

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy)  
Earth Day April 27-28, 2019

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### Sister Water: Critical to Our Habitat

#### **Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water: Useful, Humble, Precious and Pure**

I've prepared this reflection titled "Sister Water: Critical to Our Habitat" from the inspiration of, and blessings from: St. Francis and Clare of Assisi, St. Faustina Kowalska, Pope Francis, our All Saints Community, and Fr. Andrew Szebenyi.

To St Francis and Clare of Assisi - for their sincere connection with, and concern for our Mother Earth and all its creatures great and small, for their focus on the most vulnerable among us, the ones most affected by climate change: by water scarcity, drought, pollution, water-borne disease, sea-level rise, storms and flooding. And for their tradition of greeting each other and creation with the salutation of "Peace."

To St. Faustina Kowalska - for her revelation of the Divine Mercy of Jesus, which we celebrate at this weekend's Masses. And through which we show Mercy to ourselves, each other, and our Common Home.

To Pope Francis – for his pastoral approach to Creation and our most vulnerable siblings. Earth Day should be every day!

To Our All Saints Community – for all of us, together, who provide the rich habitat for the Holy Spirit and the incredible mission work we do.

And last to our Fr Andy – our friend, a scientist, a teacher, and our Emeritus Assisting priest, who inspired by love, followed his curiosity to reveal divinity in the laws of Nature, and who was never afraid to reveal the truth of science, nature and love to the Church, even when it was in conflict with their perspective – AND as a Homilist, he also tended to be brief. I'll try to do that too!

#### **Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water: Useful, Humble, Precious and Pure**

The liturgy themes from today's scriptures are connected to our focus on Water and its role in providing productive habitat for the Holy Spirit. From the Acts of

the Apostles, the cleansing water of the Word was poured out on the people, and especially on the sick and the spiritually unclean, as Christianity surged after Christ's resurrection. The enduring and powerful Grace and Mercy of God flows over us in the Psalms. In the second reading from Revelations, we are reassured that Christ, the Living Water, will be with us always. And last, in the incredible power of Faith...."blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" ...to establish us, and sustain us in strong currents as we struggle to restore the waters of Gaia.

The Bible has many water references, 722, according to one count. We shouldn't be surprised. Freshwater in the Middle East has always been relatively scarce, consider the ecosystems of an arid climate or the salinity of the Dead Sea.

It truly starts at the very beginning in Genesis with water's role in Creation, initially devoid of life in chaotic darkness, but later teeming with it in peaceful light as God's designs and order came into being. Throughout the Old Testament, we see the significance of water...

In both the first and second chapters of Genesis, water and water ways are the reference lines for land and lands, establishing geographic borders with divine authority. Water is refreshment for body and soul in Abraham's hospitality to the Lord: "Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree."

The cleansing power of a flood was a form of justice that brought about the covenant between God and his living creation...sealed under the sign of a Rainbow....extending God's Mercy to all of creation forever. And justice is contrasted with corruption in Amos: "But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!"

The power of water is transformed from what is sometimes a destructive force to a force of Salvation throughout the Exodus.

There is comfort from water in Psalms, "He leads me beside quiet waters." And, Purification in Psalms, "Lord wash away my iniquities and cleanse me of my sin."

Water is Grace in Ezekiel: "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you."

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But, from our death to sin and resurrection to life in Jesus Christ, and from the passing of the Old Law and its sometimes punitive, violent and destructive expression of water justice, we are reborn into the New Law of Christ's never ending Divine Mercy, Grace and its **non-violent** and restorative expression of water justice through baptism, refreshment, purification, tears of empathy, the Holy Spirit and the Word....

The Word is born with water at Jesus's birth. John baptizes Jesus and many others in the Jordan River. Jesus turns water into wine. Jesus walks on the water. Jesus weeps. Jesus offers himself as Living Water to the Samaritan woman at the well, and water comes from the crucified Jesus' side.

But, the resurrected Christ Jesus, the Word and the Truth is also associated with water, Living Water, and thus the fluidity of our freedom, our free-will obligation to Care for Our Common Home, and our voyage towards Truth: "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

But perhaps what is most useful to us is water as the Holy Spirit with us forever....as in Revelation: "The angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb"

We gush with gratitude for these gifts that keep giving despite our human frailty.

It IS the divinity in water that binds us all with each other and with all of God's creation, from God's gift of one of our most basic needs, to the Living Water of Christ and his Word, and ALL under the cascade of the Holy Spirit.

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We certainly have challenges ahead.

We need to build Awareness and Appreciation of Water – Witness its commonality in everything, its roles, and what it means to us... Here's a very basic

example: Each individual needs 2 to 8 liters of drinking water per day. Ask all the questions as you follow it from the source... Where does that water come from? For you? For others?

We need to apply Love and Justice to Management and Distribution of water, because like a lot of other environmental issues, access to clean water and water justice is victim to climate change, pollution, all of our 'isms of injustice and intolerance, and the current socio-economic power structure.

This can be overwhelming, like a tidal wave, but we have to go with the current of Living Water! That's how we'll nurture and expand our Habitat of the Holy Spirit and revitalize water ecology throughout the Earth.

Think upstream, downstream, and instream – as Fr. Fred and others in this Parish have encouraged us to do, we look to understand where the injustice is coming from, we accompany those on the path, and we keep our eyes fixed on the hope of the Cross and Kingdom of God.

Lead and act in Faith, Faith that God is in all Creation...the belief and trust without proof... faith in service with Christ, and faith in relationship among each other and nature. God can be an action verb that directs and connects the flow of divinity within and among us, as when we greet each other with **Namaste**.

Accept and invoke Christ's Divine Mercy, and pray for yourself, each other, and for the planet. Witness to water abuse and injustice can be crushing. With Grace, forgive, forgive, and forgive! We never really know the crosses we each bear. Be with folks where they are, and not where you want them to be....even those among us that are pretty stubborn and set in our ways.

I'd like to call attention to Fr. Andy's words from last Easter...."Just respond to evil with something good: A good word, a smile, a hug, a little prayer. Because, you see, that makes evil to cause something good in you, and that makes you immune to all the hurt...This is what the Lord Jesus did all the time. Even on the cross he said, father forgive them, they do not know what they are doing."

That's where our call to action for water starts, with one step and one person at a time with patience and love.....radical and inclusive love.

Find your passion and a place to wade or jump in. Be, learn, pray, participate. It could be any or all of these as we help to spread the Gospel to our siblings. There lots and lots of great ways to serve refreshment to others, and I would guess that most of you are already participating in some way. You can pick up the tips in the bulletin, or you may discern a way to funnel the Holy Spirit in different way....like giving to global charity, advocating for water justice in national policy, or preparing a place for those migrating from climate change impacts.

From a quote attributed to St. Francis.... “Start by doing what’s necessary; then do what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible!”

Water is critical to the Habitat of the Holy Spirit, and all of Creation; Open the floodgates!

**Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water: Useful, Humble, Precious and Pure. AMEN**