



**A Lenten  
Reflection**



**School Sisters of Notre Dame  
Atlantic-Midwest Province**



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# Lenten Invitation

## Water of Life



*Jesus stood up and cried out: "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'"*

*- John 7:37-38*

The members of the SSND Atlantic-Midwest Province Water Committee invite you to spend time during Lent 2015 to reflect on the priceless gift of water in our world today. To assist you, we have created an online Lenten Calendar that is designed to help us ponder, study, celebrate, and protect this natural resource which is in severe ecological crisis. The Lenten Calendar begins on Ash Wednesday, includes weekly Sunday reflections, and concludes with reflections for the Easter Triduum and Easter Sunday.

The dangers we are creating for water around the globe threaten all of life. At the same time we are eliminating one of the richest sources of God's revelation – a source which Christians recognize in special ways with the culmination of Lent in the sacred mysteries of the Easter Triduum. *You Are Sent* (Constitution of the School Sisters of Notre Dame) reminds us that as Christians we are called and sent by the waters of our baptism to be . . . open in a new way to the initiative of God in our lives. We are incorporated into the life of Christ and into the community of the church which is by its very nature missionary. Thus, with all who have been baptized, we share in Christ's mission to proclaim the good news of God's kingdom (YAS C2).

# Ash Wednesday

As I travel around the world, people think the only place where there is potential conflict over water is the Middle East, but they are completely wrong. We have the problem all over the world.

- *Kofi Annan*



In today's First Reading, Joel issues a powerful mandate to Israel "to return to God with all their hearts, to sound the trumpet, and to call a solemn assembly" (Joel 2:12, 15-16). This Lent let us take seriously Joel's call for conversion, especially as we ponder the daunting words of Kofi Annan: "As I travel around the world, people think the only place where there is potential conflict over water is the Middle East, but they are completely wrong. We have the problem all over the world."

## Water of Life

To **"give up"** something for Lent is not an option for most people in the world.

*Today our world suffers from water pollution and scarcity of potable water.*

By 2025, 1.8 billion people will be living in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity, and two-thirds of the world's population could live under water stress conditions.

Source: [click here](#)

# *First Sunday*

Some people feel the rain.  
Others just get wet.

*- Bob Marley*



As Bob Marley once noted, "Some people feel the rain. Others just get wet." Let us not merely drift through this Lent. Rather, let us join Jesus in the desert for 40 days (Mark 1:12-15) that will make a real difference in our own lives and in the world today.

## Water of Life

The world's population today is comprised of 7.2 billion people. We share a **very** limited supply of drinking water.

The largest quantities of water are in the oceans.  
Fresh water in the world is only 2.5%  
of the total water available on this planet.

Source: [click here](#)

# Second Sunday

The frog does not drink up the  
pond in which it lives.

- *Native American Saying*



The Psalm for today's liturgy challenges us to give public witness to our beliefs "in the presence of all God's people" (Ps. 16:18). With what is happening to water all over the globe, what do we believe and to what must we witness? Our Native American peoples give us wise advice - "The frog does not drink up the pond in which it lives."

## Water of Life

Earth's polar ice caps are melting at an unprecedented rate.

Adélie penguins stand atop a block of melting ice on a rocky shoreline at Cape Denison, Commonwealth Bay, in East Antarctica on January 1, 2010.

Source: [click here](#)

(Photo: Pauline Askin/Reuters)



# Third Sunday

In an age when [we] have forgotten our origins and are blind even to [our] most essential needs for survival, water along with other resources has become the victim of [our] indifference.

- *Rachel Carson*



The words of Rachel Carson could easily be on the lips and in the heart of Jesus as He drives the money changers from the Temple in today's Gospel (John 2:13-25):

In an age when [we] have forgotten our origins and are blind even to [our] most essential needs for survival, water along with other resources has become the victim of [our] indifference.

## Water of Life

**FRACKING** is way of extracting sources of energy such as gas and oil. Fracking is a process through which large amounts of fresh water combined with sand and other substances, some toxic, are driven under high pressure down wells drilled into deep layers of shale. This creates cracks through which bubbles of trapped oil and natural gas can escape into the well.

Where will all the fresh water for fracking come from?

How will the dirty water that's pumped out be prevented from contaminating groundwater?

How will the silence, solitude and serenity of our beautiful landscapes be preserved?

# Fourth Sunday

In the words from Ephesians for today, we are reminded that “we are created in Christ Jesus for good works” and that this is “to be our way of life” (Eph. 1:20).

What can water teach us about “good works” and “our way of life”? Mary Oliver contemplates:



## Water

What is the vitality and necessity  
of clean water?

Ask the man who is ill, and who is  
lifting his lips to the cup.

Ask the forest.

– *Mary Oliver*

Water of Life

Filthy water cannot be washed.

– *West African Proverb*

Source: [click here](#)

# *Fifth Sunday*

Over 1 billion people don't have access to clean water. Bottled water costs 2,000 times more than tap water. We buy more than half a billion bottles of water a week, which would leave a trail of plastic bottle more than 5 times the circumference of the globe.

*- Annie Leonard  
The Story of Stuff*



We make countless civil laws to rectify injustices. The prophet Jeremiah reminds us in today's First Reading that the laws which bring true justice are those laws written in our hearts by God (Jeremiah 31:32).

## Water of Life

**Bottled Water is no healthier than tap water.**

**In theory**, bottled water in the United States falls under the regulatory authority of the Food and Drug Administration.

**In practice**, about 70 percent of bottled water never crosses state lines for sale, making it exempt from FDA oversight.

Source: [click here](#)

# *Palm Sunday*

As we listen to the Passion in today's liturgy, we recognize the stark contradictions between Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem and his ignominious journey to Calvary. How do we make sense of his experiences? How do we make sense of the sacredness of water and our exploitation of it? Perhaps the insight of Winnie the Pooh provides some help:



**Sometimes, if you stand on the bottom rail of a bridge and lean over to watch the river slipping slowly away beneath you, you will suddenly know everything there is to be known.**

*- A.A. Milne  
Winnie the Pooh*

## Water of Life

“My word is like the snow and the rain that come down from the sky to water the earth. They make the crops grow and provide seed for the planting and food to eat.”

*- Isaiah 55:10 (GNT)*

All the food we eat needs water to grow:

1 apple = 70 liters  
1 slice of bread = 40 liters  
Serving of Vegetables = 20 liters  
Large Steak = 2025 liters

Source: [click here](#)

# *Holy Thursday*

But let justice roll on like a river,  
righteousness like a never-failing stream!

- *Amos 5:24*

## Water of Life

“Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Water, for she is  
useful and humble, precious and pure.”

- *St. Francis Canticle of the Sun*

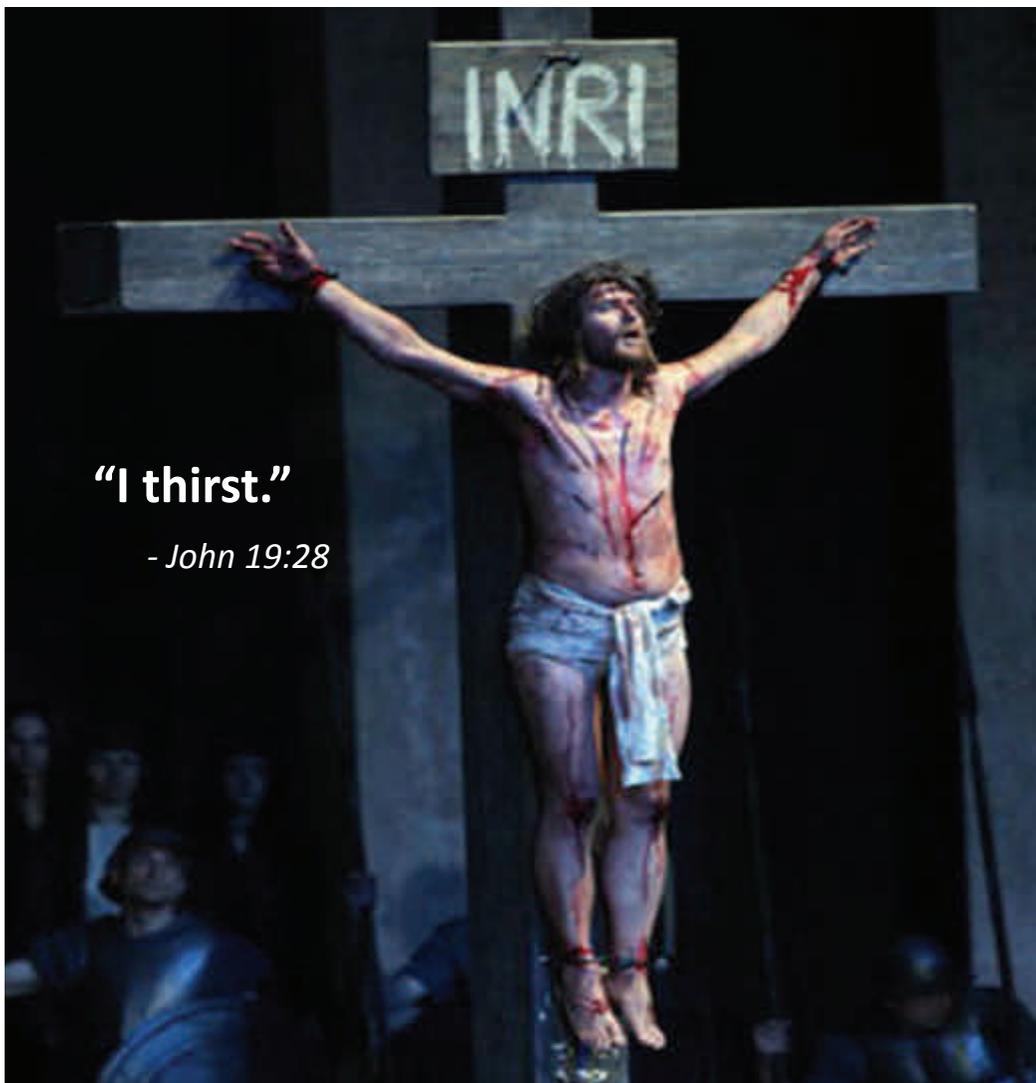
Pope Francis  
washes and  
kisses a foot of  
a disabled  
person at the  
S. Maria della  
Providenza  
church in Rome,  
during the Holy  
Thursday  
celebration,  
April 17, 2014.

Source: [click here](#)



# *Good Friday*

## Water of Life



**"I thirst."**

*- John 19:28*

The average human body is 70 percent water. We start out life being 99 percent water, as fetuses. When we are born, we are 90 percent water, and by the time we reach adulthood we are down to 70 percent. If we die of old age, we will probably be about 50 percent water. In other words, throughout our lives we exist mostly as water.

*- Masaru Emoto*

**We forget that the water cycle and  
the life cycle are one.**

*- Jacques Cousteau*

# *Holy Saturday*

## Water of Life

Earth *thirsts*  
for Resurrection.



Thousands have lived without love,  
not one without water.

- *W. H. Auden*

# *Easter Sunday*

## Water of Life

To understand water is to understand  
the cosmos, the marvels of nature,  
and life itself.

*- Masaru Emoto*



### **The World Can't Wait**

Ever-present, ever-loving God,  
May your gentle spirit surprise us,  
shatter our complacency  
and wake us  
from our dreams.

**We know the time is now.**

May your urgent spirit send us out,  
and demand our courage;  
may we set forth the stories of truth  
in the face of the story of power.

**May world leaders listen to us.**

May your comforting spirit  
turn us towards the discomfort  
of knowing, seeing  
and understanding.

**The hour has come to act.**

May your Holy Spirit  
burn through us,  
and call us  
to tell even those who aren't ready to listen  
**that the world can't wait.**  
**Amen.**

*- Linda Jones - CAFOD*



*Anything else you're interested in is not going to happen if you can't  
breathe the air and drink the water. Don't sit this one out. Do some-  
thing. You are by accident of fate alive at an absolutely critical moment  
in the history of our planet.*

*- Dr. Carl Sagan*

All the water there will be, is.

- *National Geographic, October 1993*