

Works of Mercy: Gifts of Life

REFRESHMENT  
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FOUR  
IT IS AN ACT OF LOVE TO:  
**Give Drink to the Thirsty**

Gather

OPENING PRAYER

Creator and Father of all, you blessed us from the beginning with life giving water and continue to send the rains and snows to replenish the earth. Help us find ways to meet the need of all living beings for water. Give us, who have been baptized with water and the Spirit, the ability to reach out to fulfill the words of Jesus your Son and to give drink to the thirsty out of love for our brothers and sisters in need. We ask this through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Report on Actions

Scripture Reflection

But he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink" (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink', you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me

this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

*-John 4:4-15*

-How does Jesus respond to thirst?

-When have you experienced water as a gift?

## SOCIAL INQUIRY

### Introduction

When we fill a glass from the water faucet or reach in our refrigerator for a bottle of water to quench our thirst – most likely several times a day – we may not give it a second thought. However, millions of people don't have adequate access to this basic, life-sustaining element. Not only is safe water a problem in developing countries, but disaster, poverty and climate can affect access to clean water almost anywhere.

World Health Organization and UNICEF data from 2015 give us these facts to consider:

- Water-related diseases affect more than 1.5 billion people every year
- Water, sanitation and hygiene related disease kills nearly 1 million people each year.
- 160 million children suffer from stunting and chronic malnutrition linked to water and sanitation.
- Diarrhea is the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of child death, a majority of which are water-related.
- In low and middle-income countries, 1/3 of all healthcare facilities lack a safe water source.

Even in developed countries, we see the availability of clean water can reach crisis stage. Flint, Michigan, a city beleaguered with financial difficulties, made national news in January 2016 when the composition and

age of the water pipes, along with the source of supply of their water, compromised all the inhabitants of the city. Poor, and possibly unethical, decisions were made. The unprecedented problem, along with the labor and expense required to correct the water supply, has many other municipalities watching closely what takes place. The poverty-stricken are suffering the most with no access to clean drinking water. The situation raises additional questions about the safety of using the water for hygienic purposes.

Agricultural operations, pesticides and other pollutants can compromise a water supply. In California there are water problems due to drought. Natural disasters such as floods, tornados, and hurricanes can create a safe water crisis even in developed countries. Here too, those that suffer the most are the impoverished. The concern that our neighbor has access to clean water is a global concern.

On March 23, 2015, Pope Francis, in his address after the Angelus to visitors in St. Peter's square, said, "Today marks the World Water Day promoted by the United Nations. Water is the most essential element for life, and the future of humanity depends on our capacity to guard it and share it. I therefore encourage the International Community to be vigilant so as to ensure that the planet's waters be adequately protected and that no one be excluded or discriminated against in the use of this resource, which is a resource par excellence. With St Francis of Assisi, we say: "Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water, She is very useful and humble and precious and pure" (*Canticle of the Sun.*)

In his remarks before reciting the Angelus prayer that day, the Pope said Catholics can offer people three things: the Gospel, the crucifix and the example of living out their faith. In the Gospel, "we can encounter Jesus, listen to him and know him," he said, while the crucifix is the "sign of the love of Jesus, who gave himself for us." Catholics should also translate their faith into "simple gestures of brotherly love" and charity in which the most important thing is to practice what one professes; one's faith and life, words and actions must be consistent.

Jesus used the simple act of giving a drink of water to the thirsty as an example of how we serve him when we respond to the needs of others (Matthew 11:42). Organizations like Catholic Relief Services (CRS) devote great energy to make sure there is enough water for human and other ecological needs by drilling wells, supporting better agricultural practices, applying innovative technologies and working to ensure that water supplies are available and safe. We continue Jesus' ministry of bringing life to others who are thirsty for salvation by responding to their most basic needs – by giving drink to the thirsty.

### Observe

1. How much water does a person need each day? Visit [www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/water.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/water.shtm) to learn about the suggested storage amount per person in case of emergency.
2. Review your household use of water. How much water do you use and for what do you use it?
3. In your area, what does it take for waste-water to be made usable again? How much does this process cost?
4. Find out who controls or owns the sources of water in your community.

### Judge

1. What amount of water should each person be entitled to?
2. Is your use of water responsible, given your actual need?
3. Is there an acceptable amount of water that can be "wasted"?
4. How might society go about making sure everyone has enough water?

### Act

1. Use water responsibly. For example, stop purchasing bottled water and fill reusable containers instead or try taking shorter showers; install water-saving plumbing fixtures in your home.
2. Modify your use of water contaminants by trying household products made to be gentler on our water supply. Volunteer to monitor nearby rivers or streams for pollutants and organize efforts to address any problems that exist.

3. Visit Catholic Relief Services or another internationally active relief organization online and find out how to support their efforts to respond to the water crisis.
4. Take time to read Pope Francis Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* - *On Care for Our Common Home*
5. Place a holy water font at the entrance to your home. Use the holy water to mark your comings and goings and remind you of our baptismal call to bring the living water of Christ to all those we meet.

## Status Update

“@cfmact It is an act of love to give drink to the thirsty”  
#ChristianFamilyMovement

## Look Ahead to the Next Meeting

1. Date \_\_\_\_\_
2. Time \_\_\_\_\_
3. Place
4. Phone or e-mail host if you cannot attend
5. Look ahead to the Observe section for the next meeting.
6. Who could we invite to join our group?

## CLOSING PRAYER

*As St. Francis prayed: "Praised be You my Lord  
through Sister Water, So useful, humble,  
precious, and pure."*

*We thank You, God, for one tiny drop of water  
collected with thousands of drops which nourishes  
future harvests to feed us and all creatures.*

*We thank You for one tiny drop multiplied which  
quenches our burning thirst.*

*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.*

*Transform us into living streams of water flowing  
with life, hope, and love for the earth and all people.*

*We pray in thankfulness for Your life sustaining  
generosity. Amen.*