



SPIRITUALITY of WATER

When parents hold a new born child for the first time, they are actually holding 64% - 84% water.¹ When an adult over 51 years of age goes for a walk, 57% to 67% is water getting exercise. When you do your morning crossword or sudoku, about 80%-85% of your brain, or 80%-85% of your heart, is water working away to solve your puzzle or keep you alive. All life on earth is dependent on water in order to survive. Access to safe and sufficient water is a basic global human right.²

As we begin each day, turning off the alarm, brushing our teeth, taking a shower, enjoying our morning juice or coffee, what might we do to become more conscious of and grateful for water? Perhaps we might start the day with the Psalmist declaring:

“As the deer longs for running streams,
so my soul longs for you, O God (Ps.42,2).”

As the day progresses, what might we do to spend time in wonder and awe for the many, many ways that water exists around us such as dew, ice, rain, vapor, snow, or a stream? Depending on the weather, perhaps we can spend some time with a cloud, a raindrop, or a snowflake, and reflect on the profound mystery of how we - as St. Francis of Assis would say - are “Brothers and Sisters” with all forms and expressions of water. Just as water is transformed into a myriad of appearances, what might this suggest to us about a need for flexibility, change and transformation in our lives?

Experience tells us that the waters of our earth are not always kind and beautiful. Nor are we as human beings. Our human frailty is all too familiar to us, as we are reminded in Romans 7:19 that “we do not always do the good we want to do.” Our integral human relationship with and dependence on water, therefore, can challenge us to embrace a spirituality of justice and right action when we watch TV presentations of preventable droughts, devastating floods, or contaminated drinking water.

Proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ is the defining nature of what it means to be a Christian. For Christians, there is only one mission- to proclaim this Good News. The mission of the School Sisters of Notre Dame is not something separate from this mission. It is the very same mission as for any Christian - to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. There are many ministries or ways to do this. Let us ponder how our essential relatedness to water calls us to proclaim the Good News. What can we say by our very lives about water to the whole world? Perhaps we might take inspiration from the words of poet, Mary Oliver:

“Instructions for living a life.
Pay Attention.
Be astonished.
Tell about it.”

Paying attention to the rich sacramentality of water, its significance of the very presence of God among us, let us take to heart the words of Thomas Berry, CP, that while “we bless water, we need to let water bless us.”

Mary Heather MacKinnon, SSND
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¹ All water statistics in this piece are taken from <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/what-percentage-of-the-human-body-is-water#percentage-chart> and <https://spaceplace.nasa.gov/water/en/>.

² <https://www.unwater.org/water-facts/human-rights/#::~:~:text=Human%20Rights%20to%20Water%20and%20Sanitation.%20UN-Water.%20Access,consequences%20for%20the%20realization%20of%20other%20human%20rights.>