



WITNESS : Care for Creation

“Many of the wars in this century were about oil, but those of the next century will be over water”

Ismail Sernagelain,
Former World Bank
Vice President (1995)

All life springs from water. Water is unique and essential. Water symbolises what is sacred and spiritual in all religions and many cultures.

Protection of creation is a commitment for which all must feel responsible. We believe that the earth belongs to God, though put into human hands to care for it. In the **CANTICLE OF CREATION**, St. Francis sung of a reverence for every being in creation. Today, it is more important than ever that we learn from Francis' example and live out an ecologically sustainable spirituality.

Franciscans In Action:



Secular Franciscans in Croatia are protesting a proposed oil pipeline that they describe as an “expression of deep contempt towards creation and its Creator.” In December, the Franciscan communities appealed to the country's parliament to halt construction on the controversial **“DRUŽHBA-ADRIA” PIPELINE** that would carry oil from Russia to the Adriatic Sea. The greatest environmental threat is the impact of foreign seawater (known as ballast waters), which the tankers would bring in high volumes and release into the Adriatic Sea before loading oil. Ballast waters often contain species that can colonize their new environment to the detriment of native species and local economies.



At the International Level:

Franciscans International represents Franciscan concerns at the international forum of the United Nations. This March marked the beginning of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Life” 2005-2015. **SR. MARY THERESA PLANTE, FMM**,



will be an active voice at the 13th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in New York in April 2005, bringing Franciscans concerns to world governments.

With your support, Franciscans International will host a 2006 meeting of an international **ENVIRONMENTAL TASKFORCE**, comprised of a group of Franciscan scholars and activists prominent in the field. This group will produce a decisive strategy for Care for Creation, aimed at such issues as water privatisation, deforestation and sustainable development.

What Can I Do?

PRAY: Consider organising a prayer service in appreciation of Sister Water, perhaps at a local water source.

INCREASE AWARENESS: Share this information with your parish, school and community.

REDUCE CONSUMPTION: Become an educated consumer. Think of ways that you can conserve water in your home and community.

CONTRIBUTE: Send your ideas or suggestions for the Environmental Taskforce. Support us with your donations.



CARE

OUR SISTER WATER

Praised be You my Lord for Sister Water, who is useful, humble, precious and pure...

Creator God, whose Spirit moved over the face of the waters, who gathers the seas into their places and directs the courses of the rivers, who sends rain upon the earth that it should bring forth life: we praise you for the gift of water. Create in us such a sense of wonder and delight in this and all your gifts, that we might receive them with gratitude, care for them with love, and generously share them with all your creatures, to the honour and glory of your holy name.

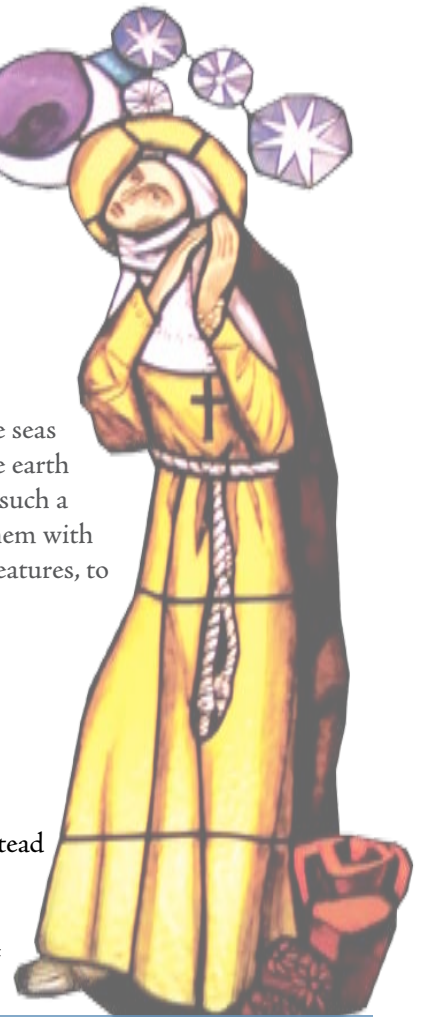
Psalm 65

BRIEF Silent Reflection

PENITENTIAL PRAYER

Forgive us, we pray, for the times we have failed to recognise our relationship with Sister Water, have not used water wisely, have not called others to awareness,

have thoughtlessly polluted instead of protected our water sources, have ignored the needs of our brothers and sisters around the world. (pause)



PRAYER OF WATER *(Let us pray together)*

“Praised be You my Lord for Sister Water, who is useful, humble, precious and pure.”

As St. Francis prayed in great gratitude for Sister Water, we pray in thankfulness for her life-sustaining generosity.

Oh water, in your mysterious beauty you cause the desert to bloom. One tiny drop spread collected with thousands of drops water seeds and future harvests to feed us and all creatures. One tiny drop multiplied quenches our burning thirst.

Our bodies, like the body of earth, are over 75% water.

We are a water people.
We are a water planet.

Oh 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. We ask healing for the ways that we disrespect and contaminate our sister.

In this drought time we wait and watch for the gift of rain upon the earth. We watch and wait for the rain of grace into our souls. Come free us from the hatred, greed, fear, and our lack of love for your gifts upon earth.

Transform us into living streams of water, flowing green and moist with life, hope and love for earth and all peoples.

We pray this prayer in the name of God who is gracious Creator, Jesus who is Eternal Word and Spirit who is Wellspring of Wisdom. AMEN.

Sr. vJoan Brown, OSF
Ecological Ministry of the Social
Justice Office,
Archdiocese of Santa Fe

CLOSING RITUAL

The Leader invites each of those gathered to name one thing they are committed to doing to raise awareness of water issues, or to restore right relationships with water. Then using water from the bowl, all are invited to bless themselves asking for a gift they need in order to complete their commitment. When all have had an opportunity to share, close with an appropriate song.

