

Water, water everywhere

Water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink from the poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798) by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) is often misquoted as 'Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink'. The meaning of this sentence can be understood as being surrounded by water but not being able to take advantage from it.



For those of us in in the UK and northern Europe, the opposite is true we can and do benefit from water being widely accessible. It is so accessible that we can easily take it for granted. From my travels in Europe, I am aware that there are regions where water is not as plentiful and there has been no rain for months. (I will reflect on water shortage later in this series)

Our opening reflection focuses on our personal response to water. Hopefully it will encourage us to appreciate water more and perhaps make us more aware of its qualities, benefit and lessen the chance of us taking water for granted.

Where do we find God in our reflection? In Ignatian spirituality* there is the practice of trying to find God in all things, of finding God in all times and spaces. It may not be easy but if for example, you let the pouring of a glass of water become more than a routine, if you become aware of this mundane task of your actions it can have a sense of holiness, The mundane becomes holy!



Our day will start with water, perhaps, the flush of the toilet, the washing of hands and the first drink of the day. So routine, so natural how our day begins.

Perhaps a bath or a shower to prepare us for the day ahead, fresh towels to dry us down and then the next decision what to wear clothes washed and clean for us to wear and a glimpse at the washing basket with clothes waiting to be washed.

So, the day goes on more drinks, food preparation and cooking and not forgetting the washing up. There will be some other household tasks that will require water.

During the day there will be numerous occasions where water is essential to our daily life.

Over a drink be conscious of the number of times the tap is turned on, the drinks consumed. Try to image a day or remember what was like without water flowing from the tap.



The spiritual qualities of water

Within our sacred texts water, living water, have a spiritual dimension. In Jerimiah's prophecy the Lord says of the people

'They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters'
(Jerimiah 2:13).

The prophet Ezekiel creates the image of a river flowing from the temple flowing into a river and bringing healing and plenty of food (Ezekiel 47:1-13).

'... because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine.' (Ezekiel 47:12)

In John's Gospel, it refers to himself as the water of life (John 4:6-15) when with the Samaritan woman and later in Jerusalem Jesus says:

'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. (John 7:37-38)

Water become a symbol for fulfilment and spiritual refreshment.

Time for a break!

Over the next few weeks, we will be reflecting on water. For many of us in northern Europe with have an abundance of water, for others it is the opposite. There can be a tendency to take things for granted until they are not there. So . . .

Slowly pour out a glass of water

Hear the as it flows into the glass.

Find your favourite space for this time of prayerful reflection

Place the glass of water on a table and light a candle.

Slow down, breathe calmly, be comfortable and relax.

'Is anyone thirsty?


Come and drink - even if you have no money!

(Isaiah 55:1 New Living Translation)

Come all who are weary and let the water refresh you and may the quiet pools of God's love embrace you.

Let us remember that the Lord is here, and His Spirit is with us, washing away the dust and grime of our lives. His Spirit is poured out on all who thirst.

We continue this time of reflection with 'I heard the voice of Jesus say'

The words of will appear on the screen via the YouTube link. 

https://youtu.be/yYqgBMrmeZA?si=LO738zc6Ay8p_rY-

Verses from Ezekiel and Hebrews (New King James Version)

Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. (Ezekiel 36:25-26)

. . . let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10:22)

Let us pause and reflect with thanks for the gift of water

Thank you Lord, thank you.

Thank you for all the gifts that you have given me today,
Thank you for all I have seen, heard, received. (MQ)

Thank you for the tap and the water that flows from it.

Thank you for the refreshing shower and the fragrance of the shower gel that invigorates.

Thank you for the first drink of the day.

Thank for the drinks that quenches' my thirst.

Thank you for the cleaning properties of water,
For the freshness clean clothes and the cleanliness within my homes.

Thank you for the water that sustains our gardens and fields that provide my food.

Thank you for the ponds in our gardens and the wildlife that excites me.

Thank you for all that water provides and forgive for the times we take it for granted and may I not waste this precious gift.

Thank you for the time you have given me.

Thank you for life.

Thank you for grace.

Thank you for being there, Lord.

Thank you for listening to me, for taking me seriously, for gathering my gifts in your hands to offer them to your Father.

Thank you, Lord.

Thank you. (MQ)

Prayer inspired by Michel Quoist (MQ) prayer 'Thank you' from Prayers of Life page 47. The opening and closing words are by Michel Quoist.

When asked about how to pray Jesus gave these simple but profound words, so let them be our prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name;
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil. Amen

Lord, pour your Spirit upon us in a gracious, healing way. Make us agents of reconciliation as we live and may we bring a blessing to those we meet. Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen

The grace of God the Father be the motivation
for all that we do and say.
The love of God the Son be the inspiration
for the many words we pray. The power of God the Spirit be in the expression
of a living faith this day.
May the blessings of the earth surround you.
Clear paths and firm ground to walk upon,
fresh water and green shoots to sustain you.
May the blessings of the sky surround you.
Rising sun to lighten your journey, s
oft rain in due season to refresh you.
. . . . and
God's peace be in your hearts.
(John Birch Ripples)

Our reflections over the next few weeks will be inspired by accounts of water in our scriptures

Fr Derek Akker

* Ignatian spirituality based on the experiences of the 16th-century Spanish Saint Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus, also known as Jesuits. Ignatian is practiced across various denominations.

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(Derek is a retired Anglican Parish Priest and a member of the congregations of All Saints & St James. Prior to his ordination he was accredited as a Methodist Preacher in 1968 and served within the Methodist Church until returning to the Anglican Church in the mid 1980's)

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Water in a glass - Impact of a drop of water. Featured picture, Picture of the year, Picture of the day
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