

WATER FOR LIFE

IN DEFENSE OF OUR "SISTER WATER"

*How Religious
can express Reverence
and Concern for
the precious gift of Water*

Prepared by
the Ecology Working Group
of the JPIC Promoters,
Rome, Italy - June 2003

*Your comments, questions
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“Praised be You, my Lord, through
Sister Water, so useful, lowly,
precious and pure.”¹

(Canticle of the Creatures, St. Francis of
Assisi.)

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¹ Commentary - “Sister Water - A Franciscan Perspective”, by Bro. Celso Márcio Teixeira ofm. c.f.,
<http://www.ofm-jpic.org/ecology>

INTRODUCTION :

Water is essential to sustain the Earth and its inhabitants.

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2003 an International Year of Freshwater to call the world's attention to the crisis surrounding a most precious resource, water.

What is the water crisis about?

Some would say that it is about scarcity and a growing population. Others would say that it is about distribution, waste, and lack of reverence for water in a materialistic and consumer society. Others would say that it is about the privatisation of water supply services and ownership - with 95% these activities still controlled by the public sector.



Every citizen has a birthright to water as well as to health care and education.

Access to such basic goods is not a matter of choice, but a Human Right.

However, this right has yet to be formally recognised by the international community, despite lengthy discussion and negotiations within the three "World Water Forum" events of 1996, 2000 and 2003, an International Freshwater conference in 2001 and discussions within the United Nations. No consensus on the issue emerged from the World Water Forum in Kyoto, March 2003, or from the G8 Summit in Evian (1-3 June, 2003) in its Action Plan for Water - seven of the G8 leaders representing Christian nations. It was in Kyoto that the Vatican reiterated and elaborated its strong support for the right to water. Extracts from the Vatican paper will be presented later in this booklet.

People have no alternative to water, even when price increases threaten their accessibility to it. Therefore, the provision of these goods cannot be left to market forces. "Water by its very nature cannot be treated as a mere commodity among other commodities. Catholic social thought has always stressed that the defence and preservation of certain common goods, such as the natural and human environments, cannot be safeguarded simply by market forces, since they touch on fundamental human needs which escape market logic". (cf. *Centesimus Annus*, 40).

This booklet, following the "see, judge and act" method, aims to give you clear information on issues related to water. It is the second booklet in a series on environmental issues put together by a working group of International JPIC promoters based in Rome.

Our overall goal is to help encourage sustainable lifestyles in religious communities. The first booklet was dedicated to Climate Change and Global Warming (www.ofm-jpic.org/globalwarming). There is already a wealth of information available on water so we do not propose to give an exhaustive exposé on all aspects of the theme. The signs of the times call us to environmental conversion. We hope this booklet will be a step in that direction.

A central question is why we should be more involved in this and other issues relating to Social and Environmental Justice. Water is an essential element not only for growing crops and raising animals, but also for people's very survival. Yet water scarcity is widespread. In many rural areas, water tables are falling, wells are contaminated and a rapidly decreasing run-off/water flow is available. Competitive claims on water resources by irrigation, industry and urban domestic consumers often favour the more

powerful, leaving the less powerful thirsty. Inaction on our part will have profound consequences for life in all its forms and especially for the vulnerable on our Mother Earth.

SEE

A Few Facts About Water...

The poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge in “Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner” says: “Water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink”. Why do we need to become water efficient? Fresh water is increasingly scarce today – the UN World Water Development Report has predicted that “by the middle of this century, at worst 7 billion people in sixty countries will be water-scarce, at least 2 billion people in 48 countries.

Consider these facts:

1. Almost 98% of the water on planet Earth is salt water, unfit for human consumption. Less than 1% of total freshwater is available for our use; the majority of it is locked in polar snow and ice!² To put it another way: Of every hundred litres of water less than half a teaspoon is fresh water available for human use.
2. Global water consumption has risen almost tenfold since 1900. World population is expected to increase by 45% in the next thirty years, whilst freshwater wastage is expected to increase by 10%.
3. Recent estimates is that *climate change* will account for about 20% of the increase in global water scarcity³.
4. Other factors influencing scarcity are: i) Degradation of water bodies; water tables, rivers, wetlands and bays. ii) Inequality of distribution. iii) Cross border conflicts. iv) Privatization.
5. According to the United Nations’ 1998 Human Development Report, three-fifths of the 4.4 billion people in the developing world lack access to basic sanitation and almost a third have no access to clean water.

² UNEP, Global Environmental Outlook.

³ UN World Water Development Report.

6. Under the Millenium Development Goals, 2000, the UN General Assembly agreed to halve by 2015 the number of people (then 1.2 billion) without access to safe water. A similar 2015 target for sanitation (lacked by an estimated 2.4 billion people) was subsequently agreed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2002.
7. Global water usage is divided thusly: agriculture: 70%; industry: 22% and domestic 8%.⁴
8. **Hidden Uses of water:** The Average water (in litres) needed to produce a kilo of: potatoes (1000), maize (1,400), rice (3,400), chicken (4,600) and beef (42,500)⁵.
9. More than half of the world's major rivers are being seriously depleted and polluted, and 25 million people fled their homes in 1998 because of contamination and depletion of river basins, outnumbering war-related refugees for the first time⁶.
10. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization has estimated that 100 tourists use the same amount of water in 55 days that could grow rice to feed 100 local villagers for 15 years.⁷
11. Typhoid, malaria, dengue, cholera and other water-related diseases are responsible for about 5 million deaths per year. This means that every minute of the day, somewhere in the world, ten persons, usually children, die unnecessary deaths.⁸
12. **Comparison of water consumption per day:** The Gambia (4.5 litres); Mali (8.0); USA (500); and England (200). The recommended basic requirement per person is 50 litres, but people can get by with 30 litres.⁹
13. **Water and Food Security:** In the World Peace Day Message 2002,¹⁰ Pope John Paul II stated that 'water is a basic factor of food security'. Using sophisticated computer modeling, a report by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)¹¹ projects that by 2025, water scarcity will cause annual global losses of 350 million metric tons of potential food production—slightly more than the entire current U.S. grain crop. In other words, it now appears that one of the main factors limiting future food production will be water.

⁴ Rob Boden, *Water Supply: Our Impact on the Planet* (Hodder Wayland 2002)

⁵ Peter Gleick, *The World's Water 2000-2001* (Island Press 2000)

⁶ Latin America Press, #7, Feb. 28,2000

⁷ Guardian Unlimited, May 12, 2001; article by Esther Addley: "Tourist's Water Demands Bleed Resorts Dry"

⁸ www.worldwater.org

⁹ New Internationalist Magazine, March 2003

¹⁰ Reference to all of the Holy See's World Day for Peace messages, including, 2001, in 6 languages:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/peace/index.htm

¹¹ "The Global Water Outlook to 2025: Averting an Impending Crisis"
<http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/fpr/fprwater2025.pdf>

14. In the developed world it takes on average 15,000 litres of water per year to remove the human waste of each person. (35 kilos of excrement and 500 litres of urine).¹²

Bottled Water:

15 “Approximately 25% of bottled water is merely tap water and according to tests carried out in the USA by the Natural Resources Defence Council (NRDC) it violated, in at least one sample, an enforceable standard or exceeded microbiological-purity guidelines.”¹³

16. The water bottling industry profits from the sale of this common resource at the expense of the environment. Pumping can dry out springs, destroy habitats, devastate ecosystems, and drain aquifers. Plastics are now the fastest growing sector of the waste stream and presently take up more than 25% of the volume of materials sent to landfills every year.¹⁴

17. The Perrier group owned by Nestle is twice as big as the next largest water-bottling corporation. Nestle owns approximately 30% of the bottled water market. Danone controls 15% of the market, with Pepsi and Coca-Cola as runner-ups. The bottled water industry is currently worth \$22 billion and some experts estimate a growth potential of 30% annually”.¹⁵

PRIVATISATION OF WATER – “A BIG ISSUE!” WATER AND MULTINATIONALS

Predictions are that by the year 2025 two-thirds of the world population will not have access to sufficient drinking water. Many multinational corporations see this “crisis” for humanity as an economic opportunity. Fortune Magazine, May 2000 stated: “Water promises to be to the 21st century what oil was to the 20th century: the precious commodity that determines the wealth of nations.” However, unlike oil, water has no substitute!

For most people water is not thought of as a “commodity” to be bought and sold. Water has always been considered as being a “public trust” because water is

¹² New Internationalist Magazine, March 2003

¹³ Water for All Campaign, Public Citizen (www.citizen.org/cmep/water)

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

essential, not only for human life, but for animal and plant life as well as for the life of the planet itself. Water services have therefore been the responsibility of public and municipal systems.

Under the World Trade Organization (WTO)¹⁶ and its General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS),¹⁷ water services are coming under a new set of rules. The rules enable multinational companies to “buy and sell” water rights in the country of their choice. Consider these examples:

- Alaska Water Exports at one time had a proposal to haul glaciers from Alaska to Saudi Arabia
- The Swiss multinational, Nestle Corporation, owner of 68 bottled water companies, pumps water from Lake Michigan in the United States at a profit of about \$1.8 million dollars a day. Sixty-five per cent of the water leaves the area in large trucks to be sold in other places.
- In 1998, a Canadian Company received permission to haul off 156 million gallons of Lake Superior water every year and sell it in Asia. The proposal was eventually rejected because of public and political outrage.¹⁸

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, a powerful U.S. corporation, water rates were immediately increased. 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 a “secret court” of the WTO!

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) make, in many cases, new loans conditional on the privatization of water and other services! “A random

¹⁶ The World Trade Organization (WTO), which sets the rules for International Trade, embodies an unshaken belief in the benevolence of market forces. Focusing on the removal of so-called barriers to trade, it seeks to establish open markets across the globe, unencumbered by culture, political traditions, social rights, or environmental protection.

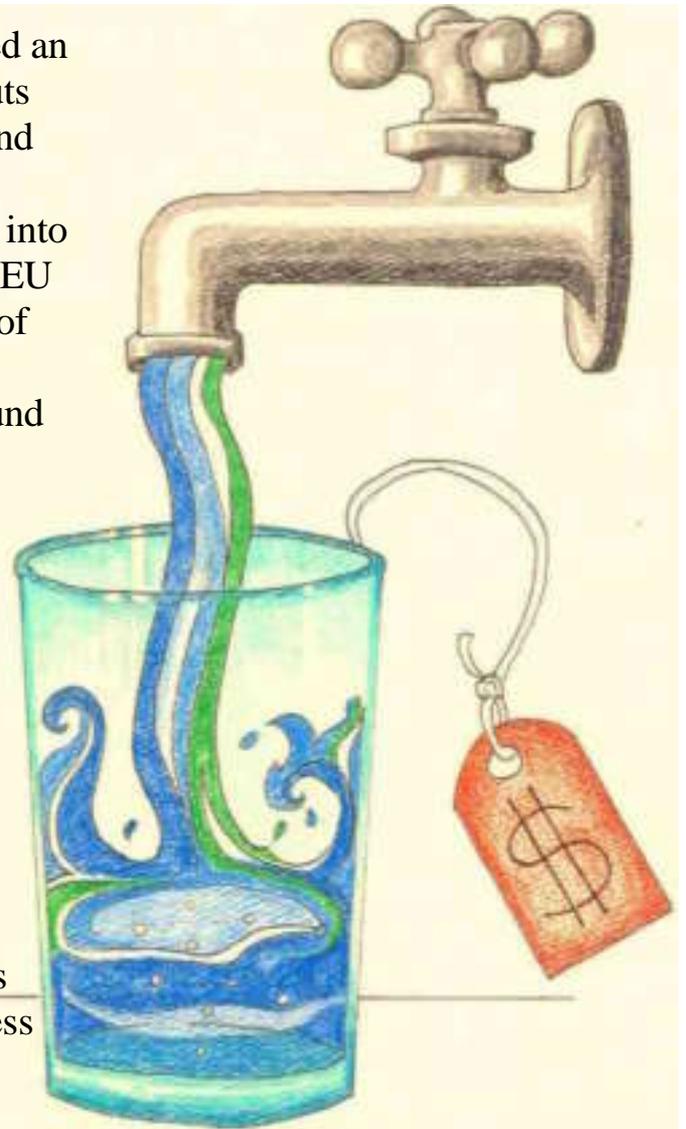
¹⁷ **General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).** - One of the effects of globalisation is the rapid and often unnecessary pressure for the privatisation and corporate takeover of public services – including education, healthcare, water management and municipal services – in countries all over the world. Large trans-national corporations in the service industries are working with national governments and international bodies, to establish a set of powerful trade rules that will prise open the services market internationally. This is the subject of the negotiations presently ongoing at the headquarters of the **World Trade Organization** in Geneva, where national governments are negotiating a new trade and investment treaty.

¹⁸ Defend the Global Commons (Vol.2 No.1 Jan 2003) www.citizen.org/cmep/water

review of IMF loans in 40 countries during 2000 revealed that 12 countries had loan conditions that imposed water privatization. In general, it is African countries, the smallest, most impoverished, and most debt-ridden countries that experience these conditions. More than 5 million people die each year in Africa from poor water access.”¹⁹

Recently, the Dutch Financial Daily carried an article stating that “the European Union puts developing countries under pressure to hand over their water supply to European Companies”. The article provides insight into which sectors in other WTO countries the EU wants market access to, in the framework of GATS and the relevant forthcoming negotiations under the so-called Doha Round of WTO. European drinking water corporations like Suez²⁰, Vivendi, and Thames Water have an interest in the dismantling of public drinking water supplies in the developing world.²¹

What is happening is that legal agreements, under the WTO, guarantee the free and unregulated flow of goods, services, and capital across national borders. Governments are signing away their control over domestic water supplies for debt relief, the promise of market access and for foreign aid. Citizens are then obliged to purchase water at a high price.



As these institutions (WTO, IMF) take on more and more of the economic and social policy decision making function of the nation state, the question must be asked, where does society draw the line between what goods and services are to be protected because they are deemed critical for life, critical for a man, woman, or child’s ability to live a dignified life versus the imperative of business to maximize profit?

¹⁹ Global Water Grab pamphlet by Polaris Institute (www.polarisinstitute.org)

QUESTIONS FOR THE "SEE" SECTION:

1. Of the facts on water which one challenges/disturbs you most and why?
2. Which of these facts relate most to your area and country?
3. Which of the facts give you most hope and why?
4. How do you and your community contribute to the "water problem"?
5. What are your feelings about control of water resources by private enterprise? Share.

JUDGE

WATER IN THE BIBLE²².

During the early centuries of its existence in Palestine, the Jewish people never succeeded in occupying the seashore. They were not a people of the beach and sea. The sea with its waves and mysterious depths frightened them.

The people lived more in the central highlands and depended for water on the rain and springs. Water falls from on high, from heaven, on rainy days. In the springs, the water comes from below, from the earth. Besides, no matter what direction one takes, locally or far away, it is certain that one will meet water, in the sea. Water exists above, beneath and to the side. Starting from this empirical observation, they drew up the image of creation. On the second day, God separated the waters, that of above and that of below, and created space. On the third day, here below, God separated the dry land from the flooded land and made the land appear. The very beautiful poetry of Psalm 104 describes how God succeeded in mastering the water and putting it at the service of life.

Before occupying the land in the 13th century before Christ, the people were nomads, who roamed the desert and found life in the springs in the middle of the desert. Jesus is the Good Shepherd that leads his sheep to the springs of eternal life (Ps. 23, Jn 10).

When the monarchy fell in 587 BC and the traditional signs of the presence of God, the temple, possession of the land, sacrifices, priesthood and Jerusalem, were destroyed, many said: "God has abandoned us and forgotten about us." But Jeremiah replied: "God has not forgotten! God has not broken the alliance with us!" – "How do you know this?" they asked. "Because the rain continues to fall in

²² Fr. Carlos Mesters, O.Carm. /2003.

due time, the rivers continue to flow towards the sea, irrigating the land...” (cf. Jeremiah 31, 35-37; 33, 19-26).

Water is good for purifying, for quenching thirst, irrigating plants, swimming, for refreshing, preparing food, and many other purposes. *It is impossible to live without water.*

The Samaritan woman drew water from the well to quench her thirst every day. Speaking with Jesus, she discovered another spring, within herself, gushing with eternal life (Jn 4,14). “Happy the person who... finds pleasure in the Law of the Lord and murmurs God’s law day and night. That person is like a tree that is planted by water streams, yielding its fruit in season, its leaves never fading, success attends all they do.” (Ps 1)

Scripture Resources: Some texts that speak about water, and their symbolism:

- John 7, 37-39, the promise of living water.
- John 4,7-14, the water of life in the conversation with the Samaritan woman.
- Ezekiel 47, 1-12, the beautiful vision of water that flows from the temple irrigating everything.
- Apocalypse 7,17, the lamb that leads by springs of living water.
- Apocalypse, 22,2, the river that flows from the New Paradise generating life in all parts.
- Genesis 2,10-13, the river of terrestrial Paradise that generates the 4 great rivers of the world.
- Psalm 107, 23-30, God calms the tempests of the waters of the sea (cf. Mk 4, 35-41).

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ²³

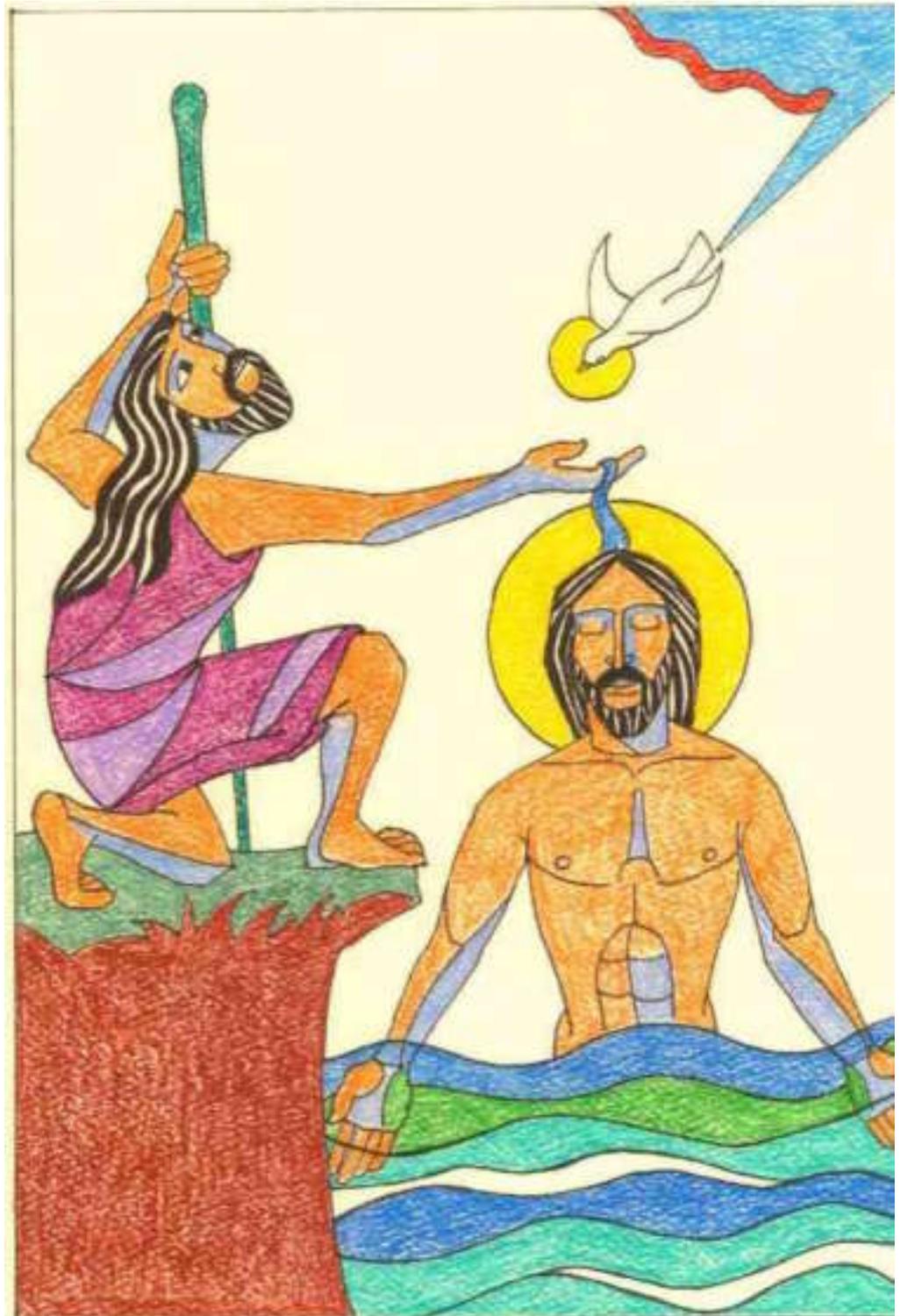
Water is a primordial reality whose importance and symbolism touches every level of existence. Ancient myth and modern science converge when they see water as the cradle of life, the amniotic fluid that holds the embryo of evolution and growth. As the basic constituent of all organic material, water is necessary for the existence of all living things, human, animal and plant.

Its presence assures life and growth; its absence presages death and decay.

²³ Mons. Liam Bergin, Rector of the Irish College, Rome.

Water refreshes and renews: a pool revives and restores limbs that are tired and weary; a fountain cools and soothes a spirit that is burdened and troubled; a bath cleans and purifies a body that is dirty and contaminated. Not surprisingly, people choose places close to water for holidays to be renewed and refreshed.

Water has a cycle all its own that is beyond our control. The rain that falls on all, rich and poor alike, reminds us that creation is a gift entrusted to our care. Water belongs to no one in particular but is freely given for the good of all.



Whenever politics or economics seek to block general access to this universal right, the natural order of things is upended. “The principle water difficulty today is not one of absolute scarcity, but rather of distribution and resources.

Access and deprivation underlie most water decisions. Hence linkages between water policy and ethics increasingly emerge throughout the world.”²⁴

In the Judeo-Christian tradition the rich symbolism of water finds a wonderful summary in the “Prayer over Baptismal Waters” in the Rite of Baptism.

At the very dawn of creation the Spirit of God breathed on the waters making them the source of all goodness. The waters of the great flood were a sign of the waters of baptism, prefiguring the life to come, an end to sin and a new beginning for all creation. Through the waters of the Red Sea the Lord led Israel out of Egypt. In the waters of baptism the new People of God is freed from the slavery of sin. Through the Jordan River, the Lord brought his chosen ones into the land of Canaan to live in integrity and peace. Through the waters of baptism, God’s pilgrim people enter the promised land where justice and harmony prevail. The prophets announced a future cleansing which would create a new heart and bestow a new spirit. John the Baptist preached a baptism for the forgiveness of sins and dramatically prefigured the dawn of redemption with his rite of washing.

In fulfilment of his baptism, Jesus died on the cross and, as water and blood flowed from his side, he opened for us the way to salvation.

Baptism is not a rite of passage into a privileged club. It is primarily a commitment to live in the service of our sisters and brothers and to manifest the justice of our God and Father as Jesus did. It is the sacrament by which believers express their commitment to live as the Spirit-filled community that seeks to anticipate the fullness of life that God holds in store for all creation.

²⁴ "Water, An Essential Element for Life," for the 3rd World Water Forum (Kyoto, 16th-23rd March 2003). For copies of the text in several languages go to:
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/index.htm

CHURCH DOCUMENTS ON ECOLOGY :

World Peace Day Message of John Paul II (January 1, 1990)
Catechism of the Catholic Church: 299-301; 307; 339-341; 344
Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio*, 22,23-24,69
Encyclical Letter, *Centesimus Annus*, 37-38
Encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, 4
Mater et Magistra, 196,199
Octogesima Adveniens, 21
Dogmatic Constitution, *Lumen Gentium*,#36
Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* #34
Synod of Bishops: Justice in the World, Chapter 1 #2
Encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae* #42
Apostolic Exhortation, *Vita Consecrata* # 90
Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in America* #25
Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Asia* #41
Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Oceania* #31
“Water, Fount of Life and a Gift for All”. Bolivian Episcopal Conference,
Cochabamba, February 12, 2003. (Spanish).

SOME ETHICAL CHALLENGES AND EXTRACTS FROM THE HOLY SEE TEXT FOR KYOTO²⁵ (IN BOXES) :

1. Access to clean and sufficient water supply is a Human Right:

- *"Water is a common good of humankind.* This is the basis for cooperation toward a water policy that gives priority to persons living in poverty ..."
- *"The centrality of the human person* must be foremost in any consideration..."
- *"The water services in many developing countries are,* however, *still plainly inadequate* in providing safe water supplies. The situation is so dramatic that it will not be overcome without increased development assistance and focused private investment from abroad,"
- *"Funds released through debt relief* could well be utilized in improving water services,"

²⁵ Ibid.

2. **Privatization and the common good:** there are inherent dangers associated with viewing *water as just another commodity*, to be sold in the market place.

- *"The 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...."*
- *"It has proved to be extremely difficult to establish the right balance of public-private partnerships and serious errors have been committed."*
- *"... empowering local governments and local communities to manage water supplies must be emphasized. Water management should be based on a participatory approach, involving users, planners and policy makers at all levels."*
- *"In any formation of private sector involvement with the state, there must exist a general parity among the parties allowing for informed decisions and sound agreements. A core concern in private sector involvement in the water sector is to ensure that efforts to achieve a water service that is efficient and reliable do not cause undue negative effects for the poor and low income families."*

3. **The Integrity of Creation:** A Christian is called to promote and protect the environment, not only for the benefits of the human community, but for the integrity of the whole of creation.
4. **The Prevention Principle:** Prevention of harm is the best method of environmental protection and pro-poor strategies.
5. **The Precautionary Principle:** Pollution is unacceptable. Decisions and actions must be taken to avoid the possibility of serious or irreversible environmental harm, even where scientific knowledge is insufficient or inconclusive.
6. **The Polluter pays Principle:** Those causing harm should pay compensation to victims and pay for redress of environmental damage caused.
7. **Righteous indignation:** knowledge of environmental degradation and exclusion from access to water, along with the dangers inherent in its commercialization in favour of the privileged, should elicit a feeling of indignation from the followers of Jesus.

- "For water users living in poverty ...(it is) *a right to life issue.*"
- "*The few*, with the means to control, cannot destroy or exhaust this resource, which is destined for the use of all. *Powerful international interests*, public and private, *must adapt their agendas to serve human needs rather than dominate them.*"

QUESTIONS FOR THE "JUDGE" SECTION

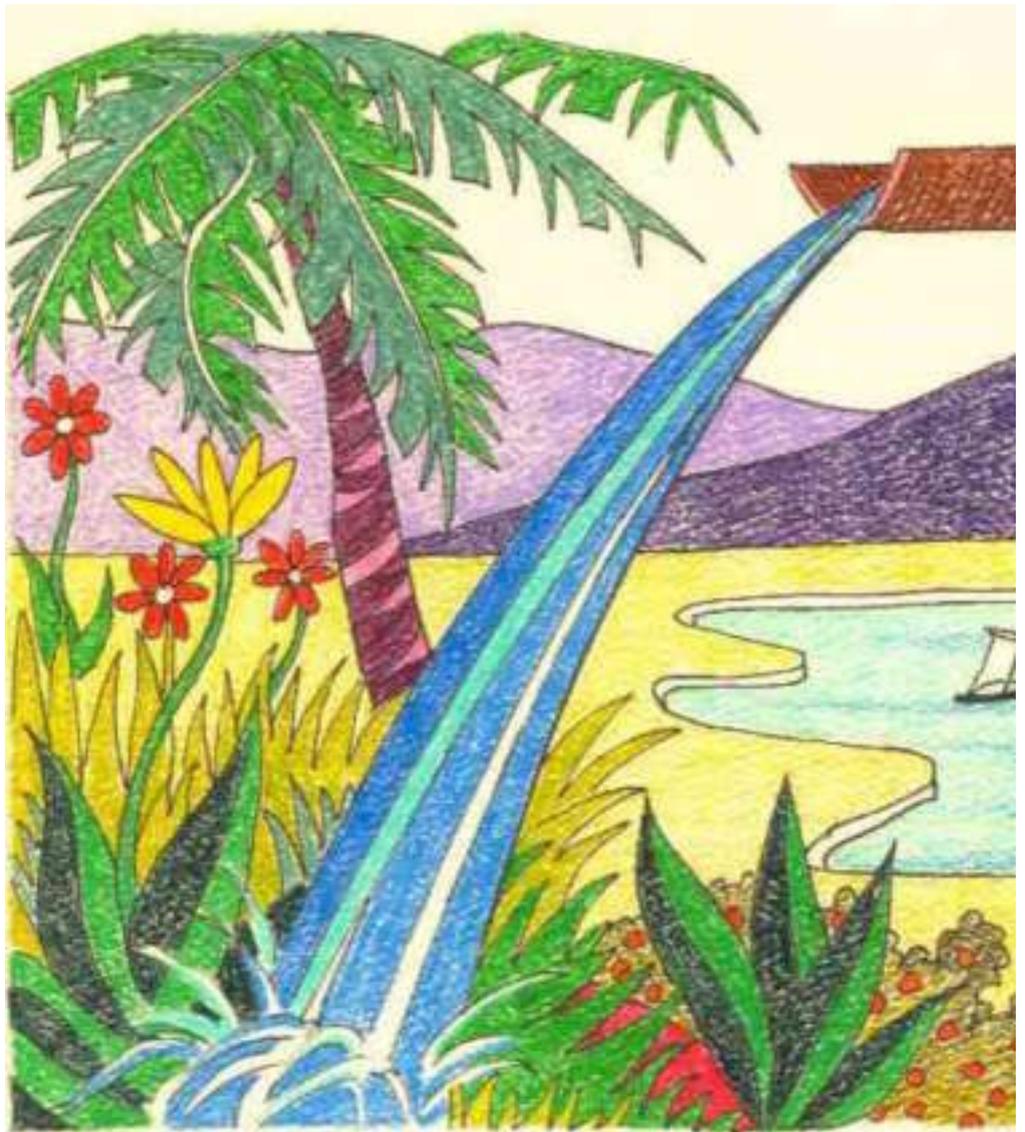
1. Describe in (a few words) a sentence what you think the position of the Church is with regard to water?
2. How does this compare with the market ethic of supply and demand?
3. What is the most recent church statement (local or international), or comment, you can remember with regard to the environment in general and to water in particular? What reaction did it elicit in your community?
4. Have any of your recent Congregational Chapters made statements on the Integrity of Creation?

ACT

WHY SHOULD RELIGIOUS BE CONCERNED AND INVOLVED IN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES?

Water is a key factor in the earth's marvellous capacity to absorb pain, to restore itself.

But today's attack is overwhelming and places the survival of the human species at risk. While the hydrological system unravels, millions are hurting because their right to water has been taken.



We are in a position to defend both our brothers and sisters and nature itself.

A landmark Papal document devoted exclusively to the environment and development issues entitled, Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all Creation (January 1, 1990) states that “Christians, in particular realize that their duty towards nature and creation is an essential part of their faith.” (no. 15)²⁶

Ecological integrity is an essential part of all faith traditions and is an important issue around which dialogue, collaboration and mutual understanding can be promoted. People of faith from all traditions are bringing together concern for humanity and care for the earth that supports life. They are working together

²⁶ Reference to all of the Holy See's World Day for Peace messages, including on the environment, 1990, in 6 languages: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/peace/index.htm

locally and internationally to protect the planet's precious water and to protect the right of all to access to water. In the current crisis we need to ally ourselves with those who have no water or are under threat, and with others who are fighting for justice among people and for the preservation of this precious resource.

This is the challenge for today:

- ❖ The prophetic dimension of religious life calls us to a lifestyle of simplicity and reverence for all creation.
- ❖ Many religious are involved in water issues because they work with communities that do not have access to fresh water!
- ❖ We are people who can read the 'signs of the times'.
- ❖ We are called to be in a continuous process of discernment.
- ❖ We have resources and established networks and ways to communicate the message and the warning of this threat to life.
- ❖ We have, through our spiritualities and charisms, a commitment to reconciliation and restoring harmony.
- ❖ We are people who come from an ethic of the common good and an ethic of solidarity with those in pain and in need of care.

How we respond will depend on where we live. For those who live in societies and countries characterized by consumerism and materialistic values, ways to live in harmony with creation will differ from those who live in societies and countries where the basic essentials to live a dignified human life hardly exist.

PROTECTING AND PRESERVING WATER

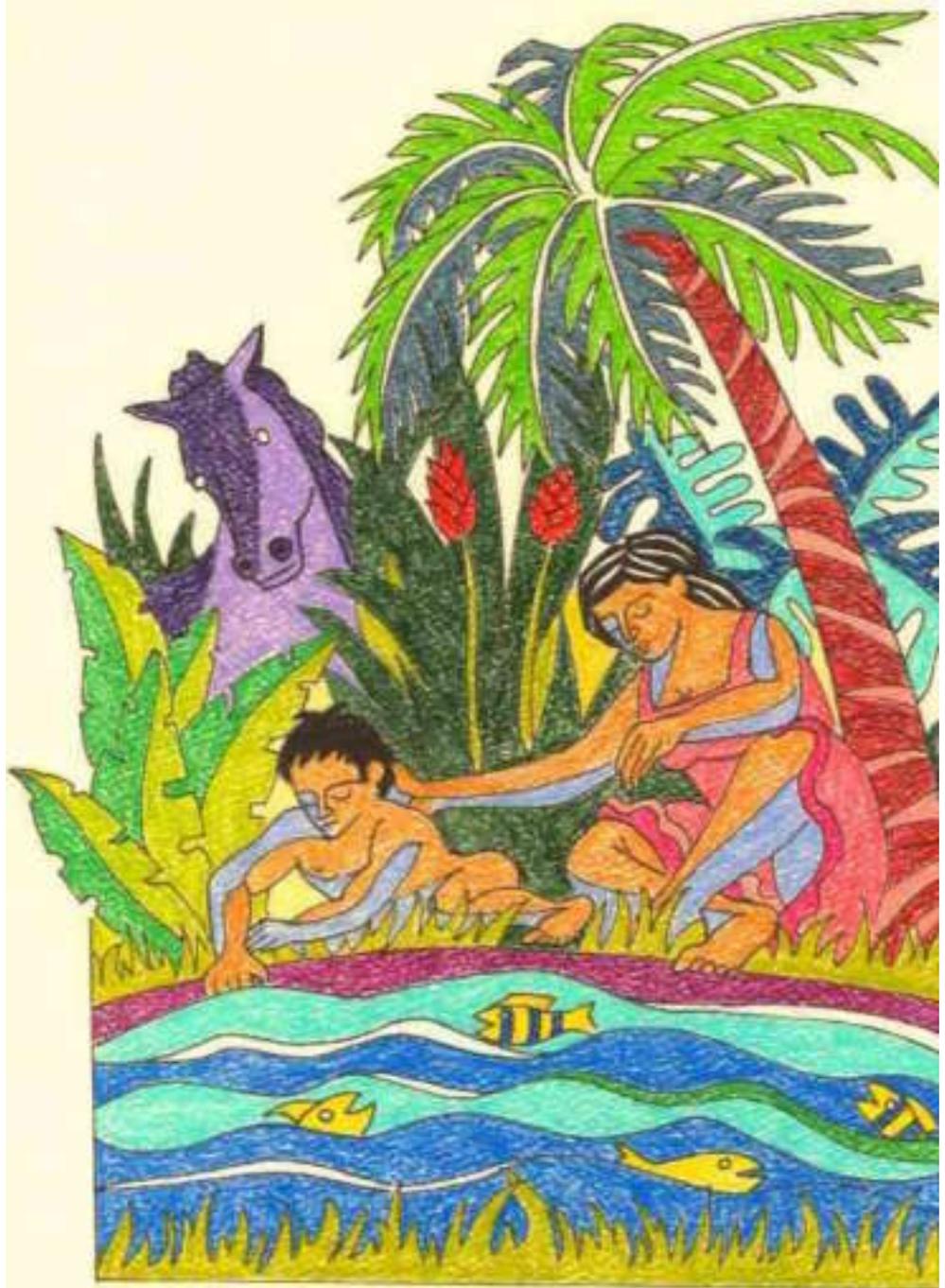
A Few Things You can Do...

CONTEMPLATE...

- Every time you see or use water, remember it is a gift of God. Learn to develop a reverential attitude to this vital liquid. It is not just a commodity or object but rather “our sister”. By developing a contemplative gaze we are led to the Creator through creatures: “All praise be Yours, my Lord, through Sister Water, so useful, lowly, precious, and pure.”
- Water is life – life for the poor – life for the world.

LEARN

- Be an advocate and defender of “water for all” as a Human Right. Develop a critical consciousness. Be wary of recommendations that take responsibility away from local and national governments on water issues and hand them over to private companies, especially multi-nationals.
- Involve civic society in planning and implementing strategies to defend and preserve water.



- Learn from communities who have successfully resolved problems relating to water.
- Find out who owns the companies of bottled water sold where you live.

CONSERVE

- Think of some ways you can conserve water in your home. E.g., fix leaky faucets/taps, limit lawn watering and long showers and support alternative methods of sewage management (dry sanitation).
- Revive water harvesting techniques (traditional knowledge and practices), protect the watershed by encouraging forestry programmes and campaigns to plant trees.
- Build awareness concerning the importance of healthy grasslands, farm lands, wetlands and woodlands; it is the best insurance against water scarcity.

DEFEND

- The rights of local communities to manage their water resources. Question critically the liberalization and commercialisation of services for water and sanitation.
- *Advocacy at local, national and international levels.*²⁷ i) Find out how water is managed in your country, region or town; ii) Find out what the water and sanitation policy is in your local area and in your country. Pay particular attention to what your government position is on the **GATS negotiations**; iii) consult reputable NGOs or other experts for this information and; iv) work with them to defend basic rights to water and sanitation.
- *Advocacy in developed countries:* target the national Ministers for Trade and the European Commission for Trade to defend in clear language at the **GATS negotiations** the exclusion of the access to household water and basic sanitation services from the renegotiated GATS agreement.
- Limit the use of lawn fertilizers, and be sure to use only phosphorus-free fertilizers. Most lawns already have all the phosphorus they need.

CHANGE

- Become an educated consumer! Buy recycled, environmentally friendly products.
- *Personal Conversion:* Choose one activity you can personally commit yourself to do and another with your community. Evaluate this at some future date.

²⁷ AEFJN document on water. c.f. <http://www.aefjn.org/>

- ***Structural Conversion:*** Support some campaign either nationally or internationally that is working to ensure a just legal framework for the protection of and access to water and/or sanitation facilities. Evaluate this at some future date.
- Change your daily habits and help reduce water pollution and water use. Drive less and bike, walk or carpool more to help reduce the production of toxic air pollutants that cause acid rain.
- Always take a shower rather than a bath – if under five minutes you can save up to a 1000 gallons per month. Don't clean your teeth with the water running – you can save four gallons per minute - and whenever you use water, use less.
- Turn down your water heater temperature and your home thermostat to reduce energy use and help curb pollutants that cause acid rain.
- Share your knowledge and activities with others!
- **WHAT ELSE?**

QUESTIONS FOR THE "ACT" SECTION

1. Describe some activities taking place locally or near you to defend and protect water resources. Who are involved and why?
2. How can you and your community contribute to the “water solution”?
3. Are any members of your congregation working in countries where water is being "privatized"? Find out from them what is happening. Ask if there are actions being requested of the international community

FOR REFLECTION AND PRAYER

We invite you to gather in community or with friends for reflection and prayer using the format below.

Arrange a simple centre for your prayer with a bowl of water.

CALL TO PRAYER: Creator God, whose Spirit moved over the face of the waters, who gathers the seas into their places, and directs the courses of the rivers, who sends rain upon the earth that it should bring forth life: we praise you for the gift of water. Create in us such a sense of wonder and delight in this and all your gifts, that we might receive them with gratitude, care for them with love, and generously share them with all your creatures, to the honour and glory of your holy name.²⁸

SCRIPTURE Psalm 65

SILENT REFLECTION:

CREEDAL STATEMENT:

- I believe that water belongs to the earth and to all species
- I believe that water must be conserved for all time.
- I believe that polluted water must be reclaimed.
- I believe that water is best protected in natural watersheds.
- I believe that water is a public trust to be guarded at all levels of government.
- I believe that an adequate supply of clean water is a basic human right.

FAITH SHARING: Share something you learned from reading this booklet on water. Was there anything that surprised you? Disturbed you?

BLESSING OF WATER:

- Come up to the bowl of water. Bow before it, put your hand in it, make the sign of the cross and let water bless you.

CLOSING HYMN: choose a hymn to end your prayer.

²⁸ World Council of Churches Prayer Services.

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES :

WEBSITES:

IN SEVERAL LANGUAGES:

1. **The World Water Development Report: Water for People, Water for Life (UN):** the report can be ordered on line. A good executive summary (36 pages) is available in seven languages:
http://www.unesco.org/water/wwap/wwdr/ex_summary/
2. **International Year of Freshwater (Official Site):** – English, Spanish and French - For information on *what is happening in your country* click on the section *“The Year around the World”*.
http://www.wateryear2003.org/ev.php?URL_ID=1456&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201
3. **Water justice for all: global and local resistance to the control and commodification of water.** Twenty six pages. Published by Friends of the Earth. Available in English, French, Spanish and Japanese.
<http://www.foei.org/index.php>
4. **Document: Water a Right for all - European Africa Faith and Justice Network.** (English and Spanish):
<http://www.aefjn.org/english/issues/equitable%20trade.htm>
5. **Report by the International Commission on Dams:**
<http://www.damsreport.org/> Download the complete report in English and Spanish at: <http://www.damsreport.org/report/> *Report Overview* available in English, German, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Hindi, Polish, Russian, Chinese and Japanese at: <http://www.damsreport.org/report/overviews.htm>
6. **International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN):** - Spanish and English -
<http://www.igtan.org/EconoLit/Literacy.html>
7. **UNESCO and Water:** - English, French and Spanish -
http://www.unesco.org/water/index_es.shtml
8. **Global Environmental Outlook 3 (GEO 3-)** provides an overview of the main environmental developments over the past three decades (English, Spanish, French and Russian), and how social, economic and other factors have contributed to the changes that have occurred.
<http://www.rolac.unep.mx/geo/geo3/> A Section of this report is on Freshwater
<http://www.grida.no/geo/geo3/english/265.htm> (English).
9. **World Social Forum - Water:** - English, Spanish and Portuguese –
http://agenciartamajior.uol.com.br/agencia.asp?coluna=forum_agua
10. **Swiss Coalition:** - German, French, Italian and English -
<http://www.swisscoalition.ch/deutsch/pagesnav/H.htm>
11. **World Water Rescue Foundation:** - English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish - <http://www.wwrf.org>

IN ENGLISH:

12. **International Water Working Group:** www.citizen.org/cmep/water
13. **Save Water:** <http://www.savewater.com.au/default.asp>: a resource recommended by Planet Ark. (English).
14. **Greenhouse gas emissions from Dams:** for a free pdf file copy of the 24 page report in English, go to:
<http://www.irn.org/programs/greenhouse/index.asp?id=pt1.html>
15. **Water Barons:** <http://www.icij.org/dtaweb/water/default.aspx> (a series of articles on multinationals and their search for control of water – (Analysts predict that within the next 15 years in Europe and North America, these companies will control of 65 percent to 75 percent of what are now public waterworks
16. **110 ways to save water** – English -
<http://www.wateruseitwisely.com/waterSavingTips/100tips.html>
17. **Visioning a sustainable community** –English - A process on how to work out a vision for your community. http://www.wri.org/action/action_vision.html
18. **Polaris Institute:** www.polarisinstitute.org
19. **Global water outlook:** <http://www.ifpri.org/media/water2025.htm> - English -. This web site links water and food security and has several free books to be downloaded or ordered.
20. **Water Observatory:** <http://www.waterobservatory.org/>

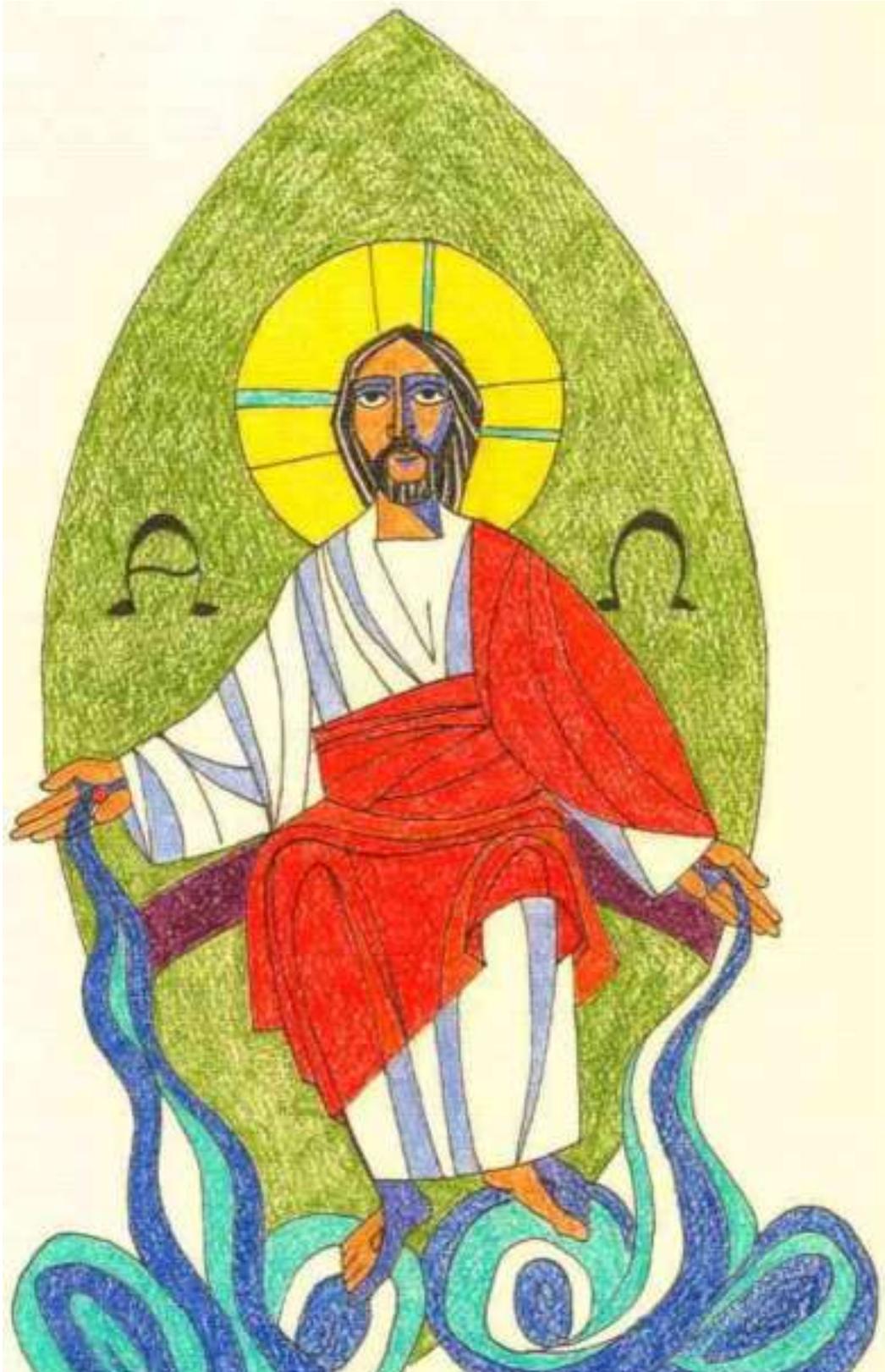
IN GERMAN /PORTUGUESE/SPANISH/FRENCH/ITALIAN:

21. www.netzwerk-afrika-deutschland.de
22. **Tierra America:** - Portuguese and English -:
http://www.tierramerica.net/agua_2002/index.shtml
23. **People's World Water Forum (Florence):** - Italian -
<http://www.cipsi.it/contrattoacqua/forum-acqua/it/index.htm>
24. **Brazil Social Forum – Water:** - Portuguese -
<http://www.estadao.com.br/ext/ciencia/agua/>
25. **Water 2003** – Italian, French and German -
<http://www.wasser2003bildung.ch/>
26. **Ecologists in Action:** – Spanish -
<http://www.ecologistasenaccion.org/accion/agua/home.htm>
27. **Eco Portal** – Spanish -: <http://www.ecoportel.net/temas/agua.htm>
28. **Save Water and Energy: (technical advice):** - Spanish -
<http://www.ahorraragua.com/>
29. **Ministry of the Environment (France):**
<http://www.environnement.gouv.fr/dossiers/eau/default.htm>
30. **Evian Document:** -English and French -
http://www.g8.fr/evian/english/navigation/2003_g8_summit/summit_documents/water_-_a_g8_action_plan.html

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I am the Alpha and the Omega,
the Beginning and the End.
I will give water from the well
of life freely to anyone.