



Prayer

Creator God, whose Spirit hovered over the waters, who gather the seas in their places, and direct the course of rivers, who send rain to the Earth in order to produce life: we praise you for the gift of water. Immerse us in the appreciation of things we do not perceive, that we may receive them with gratitude, care for them with love, and generously share them with all your creation, for the honor and glory of your name. Amen.

Context

Access to water is a basic human right, which is essential to the integral and sustainable development of the society. Unfortunately, almost three million people in the world do not have access to this basic element, which is particularly relevant today, since regular hand washing is recommended by many nations as a COVID-19 preventive measure. Without water, and the scarcity and pollution of this precious resource, makes it impossible to comply with this simple preventive measure, and other daily needs which require water. The theme of the year 2022 is "Groundwater: Making the invisible visible."

It aims to ensure the up-to-date knowledge on the responsible use and protection of groundwater. Groundwater is an important resource, providing almost half of the world's drinking water, about 40% of irrigated agriculture, and about one third of industrial water. Groundwater is an essential part of the climate change adaptation process and often offers a solution to those without access to clean water. Human activities and climate change are rapidly increasing the pressure on groundwater resources: serious problems of groundwater depletion and contamination are reported in many parts of the world.

Three key messages for this day:

- We must contribute and collaborate with those responsible for climate policy, who must take care of the water to avoid the contamination of aquiferous areas.
- Managing water responsibly can help combat climate change. Sustainable, affordable and scalable water and sanitation solutions exist. It's time to put them into practice.
- We can all make a difference. In our daily lives, we can take very simple steps to avoid accelerating climate change. Likewise, at the political level, we can demand that companies and governments commit not to pollute water sources and not to allow the indiscriminate commercialization of water.

History

Water Day was first celebrated in 1993. A year earlier, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, the idea of celebrating this day was born, and the General Assembly adopted the resolution declaring March 22 every year as "World Water Day."

This celebration would be followed by specific annual water-related events (e.g. the International Year of Water Cooperation 2013) and even decades of action (such as the current "Water for Sustainable Development" Decade, 2018-2028).

All this only reaffirms that water and sanitation measures are key to poverty reduction, economic growth, and environmental sustainability.

World Water Day is celebrated to remind us of the importance of this essential liquid. Despite the fact that all social and economic activities depend to a large extent on the supply and quality of freshwater, 2.2 billion people live without access to safe drinking water. This celebration aims to raise awareness of the global water crisis, recognize water as a common good, and seek measures to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of water and sanitation for all by 2030.

Scripture Reading

Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift of God! If you knew who it is, who is asking you for a drink, you yourself would have asked me, and I would have given you living water." — John 4:10.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well and tells her that he can give her living water, water of such a nature that she will never thirst (4:1-14).



These last days are a time of great spiritual thirst. Many people in the world are intensely searching for a refreshing fountain that can satisfy their longing to find meaning and direction in their lives; they long for a cool, satisfying drink of insight and knowledge that will bring relief to their thirsty soul; their spirit longs for experiences of peace and tranquility to nourish and enliven their withered heart.

It is the Savior's promise to this woman that encourages us because this living water promised by the Redeemer extends to all the children of our heavenly Father. By living the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we develop within ourselves a living fountain that will always satisfy our thirst for happiness, peace and eternal life.

The words of Jesus, "living water," also mean that water is essential for the living. The Samaritan woman in dialogue with Jesus reminds us of a Christian organization called Samaritan Purse that provides clean water in several countries. The Claretian Family is also invited to protect water sources, prevent their commercialization, and provide water and sanitation to the people. Let us be part of achieving the goal of providing clean water for all by 2030.

Claret: Water, source of life and health

Water is one of the four elements of the furnace (water, earth, fire and air), which is the spiritual path experienced by the saints. Water is necessary in moderating the way the blacksmith works in the fire on the anvil. It is the life-producing element—it washes and refreshes, it grows and gives life. It is an element that contains beautiful forms, emotions and feelings, and is associated with the feminine. One of the first references we find in the Autobiography is his experience of being saved from the water, where God is fully present. Claret discovered God in the events of his life: "Divine Providence has always watched over me in a special way" (Aut. 7).

Anthony expresses that he discovered God not only in the church, not only in religious things, but also in the events of his life. We can say that Claret experienced God's providence: "One day as I was walking along the beach..., a huge wave suddenly engulfed me and carried me out to sea. I saw in a moment that I was far from shore, and I was amazed to see that I was floating on the surface, although I didn't know how to swim. I called out to the Blessed Virgin and found myself on shore without having swallowed even a drop of water" (Aut. 71).

In the autobiography we find some direct references in which Claret attests to and describes the diseases and hardships caused by the lack of access to water (Aut. 178 and 837). "The whole affair so upset me that it gave me a bad case of diarrhea. Because every year someone in the queen's entourage had died of diarrhea, presumably contracted from drinking the water at La Granja, I seized upon this as an excuse to leave the court and go to Catalonia. I did not want to tell the queen my real intention because she was then four months pregnant and I feared my announcement might cause a miscarriage. She begged and beseeched me with moans, sighs, and tears not to leave. I told her that I had to go to save my life, that I had made more than enough sacrifices for her during the eight years and months I had been at her side, and that she should not ask me to sacrifice my life as well."



When Claret was in Vic, he was using well water of the community to heal the members of his community and the people around. In remembrance of this, in the Community of Vic, there is a plaque in the courtyard, portraying on how Claret drew water from a well to heal the sick. In addition to his paternal care to his brothers of the community, the water served him as a resource to promote their health.

Prayer of intercession

(After each petition, we will pray silently for a few seconds.)

- O water, in your mysterious beauty you make the desert bloom. A tiny drop of water, gathered in thousands, provides water to the seeds and crops to feed us and all the living things.
- Tiny droplets multiply our burning cravings to save you. More than three-quarters of our body, like the body of the Earth, is made of water. We are water people, we are a water planet.
- O merciful God, you created all that exists with your divine breath over the water, we ask you to forgive us for our careless use of water, our attitude of disrespecting and polluting it, we ask you to grant us wisdom to protect and care for it.
- In this time of drought, as we wait and seek the gift of rain on earth, we also wait for the rain of grace on our souls.
- Come to our aid and free us from hatred, greed, fear, and our lack of love for your gifts on Earth. Transform us into fountains of living water, so that we may value that which is hard for us to see, and that life, hope and love for the Earth and for all people may turn green.

All this we ask of you, Creator God, fount of living water, through Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word, and the Spirit, the Source of Wisdom. Amen.

Call to action

United in one voice we affirm in virtue of our missionary charism as a Claretian Family that we always seek the greater glory of God and the salvation of humanity, considering what is most urgent, opportune and effective.



We affirm:

- Water is a divine gift that connects all life.
- Access to clean water is a basic human right, which we must use sustainably to ensure its availability.
- Fresh water from the Earth for the public good is of greater value than any commercial value.
- Freshwater is a shared heritage, a public good and a commitment of all.
- Reduce chemical use in the home, and do not pour motor oil, chemicals, and medications into the water source.
- Select water-efficient plants which consume less water.
- Limit the amount of pesticides and fertilizers used in your garden.
- Protect water wells with hedges and barrier guards
- Periodically check the quality of the well water.
- Protect septic tanks from leaks and empty them regularly.

Concluding prayer

Creator God, Source of living water, who separate the seas from the land, who direct the course of the rivers, who send the rain, and in the depths of the earth created wells of fresh water to produce and sustain life: we praise and thank you for the gift of water. Instill in us the capacity to care for and value all these gifts, so that we may be grateful, lovingly care for and generously share with all your creation. To the praise and glory of your name. Amen.

