



JUST.NOW

September – October 2008 Justice Briefing

Water! Wonderful Water!

Water of the seas, vast and deep,
regenerating essence of our planet's vigour

Water of the rivers, creeks and flowing streams,
strong carriers of life, steady currents of movement.

Water of aquifers and irrigation systems,
soothing arid lands, nourishing hungry seeds.

Water of human tears,
cleansing drops of grief, dancing drops of joy.

Water of baptismal fonts,
inviting humanity into the circle of community.

Water of secret springs and ancient holy places,
providing sources of healing and transformation.

Water of raindrops and snowflakes,
caressing the land with needed moisture.

Water of wells, springs, and reservoirs,
life-giving dwellings of health and vitality.

Water of clouds, vapours, mists and fog,
numinous vessels of wetness and silent mystery.

Water of the human body,
purifying, transporting, energising, restoring.

Water of the womb, cradling precious life,
vital wetness recycled from oceans and sky.

Water! Water! Wonderful Water!

Macrina Wiederkehr



The Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice acknowledges with gratitude the article on Water by Sr. Anna Byrne D.C.

Be The Power of One in Our World

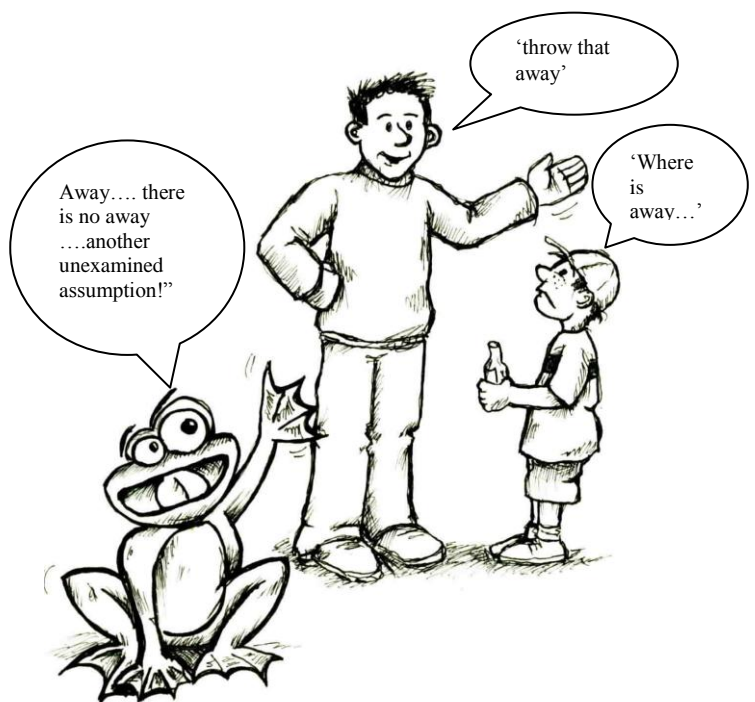
The poet Drew Dellinger was asked "What did you do once you knew?" he said "I am doing what I can"

Water and Ireland 2008

"Half of the people in the developing world are suffering from life-threatening diseases, caused by dirty water. A mother in Melka, Ethiopia, lost eight of her children, all before the age of two." Thankfully such heart rending stories are not true of Irish families today. However, potable or drinking water in Ireland is not as it should be for everyone all of the time since e-coli and cryptosporidium bacterium have contaminated water supplies in recent years.

Due to increased rainfall this summer floods caused anxiety that fresh water supplies would be contaminated by sewage and many people were urged to boil their drinking water.

Then a Spotlight programme on RTV in early September highlighted the possibilities of a water shortage in the greater Dublin region by 2012/15. It is difficult to understand the relevancy of such an alarming warning in a sodden country on a rain swept day. We expect, and rightly so given our levels of taxation, technological sophistication and investment in public utilities, that such blips would be remedied effectively and speedily. The purpose of this article is not to berate local authorities or repeat newspaper articles but to reflect on how we can misuse water- that vital ingredient of life- in our own homes.



Water a Justice Issue

Consideration for "the common good", a key value in Catholic social teaching, relates to our use of water. The loop of the water cycle that comes into the house is intended for use not abuse. It is an alarming possibility that the water leaving my house - with or without extra baggage - is likely to return to me or to some unsuspecting neighbour in the near or not too distant future!

Be The Power of One in Our World

Waste and Misuse of Clean Water

Waste and misuse of clean water is an ongoing concern. Will we have to wait for water accountability and possible charging based on the amount entering and the quality of that draining from our homes before we take notice? Remember how the ubiquitous plastic bags became redundant when they had to be paid for! In a world where one out of every three people is denied access to safe drinking water, it is incredible that 15,000 litres of drinkable water is supplied to every European and North American household just to flush the toilet! The River Rhine was known as the 'sewer of Europe'. Millions of pounds were spent between 1970 -90 in scientific research and cleaning strategies in an attempt to restore the river to its former clean status. It was found that a 'cocktail' of medicines, drugs and chemical cleaning agents from the households in the drainage basin caused a change in the sex of fish. Could this be happening to the fish in our local rivers? What else could be happening!

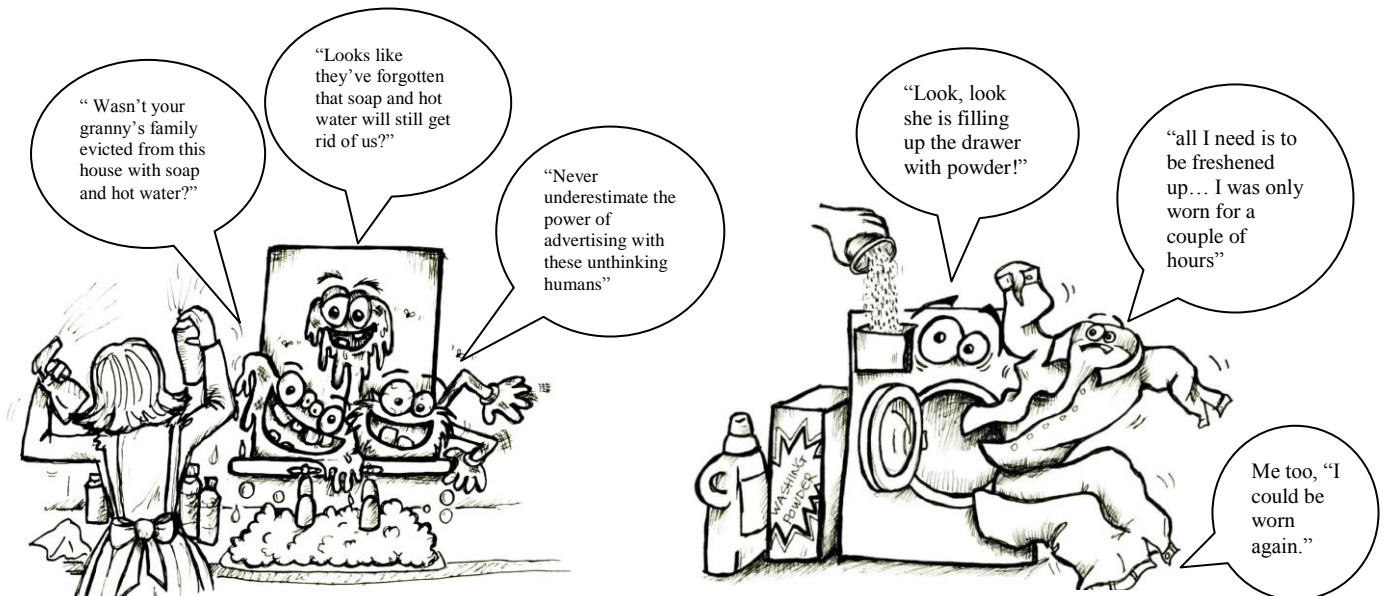


Am I Doing What I Can?

What about the common good and the poet's response to the question, "What did you do once you knew?" "I am doing what I can"- suggests action.

- The source of the water in our bathrooms is fixed, but could a cistern with a low volume flush be installed?
- A rain-water butt could provide sufficient water for the garden, pot plants and outside cleaning jobs - cars, steps etc.
- Convenience is not always the better option. The use of the most up to date/most frequently advertised product that will not biodegrade, may not be a good option when soap, hot water and a little "elbow grease" would be just as effective.

Has the time come to reverse 'NIMBYism'? What about being the power of one and doing what I can NOW. "We cannot live harmlessly but when we do it greedily, clumsily, destructively, it is desecration." W. Berry.



A Cocktail of Chemical Cleaning Agents!

Reflection and Prayer

Peace on earth is not possible until there is peace with the earth.

"The arc of the moral universe is long but it bends towards Justice"
Martin Luther King

There are 6 billion ways to look at everything - but only one everything.

Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons and daughters of the earth.

The earth has a natural ability to regenerate itself and its resources, but now due to population growth and improved technology, there is a danger that its assimilation capacity is being exceeded.

"This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognised by yourself as a mighty one; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.

I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community, and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can.

I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me; it is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations." G. B. Shaw.

"Indifference is always the friend of the enemy." Elie Wiesel.



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God our Father

Thank you for the wonderful world
you have created.

We thank you for the gift of
water that flows through the land.

Bless the seas with fish and sea
creatures.

Help us to bring an end to the
misuse, waste and pollution of the
water of the earth.

Teach us to be stewards and
guardians of your gift of life
giving water. *Amen*



Water

Then He poured water into
the basin, and began to wash
the disciples' feet, and to
wipe them with the towel with
which He was girded. (Jn 13:5)

Where Many Waters Meet

All the water below me came from above
All the clouds living in the mountains
gave it to the rivers
who gave it to the sea
which was their dying.

And so I float on cloud become water
central sea surrounded by white mountains,
the water salt, once fresh,
cloud fall and stream rush,
tree roots and tide bank
leading to the rivers' mouths
and the mouths of the river
sing into the sea,
the stories buried in the mountains
give out into the sea
and the sea remembers
and sings back from the depths
where nothing is forgotten.

David Whyte.