

She said: "Lord, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty of have to keep coming here to draw water".

- p. Questions:** What can you do to help take care of this? ..... to share it? As a community, what can we do to take care of it?
- q. Gesture:** Pass round the jug with clean water so that each is served in a glass and drinks some of its contents, sensing the cool delight of the water... and the life that flows through it. Quietly, with background music.
- r. Song.** We all join in a final song...

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## CELEBRATION OF WORLD WATER DAY (22<sup>ND</sup> MARCH)

These are suggestions for a prayer on 22 March, **World Water Day**. Each community should adapt it to the situation and culture in which it is located.

### A.- Symbols and elements to consider.

- Find a place to pray, whether a chapel or a room, preferably the people should be seated in a circle.



- Place a table in the middle with...
  - Three jars or clear glass containers (where the water can be clearly seen):
    1. one filled with clean water;
    2. another filled with dirty water;
    3. and the third empty.
  - Several glasses ... if possible one for each person.
  - A Bible.
  - Some well-known songs about water.
- A stereo with some songs for meditation.

## B.- PRAYER.

a. If possible start with a song or some soft music to help enter into a spirit of prayer. You can project a VIDEO.

b. **Introduction.** Somebody should introduce the theme of the day.

1. A special day dedicated to water.
2. Water symbolizes our entire relationship with ecology.
3. The most important result is that we end the day in a spirit of solidarity with all who are suffering the consequences of environmental change, especially the lack of water, or from contaminated water.

4. We also assume our own responsibility for this problem and seek ways to address the things we failed to do when we should have done them.

c. **Music:** soft music. It's not necessary to employ many words to speak about the gesture that follows. Simply explain the practical issues.

d. **Gesture:** The absence of water. Pass round the empty jar and each one make a gesture of drinking... thus feeling the lack of water that many of our brothers and sisters experience in the length and breadth of our world.

e. **A moment of silence.**

f. **Gesture:** pass round the jug with the dirty water which each one can contemplate for a brief moment.



m. **A moment of silence.**

n. **What impressed you as you read this essay? Share spontaneous prayers.**

o. **Reading:**

We read a text from the Gospel Jn. 4, 5-15.

He arrived to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. There was, and there was Jacob's well. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat beside the well. It was about noon.

A woman of Samaria came to draw water, Jesus said to her: Give me a drink.

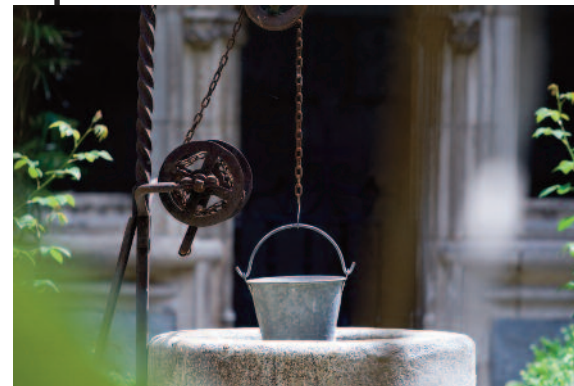
His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.

Therefore the Samaritan woman said to him: How can you, a Jew, ask me a Samaritan woman, for a drink? (For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.)

Jesus replied, "If you knew the gift of God, and who is saying to you," Give me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water".

She said to Him: Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, with his children and his flocks?

Jesus said: Whoever drinks this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a fountain of water welling up to eternal life.



water, day after day. This resource, such a key necessity for our human life, is generating, in our world today, more and more conflicts.

Among them...Tibet, where its great source of water, the Brahmaputra River, and its glaciers are a motive of discord, with China deciding their future.

The United States and Mexico in conflict over the Rio Bravo/Grande. Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt fighting over the famous Nile. Turkey, Syria, and Iraq in confrontation over the Tigris and the Euphrates. The Andes mountain range which divides Argentina and Chile, where there is a fight between mineral companies and indigenous peoples, the companies able to make enormous profits by using huge quantities of water to wash the metal, contaminating the ecosystem of the neighbouring populations.

The conflicts between Israel, Syria, Palestine and Libya in order to be able to possess the water of the Jordan and the Litani. Or the scarce provision of potable water to Gaza and the West Bank. The list could go on.... All of these, and so many other conflicts over water—a right for all—are arising because of its scarcity, its privatization into the hands of the hydro-mafia, its waste on the part of those who have access to potable water or its pollution by those who are ambitious.

The source of life is increasingly turning into a reason for death. It is urgent that we seek a place where there is “room for us” all as with Isaac, a fruit of another possible world, where ecology, justice, equality, and a fair distribution of the earth’s goods based on solidarity, reign over selfish ambition, avarice, ethnic hatred, and the logic of the permanent search for an enemy that justifies death. The waters of “contention” and “hostility” should be replaced with: **“This water is ours, let us care for it and share it”**.

Essay awarded by the 2010 Latin American Agenda

**g. Questions:** What is water for you? Do you know someone who might be missing it? Do you know of somebody who is wasting it?

**h. A moment of silence.**

**i. Reading. We then read a Scripture text from the book of Genesis: (Gn 26, 19-22)**

But when Isaac’s servants dug in the valley and found there a well of flowing water, the herdsmen of Gerar quarrelled with the herdsmen of Isaac, saying, “The water is ours!” So he named the well Esek, because they contended with him. Then they dug another well, and they quarrelled over it too, so he named it Sitnah. He moved away from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it; so he named it Rehoboth, for he said, “At last the Lord has made room for us, and we will be fruitful in the land.”

**j. A moment of silence.**

**k. Question:**

what to do you with the water?

**l.** We read the following story: **«This water is ours, let us care for it and share it».**



Mwadia awoke this morning—like she did every morning—when it was still dark. She left her hut and she went to get her yellow jug—like she did every morning—to look for water. Her husband and her children—like always—took advantage of the darkness of night to get a bit more rest. Except for little Ze, who would travel 3 kilometres on his mother’s back, so that he could nurse when the hour for his breakfast arrived.

Along the way, she met other women leaving from their huts, carrying their similar yellow jugs in search of the same source of life. Carrying water was a daily encounter that Mwadia had repeated ever since he had had a family and, before that, she had accompanied her mother each morning.

In that Northern zone of Mozambique—like in many other parts of Africa—looking for and carrying water and wood was the daily work of women and children. Water, yucca, and beans were the elements that sustained the family. Sometimes, some passing job, a gift, or a packet of food added a bit of novelty to the diet.

The women went along, exchanging words on the way: observations about what had gone on the day before in their families, comments about the weather, or a new ache that they had just felt this morning. The place where they filled their jugs was on the outskirts of the town. A place where everybody put their jug in a line and waited their turn to fill it. Sometimes, if they arrived a bit late, it could be hours. Sometimes it was possible to leave the jug with another and to go gather firewood.

Here women of two ethnicities met—Macua and Maconde—who, through language, culture, and history sometimes were united and sometimes were divided, sometimes were close, and sometimes distrusted each other. The links between the ethnic groups had passed through different stages in that broad zone of Mozambique. The same rhythms occurred in the village.

Nevertheless, it was normal to meet each day in the search for water, that element so vital, so common, so universal. They became sisters in their need to search for water.

But this morning was different than all the others. There was very little water and, as such, the women, those of her ethnicity, couldn't take any of it. They would go on to the next village to try their luck there. Strong words were had, as they wanted to fix the situation

so they wouldn't have to walk so far, but there weren't any solutions. The other group was larger and stronger.

Then, in resignation, they took their jugs and began to walk toward the next village. They were used to walking a lot, but they were only used to venturing 3 kilometres for water. Nevertheless, on that day, what had been a daily task became a new problem without a close solution. Because of this, they left in a bad mood. Along the way, the children who accompanied them—the first moment of tension having passed—began to play. What could these children know about the ancestral conflict between these two ethnicities? What could they understand of a more complete reality that, for them, wasn't very important yet? For them, it had only been a passing moment of hot argument and, now, it was an opportunity to visit another village.

The journey toward the water was long and tiring. The sun began to shine and, when the time came to return, more than shining on them, it would suffocate them.

Along the way, both coming and going, nobody imagined that this conflict wasn't limited to just this tiny place on the earth. Far beyond these seven kilometres that separated them from water, there were so many more national and international conflicts over access to this same liquid: water.

But...What could Mwadia and the other women know about all of this which was so far away from them? Their job was but to carry their yellow jugs, filled with

