



Embrace ©2014, Marion C. Honors, CSJ

## COMMUNION within the EARTH COMMUNITY:

# The Same Water Flows Through All of Us

### Preparation:

**Everyone** Calculate your “Water Footprint” and “Virtual Water Footprint” at: <http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/freshwater/change-the-course/water-footprint-calculator/>

Bring water from home.

Glasses and water for each person to drink

**Leader** A prayer table with a bowl or pitcher and a branch for sprinkling  
Music for prayer: “Come to the Waters” by John Foley, SJ; “Song Over the Waters” by Marty Hagen; “The Moldau” by Smetana, “O Holy Water” by Marty Haugen and Marc Anderson, or a song of your own choosing

We were invited by our last Chapter to enter into a conversion process, moving beyond what we have thought was sacred to seeing the whole Earth community as a sacrament of divine presence (Johnson). In presenting these materials, the Ad Hoc group hopes to engage the mind, heart, and will of each of us in this conversion process. This is our chapter call.

Attention to the needs of the dear neighbor is not new to us. We have been hearing this call of the dear neighbor for hundreds of years. Now, however, we are realizing, ever more deeply that our neighbors are the whole Earth community--exquisitely beautiful, abundantly generous, frightfully wounded, and desperate for the human to reconnect with the web of life before it is too late. We acknowledge that there is a great deal that we are doing, even as we are being invited into a new way of being, knowing that we are always called to MORE.

## I. Praying In Communion with Life-Giving Waters

### Leader:

Welcome to this celebration of our CSJ call to be in communion with water, the life blood of every living thing within our Earth community. We will celebrate it as a precious gift from our Creator and also pray over the challenges we now face to return water to the life-giving, cleansing, healing gift for all that our Creator meant it to be.

### Reader 1:

We praise you, Bounteous God, for the wonder of water, which feeds the Earth and does not return to you empty.

### Reader 2:

We praise you, too, O Creator God, for the water that is essential to living beings: the life of our planet was incubated in the oceans, our own lives cushioned by water in the womb. Water makes the crops flourish and carries nutrients up the tallest trees. It purifies itself as it flows over rocks in the sunlight. It is truly the lifeblood of the planet.

Let us, now, blend the waters we have brought with us as a symbol of the gift of water that we share, and of how, once blended, we are joined in a way that is inseparable.

### **Song**

*(Everyone brings forward the water they have brought and adds it to the bowl during the singing.)*

### **Response:**

You visit the earth and water it,  
You greatly enrich it;  
The river of God is full of water;  
You provide the people with grain,  
For so you have organized our life. (*Psalm 65:9*)

### **Leader:**

In Baptism, O Holy One, You pour water over us and immerse us in its refreshing depths, to bring us to new life. As we enter churches and chapels, we dip our fingers in water and bless ourselves to prepare to be in your holy place. During special liturgies your minister sprinkles us with water to cleanse us and make of us a holy people gathered in celebration.

**Response:** *(During which Reader 1 sprinkles the group with the blended waters)*

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
And put a new and right spirit within me  
Enfold me in the arms of love,  
And fill me with your Holy Spirit  
Restore in me your saving grace,  
And encourage me with a new spirit  
O God, open my lips  
And my mouth will sing forth your praise  
For you do not want sacrifice  
But delight in our friendship with you  
A sacrifice most appropriate  
Is a humble spirit  
A repentant and contrite heart, O Merciful  
One,  
Is the gift you most desire (*Psalm 51*)

### **Song**

#### **Leader:**

As a congregation, we are daughters and sons of Mother St. John Fontbonne, the “good fountain,” in life-giving service to those who hunger and thirst for justice, for healing, and for hope. We have traveled across oceans, up rivers, and across lands parched for water to serve our dear neighbors.

#### **Reader 2:**

Today, those same oceans are over-fished, those rivers are polluted, and more and more land is being turned into deserts. This gift of our Creator has been privatized, sold out from under the lives of the people and beings of fragile areas and turned into that which threatens the very life it was meant to support.

#### **Reader 1:**

Influenced by the Spirit, our Congregational Chapter urges us to deepen our communion with our neighbors in the Earth community – the exquisitely beautiful, abundantly generous, frightfully wounded people, beings, and elements of our planet – crying out to us in this time of crisis. How can we go beyond the good we are already doing to respond to their urgent needs?



### Response:

We believe in the interdependence of humanity and nature in the whole Earth community, and recognize our harmful impact. Therefore we commit ourselves to simplify our lifestyles through specific, measureable actions regarding water...taking into consideration local realities and concerns. (*Calls to Action, Chapter 2013*)

### Leader:

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. (*Revelation 22:1-2*)

Let us enter, now, into contemplation with the Spirit who hovered over the waters and Jesus who promised us living waters.

(*After this celebration of the gift of water, take ten minutes of contemplative silence, breathing in and out consciously and reflectively.*)

### Additional ideas for celebration and sharing:

- Celebrate some of the many manifestations of water – waterfalls, brooks, lakes – in the natural world. Reflect on a time that you have spent in, near, on or under water. Share a simple story and end with a prayer of gratitude.
- Individually or communally pray a psalm that celebrates water. Psalms 1, 63, 65, 72, 104 and 107 use water as metaphor for life and growth.
- Renew baptismal vows; sprinkle each other with water and give one another an appropriate blessing.
- Share times that the fluidity, beauty, peacefulness or turbulence of water has stirred special feelings within you. What blessing was water bestowing on you at that time? Conclude with a prayer of gratitude.
- Reflect on a glass of water: place a glass of water on a table in the midst of the group. Take turns acknowledging and being grateful for all the ways water is a gift to us and helps us.
- Use the reflection “Glass of Water” from page 12 and “Water” from page 22 of the booklet *Deepening Communion with Creation by the Carondelet Wisdom Circle* (see Appendix I for the complete text).

## II. Water, water everywhere but...

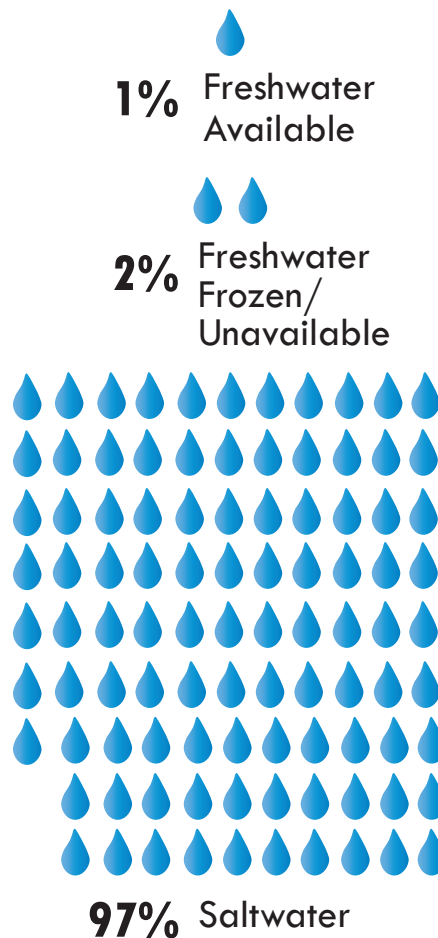
### Experience of our water use

Water is a Cosmic gift. Up to half of the water on Earth is likely older than our solar system itself, astronomers say, likely originating as ices that formed in interstellar space. Water is also a gift continually renewed by Earth: as it sinks into aquifers and flows over rocks in the sunlight, it is able to purify itself of contaminants – that is, if we don't overload it! <http://ns.umich.edu/news/releases/22401-the-water-in-your-bottle-might-be-older-than-the-sun>

Information is powerful when it touches our hearts and moves us to change our consciousness and our consumption. Take a moment to review the information in the following two charts on water use and the preparation you did on your own water footprint.

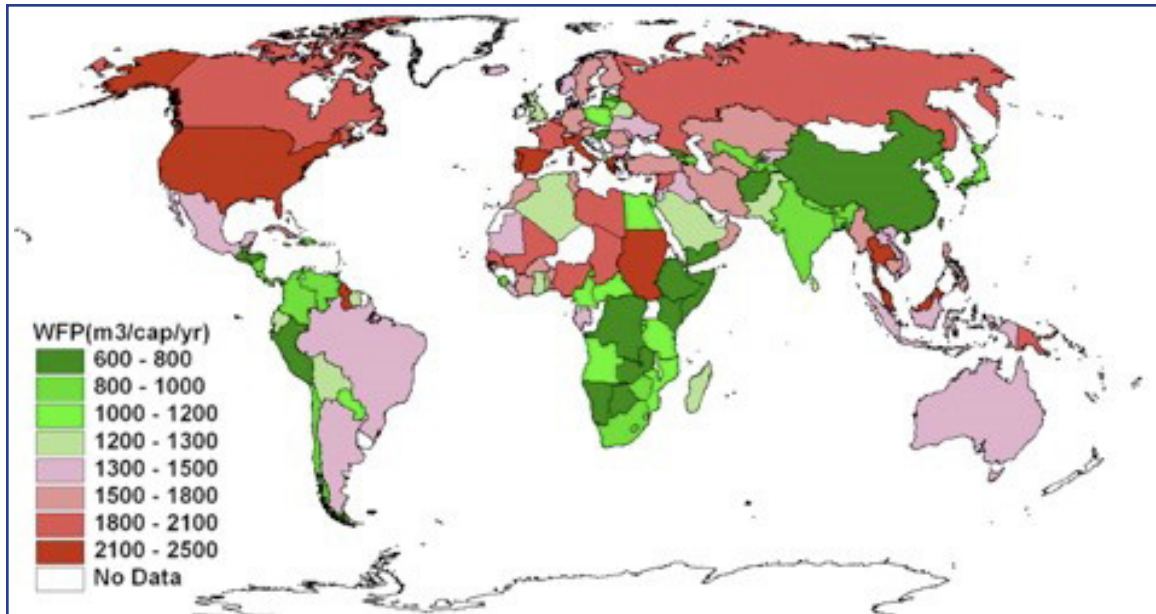
### WATER ON EARTH

via <http://www.greenventure.ca/>



## WATER USE BY COUNTRY

Dark red countries have the worst footprints - between 2.1 and 2.5 million liters of water per capita each year.  
via [Waterfootprint.org](http://Waterfootprint.org).



### Discuss your water footprint:

1. Were you surprised to discover how much water you use when you include your virtual water footprint?
2. What effect do you think your water use has on others?

#### what's in your water footprint?

The average American lifestyle is kept afloat by 2,000 gallons of water per day.

**That's twice the global average.**

Our partners at National Geographic have created a robust online water footprint calculator that measures your embedded water footprint, made up from your home, yard, the energy you use, food you eat and products you buy.



**NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC**

Think of the water that comes into your home. Imagine yourself using water as it comes into your kitchen or bathroom. Where did water come from? When water was a guest in your home, how did you treat it? What went into the water? Where does water ultimately go when it goes down the drain? Where did water go to be purified?

Let's take a look at some ways to be hospitable to our water while it is a guest in our homes. (See the resource section for further actions)

1. What are you already doing to conserve water?
2. What is a new awareness for you about water use?
3. How do you feel about taking further steps in your water conservation?

*Pause for a drink of fresh water.*



### III. Human Impact on the Wider World of Water

It is impossible to consider all the challenges that water faces in other places on Earth. Being aware of these water problems taps into the power of intention- our human intention to heal. Social scientists say that we respond better to stories than to facts. If we have a name, a face and a need attached to it – then we are moved to take action. Imagine water does have a face – what does it look like? Imagine water has a voice – what is it saying to humans right now? Share ideas with those in your group.

Between the reading of each of the following statements take a silent moment to create a related prayer intention. What face do you see? Whose voice do you hear?

1. Only 3% of Earth’s water is fresh, and some two-thirds of that is locked up in glaciers and permanent snow cover. But despite the very real danger of future global water shortages, for the vast majority of the nearly one billion people without safe drinking water, today’s water crisis is not an issue of scarcity, but of access. <http://water.org/water-crisis/one-billion-affected/>
2. Agriculture uses 70% of the world’s accessible freshwater, but some 60% of this is wasted due to leaky irrigation systems, inefficient application methods as well as the cultivation of crops that are too thirsty for the environment in which they are grown. This wasteful use of water is drying out rivers, lakes, and underground aquifers. Agricultural and industrial runoff is draining into oceans, triggering algae blooms which deplete the water of oxygen necessary for aquatic life and interfering with the reproductive cycles of fish. The largest of these algae blooms, 8,500 square miles, is at the mouth of the Mississippi River. <http://www.worldwildlife.org/threats/water-scarcity> and <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/ocean-dead-zones/>

3. Water pollution comes from many sources including pesticides and fertilizers that wash away from farms, untreated human wastewater, and industrial waste. Even groundwater is not safe from pollution, as many pollutants can leach into underground aquifers. <http://www.worldwildlife.org/threats/water-scarcity>
4. Many freshwater species depend on free-flowing rivers to complete their life cycles and, in some systems, those species make up critical parts of people’s diets. Some governments and environmental groups want to protect these rivers – and the species and people that depend on them. Sustainable dam projects and an understanding of all the positive and negative impacts of specific dams before their construction and operation have improved life for fish like sturgeon and salmon. <http://www.worldwildlife.org/threats/water-scarcity>
5. Water is by far the largest component of fracking fluids used in natural gas production. According to driller Chesapeake Energy Corporation, an initial drilling operation itself may consume from 6,000 to 600,000 US gallons of fracking fluids, but over its lifetime an average well may require up to an additional 5 million gallons of water for full operation of water used in fracking. Oil and gas drilling companies have started reusing and recycling the wastewater. The natural-gas industry uses a number of methods to recycle drilling waste, but drilling wastes are not considered hazardous so the regulations aren’t as stringent. [http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Fracking\\_and\\_water\\_consumption](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Fracking_and_water_consumption)

Water issues are complex and seem overwhelming. May we remember that whatever we do to conserve, to help others understand the importance of caring for our water and to take action politically is our call to “protect her stability and integrity and to celebrate her beauty wherever we are.” (Chapter 2013)

## IV. Communal Action and Partnering

What groups in your area take on water projects and clean up rivers and lakes? How can you get involved?

What groups might you support in their world wide work?

1. **The Nature Conservancy** is the largest freshwater conservation organization in the world – operating in 35 countries. Join with businesses, governments, partners and communities to change how water is managed around the world. [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org)
2. Using a one-of-a-kind sustainable intervention model, **ONE DROP** develops innovative access to water and sanitation projects which promote self-reliance in disadvantaged, rural and semi-rural regions of Central America, India and West Africa. Support that will transform the lives of millions of people. [www.onedrop.org](http://www.onedrop.org)
3. **Charity: Water**'s mission is to bring clean and safe drinking water to every person in the world. They find inspiring organizations and fund their most successful programs. [www.charitywater.org](http://www.charitywater.org)
4. Carolyn Henry, CSJA is an analytic chemist who goes to Gulu, Uganda to help teach women to purify water and identify water borne bacteria through the **Gulu Water Project**. You can help this project through the St. Louis province's coalition with the **Water With Blessings** alliance. All of the water filters being brought to Uganda need to have either knitted or crocheted "socks" so that if the filters are dropped, no dirt gets in them. We have a pattern for "Crocheted Water Filter Sock" from the Water With Blessings alliance. <http://www.csjstl.org/news/giving-water-giving-life-in-gulu.php>
5. **Grandmother Circles**' goal is to provide for the needs of women and children in Homa Lime, Kenya. St Paul province sisters

and consociates have visited Kenya, met community leaders, and responded to needs. They work to supply water containment tanks for widows' homes and pottery co-op as well as raising funds for scholarships for girls. Three Kenyan Consociates work on site. For more information, contact Lois Mineau at [grandmothercirc@gmail.com](mailto:grandmothercirc@gmail.com).

[www.grandmothercircles.org](http://www.grandmothercircles.org)

6. **Waterkeeper Alliance** provides a way for communities to stand up to anyone who threatens, from law-breaking corporate polluters to irresponsible governments. On over 244 waterways, from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, the Amazon to the Ganges, Waterkeepers are on patrol. [www.waterkeeper.org](http://www.waterkeeper.org)



Today in the Woods ©1995 by Ansgar Holmberg, CSJ



## V. Commit

What might you continue to do to reduce your water footprint?

What is the *more* that I/we can do to protect the water on which all life depends?

### Suggestions:

1. Celebrate water consciously and regularly.
2. Adjust actions based on your water footprint.
3. Engage with groups in your area who are working to improve conservation and water quality.
4. Use cleaning supplies without phosphorus, nitrogen and ammonia, major pollutants of water. (See Appendix II.A.)
5. Use WaterSense heads on your faucets and showers (<http://www.epa.gov/WaterSense/products/>), turn off the water while brushing your teeth (saves up to 3,000 gallons per year) and take care of drips as soon as possible.
6. Eliminate bottled water. The problems with bottled water and the consequences of privatization are explained in the 8-minute video "The Story of Bottled Water". [storyofbottledwater.org](http://storyofbottledwater.org)
7. Use Non-toxic cleaners. They are healthier for you and water, and also a lot less expensive! See Appendix II.B. for helpful websites. (Note: some sites have great suggestions but still use ammonia as a cleaning agent, but this is not recommended!)  
  
With a vinegar and water solution and baking soda, you can clean and disinfect both bathroom and kitchen! It is easy to put vinegar and water in a re-used plastic spray bottle; baking soda can be put into a re-used grated cheese shaker.
8. Carefully dispose of expired, unwanted or unused medicines. (See Appendix II.C.)
9. Reduce your energy use (hydroelectric and gas), which can also affect water use on the planet. Turn off lights in unused rooms and remember to regulate that thermostat!
10. Act on national or local legislation that protects our water commons.



*The Well* ©1996 by Ansgar Holmberg, CSJ

## VI. Concluding prayer

### Together:

We thank you, Bounteous God, for the wonder of water, which feeds the Earth and does not return to you empty. In support of your great gift and our treasure – water, we each offer a commitment to action:

*Group members individually name aloud what they have chosen to focus on as a promise of ongoing conversion to protect water. Each one then blesses themselves with the water on the center table.*

All around us and within us life emerges. We promise these actions in support of and in communion with the whole Earth community. May we accept the challenge and responsibility to safeguard water and so to foster life in all its forms. Amen.

# Appendix I: Selections from Deepening Communion with Creation

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## Glass of Water

by Toni Nash, CSJ (p. 12)

### KNOW

From Science we learn that before the Universe was three minutes old, the nuclei of hydrogen were created, and that hydrogen nuclei were never again created! Hydrogen was the first element, and makes up 90 percent of all the atoms in the Universe. Each atom of water in your glass has two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen.

### EXPERIENCE

Look at the water you have poured into a glass. Sip some water. Note its transparency, smell, color and weight.

### REFLECTION

The water you just sipped contains hydrogen nuclei that were created 13.7 billion years ago! Through them you are connected to the sacred moment of Original Creation. Imagine hydrogen nuclei in the water throughout your body, in water everywhere, in the air and throughout the Universe. You are in communion with all the water, in the people, the rivers, seas and lakes, and with those who thirst for water.

## Water

By Linda Crosby, CSJA (p. 22)

### KNOW

Water scarcity affects one in three people on every continent of the globe. The situation is getting worse as needs for water rise along with population growth, urbanization and increases in household and industrial uses. Water scarcity occurs even in areas where there is plenty of

rainfall or freshwater. How water is conserved, used and distributed can determine if there is enough to meet the demands of households, farms, industry and the environment. Water scarcity forces people to rely on unsafe sources of drinking water. It also means they cannot bathe or clean their clothes or homes properly.

### EXPERIENCE

Think about your use of water each day. Try limiting that use for a day, or two, or a week. Turn off the tap as you brush your teeth, as you suds up for hand washing and for your shower. Set a timer to see how long you spend in the shower, then cut that by one-third.

### REFLECTION

After my initial discomfort, am I really okay? Am I as clean as I was last week? Can I agree to continue to limit my use of water by conserving in these small ways?

Can I encourage others in this effort? Is this one way I am more in communion with those who struggle for water?

Source, Inspiration, Further reading: World Health Organization <http://www.who.int/topics/water/en/>

## Appendix II: Resources

### A. Chemicals in Cleaning Products

The chemical culprits according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:

Phosphorus, nitrogen, ammonia and chemicals, grouped under the term "Volatile Organic Compounds" (VOCs), are the worst environmental hazards in household cleaners. VOCs are found in a wide range of cleaning products. They whiten your clothes, remove grease from dishes and disinfect as bathroom cleaners, among other uses. Ammonia is a multipurpose household cleaner that is found in many cleaning products that do everything from degreasing to sanitizing and removing allergens. Nitrogen is found in glass and surface



cleaning products and in floor cleaners as well.

<http://www.epa.gov/epp/pubs/cleaning.htm>

<http://www2.epa.gov/nutrientpollution/problem>

Nitrogen, phosphorus and ammonia are dangerous water contaminants in large quantities. They are rinsed down drains and flushed down toilets as families clean the house. While most pollutants are removed from the water by the wastewater treatment facilities before it is returned to the rivers, streams, lakes and other waterways, these three household cleaning chemicals are not removed by wastewater treatment processes. Instead, they enter the waterways and build up, causing an accelerated growth of some types of plant life.

## B. Non-toxic cleaning Resources

[http://eartheasy.com/live\\_nontoxic\\_solutions.htm](http://eartheasy.com/live_nontoxic_solutions.htm)

<http://homeguides.sfgate.com/make-homemade-nontoxic-cleaners-79297.html>

<http://organizedhome.com/clean-house/pantry-recipes-homemade-cleaning-products>

Imus, Deirdre. *Green This!* Simon and Schuster, New York: 2007.

## C. Drug disposal options

Medicine take-back programs for disposal are a good way to remove expired, unwanted or unused medicines from the home and reduce the chance that others may accidentally take the medicine. Contact your city or county government's household trash and recycling service to see if your community has a medicine take-back program and learn about any special rules regarding which medicines can be taken back. You can also talk to your pharmacist to see if he or she knows of other medicine disposal programs in your area or visit the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's website for information on National Prescription Drug Take-Back Events. [http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug\\_disposal/index.html](http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/index.html)

If no medicine take-back program is available in your area, you can also follow these simple steps to dispose of most medicines in the household trash:

- Mix medicines (do NOT crush tablets or capsules) with an unpalatable substance such as kitty litter or used coffee grounds.
- Place the mixture in a container such as a sealed plastic bag.
- Throw the container in your household trash.

There are a few medications that may be especially harmful and, in some cases, fatal with just one dose if they are used by someone other than the person for whom the medicine was prescribed. To prevent accidental ingestion by children, pets, or anyone else, these medications have specific disposal instructions indicating they should be flushed down the sink or toilet as soon as they are no longer needed and when they cannot be disposed of through a medicine take-back program. For a list of medicines recommended for disposal by flushing, visit <http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/>

## D. UN World Water Development Report

"Water for a Sustainable World" <http://www.unwater.org/publications/publications-detail/en/c/281166/>

## E. Educational resource

Rouse, Joyce J. *Waste Not a Drop...A Little Water Music from Earth Mama: Songs and Connections for Water Work*. Independence, VA: 2008.

This 23-page booklet is full of water facts, activities, poems and songs for teaching water issues for balanced brain learning. This precious resource has such a deep history. This resource is for children of all ages and stages!

A PDF is available at <http://www.deeptimejourney.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Water-Book-6-9-08.pdf>