



Prayer Service *for World Water Day*

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Cry of Water

Leader: We gather on this Global World Water Day, in communion with our sisters and brothers throughout the world. May we allow the wisdom of water to well up within us and show us the way forward.

In a recent address, "The Human Right to Water", Pope Francis calls on us to recognise the intrinsic value of water.

WATERS OF LIFE. Monica Brown.

Waters of life come wash over me
Let my soul drink from your wellsprings O God
Waters of life com wash over me
Quench deep within the thirst of my soul.

Leader: Our opening chant invites us to become conscious of the sacredness of water. In ancient cultures water was regarded as a living sacred entity. The healing property of water was respected and revered. It was considered to be a holy element whose purity was not to be tampered with. In all cultures water is revered and ritualised by pilgrimages to holy wells, sacred rivers, holy places, healing baths and lakes.

Our Hebrew Scriptures issue an invitation to come to the waters.

Reader: ISAIAH 55 1- 3 (*Water is poured by a participant while the following is read*)

Oh come to the water all you who are thirsty:
Though you have no money, come!

Leader: Thomas Berry once said that the environmental disasters we are now experiencing are a result of our disconnection with nature: "We not talking to the rivers, we are not listening to the wind and the stars. We have broken the conversation." When Hildegard de Bingen conversed with nature she heard that "every element has a sound, an original sound from the order of God" and that "all these sounds unite, like the harmony from harps and zithers." We need to listen to what water is telling us, we need to hear her sound. Awakening to a new consciousness about this life-giving element will bring us into harmony with all of life.

Let us listen to water as it speaks to us

I, the surprise of the snowflake and the blessing of the babbling brook, reflect your inner beauty and magnificence. We vibrate with the same energy. Help us attune to that energy.

Response *We are listening, show us the way*

I, the ancient liquid of the stars, precious, pure and holy, am a limited resource. I am asking you to treat me as a rare gift, to use me sparingly with respect and reverence.

Response *We are listening, show us the way*

I, who am the delight of the soul and nourishment of the body, will be contaminated with pollutants which carry disease, deformity and death. I am pleading with you to listen to the wail of my weeping.

Response. *We are listening, show us the way*

Asking water for forgiveness

Water is a source of life for all of creation. Jesus promised living water 'If anyone is thirsty, let them come to me! Let the person come and drink who believes in me.' (Jn 7:19). It was often used by Jesus in his healing ministry. Jesus instructed the blind man 'Go wash in the pool of Siloam.' (Jn 9:7). The Sheep Pool in Jerusalem was a place where people came to be healed in its water. (Jn. 5.)

Water has rights too and we now ask WATER for forgiveness:

Response: *Forgive us and show us the way*

- For our carelessness and waste of water causing a scarcity in other countries
- For the ways in which we pollute pure water
- For our use of pollutants and chemicals
- For our carelessness about water safety
- For our misuse of huge volumes of water in fracking the earth
- For our failure to recycle water from home to garden and to collect rainwater
- For our over use of showers and sprinkler systems
- For our failure to consider the needs of the underdeveloped world in our political decisions around water
- For selling water as a commodity for profit rather than seeing it as a human right for all

Introduction to Meditation

The Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu connected the healing of waters to the healing of the heart when he said "The sage's transformation of the World arises from solving the problem of water. If water is united, the human heart will be corrected. If water is pure and clean, the heart of the people will readily be unified and desirous of cleanliness." More recently, the artist and environmentalist, Osprey Orielle Lake suggested that to protect and defend water we must "look beneath the surface of the stream into the deeper currents of our understanding about it, and in this manner begin healing our relationship with this irreplaceable liquid." We are now invited into a period of meditation that is focused on healing the waters within and without.

Guided Meditation/Contemplative pause

Hildegard of Bingen described prayer as nothing but the inhaling and exhaling of the one breath of the universe. I invite you to close your eyes and become aware of that breath of the universe being breathed in you and through you. As you breathe deeply and slowly...imagine all tension is draining from your body and mind..... feel yourself relax more and more deeply..... As your breath takes you to a still deep place within set your intention for the healing of water in whatever way feels right for you. (Pause for 1 minute)

The poet D.H. Lawrence wrote:

Water is H₂O
Hydrogen two parts,
Oxygen one
But there is also a third thing,
That makes it water,
And nobody knows what it is.

I invite you to place both hands on your heart, one on top of the other, allowing your breath to take you into the waters of your own being, allowing yourself to sink deeply into that third thing, which is mystery, which is love. For a few moments, feel the fluidity of that love within. (pause for 1 minute).

Now imagine that love flowing freely to any part of your body that is sore, tight, tense or containing toxins. Allow the flow of love to cleanse and purify the inner waters of your own being. Allow love to heal inner waters that have been polluted by toxic or negative thinking and waters that have been blocked by painful experiences. (Pause for 1 minute)

And as you experience the healing of the waters of your own being, I invite you to move your hands out in front of you and place them in a cupped position.

I invite you to imagine you can now scoop up water that has been polluted through fracking.

Sense that water in your hands. Sense the pain that has been copied into its memory through the harsh process of fracking. (Pause for 1 minute)

Be aware of water as a mirror, the first reflective surface known to humans. The polluted waters of the world reflect back to us the pollution of our own thinking, thinking that sees nature as separate to us, as a commodity to be used.

Imagine the polluted water being healed as it mirrors the healing that is happening in your own heart. Feel the flow of healing. Allow the words 'Thank you' to well up in your heart and be copied into the water. Feel those words begin to heal the water. (Pause for 1 minute)

Now sense your connection with all those gathered today to heal the waters of our earth. Feel the power of our collective thanks to water, our collective desire to send healing to this wonderful element. Feel the power of love flowing to all waters in need of healing. (pause for 1 minute)

I invite you to bring your hands back to your lap and to gently, in your own time, bring your awareness back to this room, knowing that the waters are better for your meditation and so are you.

Leader: I invite each participant to come forward and bless themselves with the water as the hymn *Come to the Water* is sung (or played).



The Final Blessing *(to be prayed together)*

May the ancient wisdom of water well up within us!

May the holiness of water heal our land!

May its cleansing power wash away our guilt!

May its cosmic power capture the imaginations of decision makers!"

May its majesty inspire us to live in a way that enables the full flourishing of all beings!

Amen.