains and the earth gets everything it needs. The grasses grow to feed the animals. Plants give us food from the earth. All life sprang from the water.

♪For with you is the fountain of life, in your light we see light. (1x)

Reading *from the resources for the United Nations' World Water Day 2019*

Whoever you are, wherever you are, water is your human right.

To 'leave no one behind', we must focus our efforts towards including people who have been marginalized or ignored. Water services must meet the needs of marginalized groups and their voices must be heard in decision-making processes. Regulatory and legal frameworks must recognize the right to water for all people, and sufficient funding must be fairly and effectively targeted at those who need it most.

The water supply for each person must be **sufficient and continuous** to cover personal and domestic uses, which comprise water for drinking, washing clothes, food preparation and personal and household hygiene.

Water for personal and domestic uses must be **safe and acceptable**. It must be free from elements that constitute a threat to a person's health. Water must also be of an acceptable color, odor and taste to ensure that individuals will not resort to polluted alternatives that may look more attractive.

Water and sanitation facilities must be **physically accessible and within safe reach** for all sections of the population, taking into account the needs of particular groups, including persons with disabilities, women, children, and the elderly.

Water services must be **affordable to all**. No individual or group should be denied access to safe drinking water because they cannot afford to pay.

Take a moment to think about the role of water in our lives. We cannot live without water. We can survive longer without food than without water. Our potable water supply is finite and in danger from pollutants. How do you view your responsibility as a human charged with the caring of the Earth and its water? Think about the ways water sustains and nourishes you. Think about the gift water is to you, to humankind, to all life on Earth. Take these thoughts into today's meditation.

Invitation to Silence

As we prepare for the silence... think about this morning. You woke up and went to the bathroom. After you flushed, you washed your hands and brushed your teeth. Did you notice the water? It was clean and fresh and ready to use, right out of the tap. Did you have something to drink? Perhaps you had tea or coffee, or juice or water to drink with breakfast.

Now, imagine you don't live here. You live in a village. You wake up and have to go outside and find a private place to go to the bathroom. Maybe you decide to wait until you go to the river. You and your neighbors are using the banks of the river as a toilet, since there is no other choice - you don't have running water in the village. You have to go to the river to get water to drink. You carry a large empty bucket with you as you walk to the river. After you are done, you wash your hands in the river, as do your friends. Now you fill up the bucket, with that same river water and carry the bucket of water home for your family to use it for cooking, drinking and washing.

Reflect about the millions of Earth's children who do not have clean water, and about how easy it is for so many others to get all the clean water they need.

Prayer for Enlightenment *Adapted from the Otomi Water Ceremony and "Poem to the River" by Mindahi Bastida*

O River who softly emerges from mountains and volcanoes: For centuries you fed your children with your crystalline waters of life. You sheltered birds, from your sides came the colored fish, and from you arose the aquatic plants. You always let yourself be caressed by those who loved you, by your affluent veins and by the mermaid's song.

Today the rock is broken; the springs are drowned in their own source. The clear clouds have turned gray and a latent crying is heard, without pause, from your spirit. The lament is accompanied by a pitiful symphony from your children who are dying by your side. Yesterday: river of life – Today: river that dies.

But your children, those who love you, they accompany you and work for your life. In the middle of the nauseous waters of death, there is a hope in life that encourages us.

Unison Prayer (*"The Lord's Prayer as I hear It" by the Rev. Charles Allen*)

**All-embracing Love, in, among and beyond us all,
defy us when we invoke your name to serve our own ends.**

**Open us and our world to the new life you are bringing,
and sustain us through our daily cares.**

**Bring peace to our conflicts with you, with others, with ourselves,
and shine through our fears of failure and death.**

**For our life together dwells always in the radiance of your empowering.
Let it be.**

Concluding Promise

Whoever you are, wherever you are, water is your human right.

**I promise to be a good steward to the Earth's water resources, conserve water whenever I can, and
work so more people around the world have the clean water they need.**

I will remember that what I do upstream affects all life downstream.

I will honor my spiritual connection to the web of all existence by protecting it.