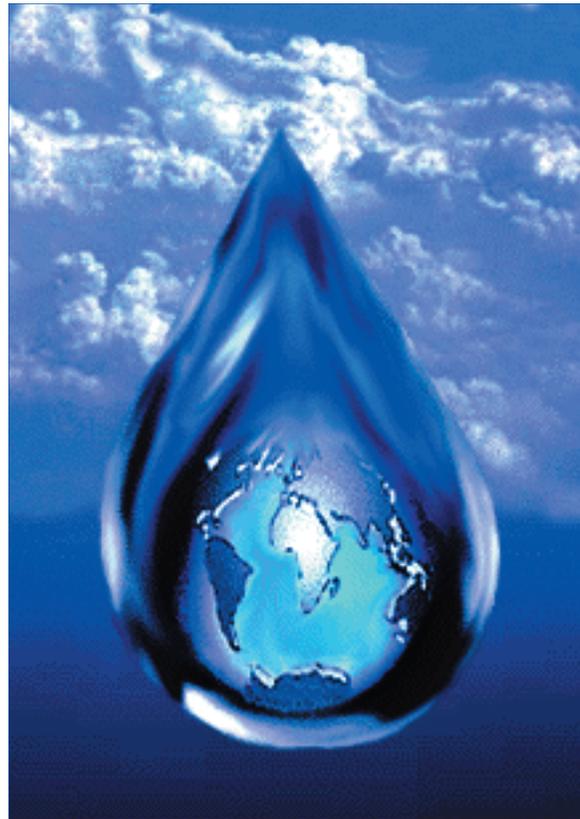


*Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary*

**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**  
**80, rue Saint-Charles Est - Longueuil - (Québec) - J4H 1A9**  
**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*      *Lorraine St-Hilaire snjm*  
*Jocelyne Latraille snjm*      *Dalores M. Wehle SNJM*

# Table of Contents

## CORPORATE STAND STATEMENT

<b>Preamble</b>	pg 5
<b>Rationale</b>	pg 6
<b>Statement</b>	pg 7

## EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

<b>SEE</b> Stories	pg 8
Reflection Questions	pg 13

### JUDGE

<b>PRINCIPLES</b>	pg 14
Reflection Questions	pg 16

<b>SNJM HERITAGE</b>	pg 17
----------------------	-------

<b>THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	pg 18
-----------------------------------	-------

- Scripture
- Catholic Social Teaching
- Faith and Universal Wisdom

Reflection Questions	pg 21
----------------------	-------

<b>ACT</b> What Can We Do	pg 22
Reflection Questions	pg 24

<b>RESOURCES</b>	pg 25
------------------	-------

<b>PRAYER</b>	pg 27
---------------	-------



*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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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 corncobs, 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, SNJMA*



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

*Wangari Maathal,  
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](http://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 Hiyata  
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/](http://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 Challenge <sup>1</sup>

*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](http://www.climatechange.gc.ca)

<sup>1</sup> 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.estado.com.br/ext/ciencia/agua) (Portuguese)
- **Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops**, [www.cccb.ca](http://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](http://www.crs.org). Education and advocacy information on water and climate change issues.
- **Development and Peace**, [www.devp.org](http://www.devp.org)  
Information on water campaign. (English, French, and Spanish)
- **Earth Ministry** (Seattle, Wash.), [www.earthministry.org](http://www.earthministry.org)  
Resources for education and advocacy.
- **Ecologist in Action**, [www.ecologistasenaccion.org](http://www.ecologistasenaccion.org)  
Look under "temas- agua." (Spanish)
- **Friends of the Earth International**, [www.foei.org](http://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](http://www.holycrossjustice.org) or [www.csc.sisters.org](http://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/agua](http://www.ofm-jpic.org/agua) (English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and other languages)
- **Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center** (Seattle, Wash.), [www.ipjc.org](http://www.ipjc.org) Has resource lists on water and climate change issues.
- **International Water Working Group**, [www.citizen.org](http://www.citizen.org)
- **Kairos Canada**, [www.kairoscanada.org](http://www.kairoscanada.org)  
Ecumenical campaign on Water. (French and English)
- **Musical Review on Climate issues**, [www.penguinsonthinice.com](http://www.penguinsonthinice.com)  
To use with students.
- **Pacific Institute** (Oakland, Calif.), [www.worldwater.com](http://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](http://www.elca.org/advocacy/issues/environment/07-08-09-water_working_group.pdf)
- **SNJM Sabbath Space** (Spokane, Wash.), [www.educatingforthe21stcentury.org](http://www.educatingforthe21stcentury.org) Resources on water issues and global warming.
- **The Learning for a Sustainable Future** [www.lsf-1st.ca](http://www.lsf-1st.ca)  
Resources for educators. (French and English)
- **Tierra America**, [www.tierramerica.net/agua](http://www.tierramerica.net/agua) (Spanish, Portuguese, and English)
- **United Church of Canada Reflections on Water**, [www.unitedchurch.ca/waterfocus](http://www.unitedchurch.ca/waterfocus)
- **United Nations**, [www.unwater.org/](http://www.unwater.org/) and [www.un.org/waterforlifedecade](http://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](http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp)
- **Washington State Catholic Conference (U.S.) Columbia River Pastoral Letter**, [www.thewsc.org](http://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](http://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*