

WATER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep,
while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

Genesis 1:2

Time for Creation 2018

1 September - 4 October



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Time for Creation 2018: Water for Sustainable Development

The Student Christian Movement of India ever year observe Time for Creation to remember the Creator and the Creation. The Time for Creation begins on September 1, the Day of Prayer for Creation, and ends on October 4, the feast day of St. Francis, the patron saint of ecology in many traditions. During this period, Christians around the world unite to pray and care for creation. The Time for Creation is an opportunity to worship the Creator and protect the good gift of creation. This year SCMI has prepared worship liturgies on the theme - Water for Sustainable Development.

The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed the decade 2018-2028 as the International Decade for Action 'Water for Sustainable Development'. It has began on World Water Day 22 March 2018 and end will on World Water Day, 22 March 2028. This also foresee to attain the 6th goal of the sustainable development goal of the UNDP.

According to the creation story of the Bible in Genesis 1, Water and Divine dwelled together. God used water as the key source to create life. We all know that the Water is the source for life necessary for the survival of any life and key feature for the entire world to sustain. God called us to be the stewards of the creation but instead due to the human greed, control over water and unnatural distribution, all our water bodies have been polluted, destroyed, checked and contaminated leaving many thirst, creating new deserts and fighting for water. Scarcity of water– worsen by climate change or water-related disasters is causing tensions and conflicts between people, communities and countries. The present economic order for sure cannot allow equal distribution of water but only can deny to access of water to the so called have not's. The development model build big check dams so that the water cannot roll down in its course and the empire make sure that the ever flowing streams are polluted and dried so that Justice and Righteousness could be denied to the communities. Our home the world is facing serious challenges and as a faith community, we are called to commit ourselves to do the 'Water Justice'.

To respond to the issues around water and sustainability, we are planning to observe the TFC 2018 with four worship liturgies on different sub themes. Each worship order is so designed with an analysis of the theme and a brief reflection. Please use the resources to celebrate the creation and to critically engage in the challenges we face today. Accordingly you can make necessary changes in the resources to be more relevant to your context.

Thanks to Jeswin, Vinod, Benedict and Dakerlin for writing the worship orders. A special word of thanks to Dakerlin for coordinating this programme.

Together let's make a difference in this period of 'Time for Creation'.

Inbaraj Jeyakumar
General Secretary SCMI

Worship - I

Youth and the Integrated Management of Water Resources

Introduction

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” This new development agenda propagates an all-of-society engagement and partnership as a main driver for transformation. It is a collective action plan that unites State and non-State actors, whereby adequate opportunity and space is given to all major groups in society. While youth is considered as a vulnerable group that warrants specific attention, young people are also viewed as important actors who should be educated and enabled to reach their full potential. Specific attention is given to the promotion of youth employment for inclusive and sustainable economic growth and to developing the capacity of youth to effectively contribute to climate change-related planning and management.

The potential of young people as effective agents of change is beyond doubt. But it is observed that the space for young people to engage and participate in collective efforts in the fight against ecological crisis has to be taken into consideration. It is proposed that engagement of youth should happen both at the decision-making level as it is at the grassroots level. Hence platforms and resources have to be created in which young people can develop their skills as well as be engaged and integrated in different political processes; their voices need to be heard and their demands met. Spaces for “youth-owned initiatives” are crucial and a reversal of the conventional method of organizing that is top-down is needed. Only then will their participation and efforts be one that is sustainable. “The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for a society of engagement and partnership, and youth will have a decisive role to play in the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs.”

In India, youth comprised of 70% of the total population. Beyond bringing fresh perspectives to the table, they possess the unique potential of reaching the masses with an eye on creating the necessary change in mindset. Youth forms valuable human resource which can do wonders if channelized effectively towards a comprehensive and sustainable water management through participatory approach. As observed above, engagement of youth should not be limited to voluntarism alone; they should be the “main stakeholders, policy makers and the major resource group playing an important role in taking up responsibilities, revolutionizing the sustainable water management”.

Reflection: Psalm 63:1

An intelligent youth from the UK was sharing her experience with people around her when a question popped up, “Are you a Christian?” Her response was in the negative, “No I am not a Christian because I am spiritual.” Her answer points to the fact that spirituality is a universal concept and not limited to Christianity. Spirituality has become an individual affair even in a context like India. The present youth are constantly moving towards individualistic lifestyles. But there is something all of us, young and old alike, are gradually experiencing - eternal thirst.

A certain kind of thirst has been recorded all over the Old Testament - a “thirst of soul for God” (Psalm 63:1). The word “thirst” stands for two different meanings. One has to do with the consequences of our sin and the second involves genuine spiritual search. If we have the spiritual thirst we can avoid the eternal thirst which is actually a consequence of our long time sin against nature. But how does one understand spirituality is another question that needs to be addressed. While spirituality in the present context has been considered an individualistic matter, its real essence involves community. Humanity’s sin against nature is a consequence of the absence of communitarian concern for nature which then leads to a consumerist attitude.

If the present generation is going to continue with the same approach towards nature, humanity’s doom is certain. However, if they transform their approach into a divine search for justice, seeking the welfare of the community as a whole, there is hope for restoration of the earth, now and for the generations to come.

It is therefore important for the churches to bring a change in the understanding of spirituality which should not be limited to an individual search alone but also a striving for the wellbeing of community. This is the ‘divine thirst’ and such a thirst will protect humanity from experiencing eternal thirst.

Order of Worship

Call to worship:

L: How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures (Psalm 104: 24).

All: Ever since the creation of the world God's eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things God has made. (Romans 1:20)

L: Come, let us worship God in one spirit with all God's creation.

Opening Song: (to be sung to the tune of 'Guide me oh thou great Jehovah')

For the healing of the nations,
Lord, we pray with one accord,
for a just and equal sharing
of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action
help us rise and pledge our word.

Lead us forward into freedom,
from despair your world release,
that, redeemed from war and hatred,
all may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and good-
ness
fear will die and hope increase.

All that kills abundant living,
let it from the earth be banned:
pride of status, race or schooling,
dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice
may we hallow brief life's span.

You, Creator God, have written
your great name on humankind;
for our growing in your likeness
bring the life of Christ to mind;
that by our response and service
earth its destiny may find.

Prayer of Repentance:

Merciful God, we confess that we have ignored to acknowledge, love and care for your creation. We have taken for granted the value of water and have failed to use it wisely. We were least bothered when we see our rivers, lakes and ponds filled with dirt. Instead we were comfortable shifting the blame of dirtying such places on others. We have allowed factories and industries release their wastes into our rivers and oceans. We were not bothered to raise our voices against companies or groups that have privatized water for their selfish gain and interest. Lord, forgive us for not having shared the pain of many who are inaccessible to basic amenities such as water.

our actions. Help us to fight against unjust exploitation of water resources and make us channels of your love by sharing your resources with everyone in need.

Amen

Scripture Reading: Psalm 163:1

Sermon/message/reflection:

Act of Commitment: *(Stick notes needed for this activity)*

Write down one vow that you want to make in a small way to commit to responsible use of water in your daily life.

Intercessory prayer:

Voice 1: Lord, we remember our co-creatures - animals, birds, fishes, insects, plants, trees, the mountains, the hills, the valleys, the rivers and seas including all those which we are not even aware of, who have now become endangered species due to development activities that have encroached their habitat, denying them space to live and breed. Lord, help us recognize that their survival is crucial for the survival of the ecosystem as a whole.

Silence . . .

Voice 2: Lord, we remember all those who are engaged in addressing ecological issues and concerns - individuals, governments, organizations, churches, and institutions. Give them your vision and may their objectives and goals be focused on the right to life for all. Help their efforts to advocate for eco-justice and may the laws and policies be life sustaining for all creation.

Silence . . .

Voice 3: Lord, we pray for our churches which, many a time, remain silent on issues of ecology. Help them to engage with issues that affect our life and environment and help them come out of conventionalism and ritualism so that they may faithfully bear witness to you by engaging with uncomfortable issues and standing for the cause of justice.

Silence . . .

Voice 4: Lord, we pray for the leaders, law and policy makers of our country and the world that they may recognize the threats posed to the environment as a result of projects and activities in the name of development. Drive out greed and selfishness from their hearts and help them see the extent such activities have on the life of all living beings and the universe as a whole. Make them sensitive to justice issues so that they may implement changes that are sustainable for all.

Silence . . .

All: Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers. Amen.

Song of commitment: Sent by the Lord

1. SENT by the Lord are we
Our hands are ready now
To make the earth a place
In which the kingdom comes
2. The angels cannot change
A world of hurt and pain
Into a world of love
Of justice and of peace
3. The task is for us too
To set it really free
God help us to obey
Help us to do your will

Benediction:

May God bless us with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that we may live deep within our hearts.

May God bless us with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that we may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless us with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war, so that we may reach out our hands to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless us with enough foolishness to believe that we can make a difference in this world, so that we can do what others claim cannot be done. Amen.

Ideas for Action Plans: (You can choose to work on any of the plans as per the immediate need)

1. Think of and list down activities that each person can do to save water, within the house and outdoors.
2. Identify if there are water issues that need to be addressed in the community. If so, raise awareness about the issues among the church, community and youth.
3. Find out if there are initiatives by Government or NGOs on Water Management, in your region or state. In groups, discuss how young people can be involved in such initiatives.
4. Get the help of some professionals to teach the youth on how to harvest rainwater.
5. Start a movement that involves young people between 18-30 years of age and assign them with a role in managing water-related challenges.

Worship - 2

Water Scarcity in the face of Climate Change

The Earth in Jesus Cries “I thirst”

Life Stories *(To be read to the congregation as introduction for worship or could be used as a role-play at the beginning)*

Water scarcity is the immediate crisis that the future generations are led into living. This crisis can be handled only if we, the present generation, use water responsibly. The UN reports that by the end of 2050, 6 billion people could face water shortage. Water scarcity can mean scarcity in availability due to physical shortage, or scarcity in access due to the failure of institutions to ensure a regular supply or due to a lack of adequate infrastructure.

Dairying is a major revenue stream for small and medium-sized farmers in Maddur and Mandya region. But as outputs shrink, farmers are struggling: the cost of dry fodder has shot up to ₹20,000-30,000 a truckload, against ₹5,000 in normal times. Maradevanahalli villagers are forced to fetch it from 70-80 km away. “There is no water or fodder this year, and it has become tough to manage my three cows,” says Nagamma, a dairy farmer at Maradevanahalli village in Maddur taluk. The cows and her one-acre farm are her only sources of livelihood. “The milk yields have reduced: these days I get only about 5-6 litres, against 10-12 litres earlier,” she adds. The Maradevanahalli village panchayat provides about 200 litres of water per family, twice a week. But it is difficult to manage with that, and Nagamma has to turn to private well owners in the village. On the other hand, farmers like Gururaju are affected. “The water table has declined, and we need to drill wells too at least 1200-1300 feet,” he says. He has sunk seven bore-wells on his 25-acre farm, but only one of them yielded water. “I have to give the second crop a miss,” he laments.

Ragi, coconut and silkworm rearing (sericulture) are the main crops in areas around Maradevanahalli, where farmers practice mainly dry land farming. “This year, there is no ragi and no rearing of silkworms,” says Shivaraju, another farmer. The village tank is being de-silted under the MNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) rural employment scheme, and most of the villagers are engaged in the operations. As Karnataka reels under the impact of its fourth consecutive drought, the production of key crops such as paddy, sugarcane

and even the staple ragi has taken a hit, affecting the output and resulting in a price spiral. “Even sugarcane leaves, which are normally trashed as waste, have found value this year” says Kurbur Shantakumar, President of the Karnataka Sugarcane Growers Association.

Desperate farmers have taken to feeding their cattle with sugarcane leaves. But even the sugarcane crop has shrunk by about 50-60 per cent in South Karnataka. Apart from the lack of adequate rains, the receding water table in the region has aggravated the farmers’ woes. About 40-50 per cent of the estimated 25 lakh wells in the State are dry. In a situation like this let us draw closer to God, as people to discern God’s will.

Reflection:

Globally, water covers 70% of our planet, and it is easy to think that it will always be plentiful. However, freshwater—the one we drink, bathe in, irrigate our farm fields with—is incredibly rare. Only 3% of the world’s water is freshwater, and two-thirds of that is tucked away in frozen glaciers or otherwise unavailable for our use. As a result, some 1.1 billion people worldwide lack access to water, and a total of 2.7 billion find water scarce for at least one month of the year. Inadequate sanitation is also a problem for 2.4 billion people—they are exposed to diseases, such as cholera and typhoid fever, and other water-borne illnesses. Two million people, mostly children, die each year from diarrheal diseases alone.

Many of the water systems that keep ecosystems thriving and feed a growing human population have become stressed. Rivers, lakes and aquifers are drying up or becoming too polluted to be used or even encroached for infrastructure, factories and industries. More than half of the world’s wetlands have disappeared. Agriculture consumes more water than any other source. Climate change is altering patterns of weather and water around the world, causing shortages and droughts in some areas and floods in others.

Water is crucial for the economy. Virtually every industry from agriculture, electric power and industrial manufacturing to beverage, apparel, and tourism relies on it to grow and ultimately sustain their business. Yet water is becoming scarcer globally and every indication is that it will become even more so in the future. Decreasing availability, declining quality, and growing demand for water are creating significant challenges to businesses and investors who have traditionally taken clean, reliable and inexpensive water for granted.

These problems are already causing decreases in companies’ water allotments, shifts toward full-cost water pricing, more stringent water quality regulations, growing community opposition, and increased public scrutiny of corporate water practices.

The Ceres/Pacific Institute report concludes that climate change will exacerbate these water risks, especially as the world population grows by 50 million a year. The most recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states that global warming will lead to “changes in all components of the freshwater system,” and concludes that “water and its availability and quality will be the main pressures on, and issues for, societies and the environment under climate change.”

Though suggestions could be many, Nestlé’s chairman Peter Brabeck-Letmathe puts it more bluntly, calling water availability a bigger challenge than energy security. “I am convinced that, under present conditions and with the way water is being managed, we will run out of water long before we run out of fuel.” Water scarcity already affects every continent. Water use has been growing globally at more than twice the rate of population increase in the last century, and an increasing number of regions are reaching the limit at which water services can be sustainably delivered, especially in arid regions. It is time to rethink better management of water resources, its usage and conservation. Also ensure the possible restoration of fresh water-beds.

There are several places in the Bible where water plays a key part in the story of God’s people. In Genesis, all life arose from water. The book of Exodus has the story of the Hebrew people passing through the waters of the Red Sea, and later getting fresh water from a rock. In Isaiah, he talks about flowing rivers upon deserts in chapter 41. And in the New Testament, Jesus is baptized in the waters of the Jordan River by John the Baptist, and talks about “living water” with the woman at the well. When Jesus was crucified, he was pierced in his side and water came out. Before dying, his last words as narrated and recorded in the Bible were “I thirst”. These are just a few of the events in the Bible that have to do with water.

Today, water is, in a sense, being crucified. Humanity is destroying water by filling it with chemicals from shale gas drilling, pesticides, herbicides, and animal waste. Oceans are filled with so much plastic, huge islands of trash are floating in our seas. And because of climate change, people are suffering from drought in some places, and floods in others.

Jesus’ thirst for water while on the cross reinforces the fact that water is vital for life and is a crucial part of God’s Creation. Jesus’ cry is a call and challenge to humanity to restore water resources that have been exploited in the name of development and privatization.

Order of Worship

Invitation to worship

Leader: Come, O people of God, let us praise and worship the triune God, in whom justice flows like an ever-flowing stream. Let us sing praises to God's name for God made the heavens and the earth and filled it with everything good. All of creation sings of God's glory in and through their lives.

Response: We join in unison to worship the triune God in truth and in Spirit.

Opening Prayer

Leader: The dry land tears itself in its dryness, and the people cry out in their distress O God.

Response: The LORD said, "I have observed the misery of my people; I have heard their cry on account of their task-masters.

Leader: The creation groans, and your people and cattle in it as well.

Response: Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them

Leader: Your creation O lord wanders to quench its thirst, only to find the elite gleaming in greed.

Response: I will bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

All: Amen.

Hymn: "Come to the Water"

1 O let all who thirst
Let them come to the water
And let all who have nothing
Let them come to the Lord
Without money, without price
Why should you pay the price
Except for the Lord?

2 And let all who seek
Let them come to the water
And let all who have nothing
Let them come to the Lord
Without money, without strife
Why should you spend your life
Except for the Lord?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>3. And let all who toil
Let them come to the water
And let all who are weary
Let them come to the Lord
All who labor without rest
How can your soul find rest
Except for the Lord?</p> | <p>4. And let all the poor
Let them come to the water
And let the ones who are laden
Let them come to the Lord
Bring the children without might
Easy the load and light
Come to the Lord</p> |
|---|--|

Praise and Thanksgiving

Leader: You cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for people to use, to bring forth food from the earth,

Response: and wine to gladden the human heart, oil to make the face shine, and bread to strengthen the human heart.

Leader: The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.

Response: You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills,

Leader: Giving drink to every wild animal; the wild asses quench their thirst.

Response: By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches.

Leader: From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.

Response: I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being.

Leader: May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD.

Response: Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more.

Leader: Bless the LORD, O my soul.

Response: Praise the LORD!

Scripture Reading: John 19: 28

Message/sermon/Reflection:

Confession:

O God of mercy, we humble ourselves before you. Grant us mercy for the sins we have committed against you and your creation. We have been irresponsible in the use of natural resources you have given to us. We plead guilty for being

greedy in accumulating and never sharing. We have dried-up our local water beds and constructed mega structures. We have encroached water-land and industrialized them. O God of compassion, deal with us gently as we suffer from water scarcity, a calamity we have caused upon ourselves. Though you gave us the right proportion we have caused it to dry and brought drought upon us, thus leading to climatic changes in the environment. Forgive us O God, and change our hearts and minds to responsibly use the natural resources especially water. Forgive us O God, and grant us mercy for the sins we have committed against you and your creation and our neighbor. Amen

Absolution

Leader: The sins of a contrite confessional heart will be forgiven for God is merciful and just to forgive our sins and lead us towards the realization of our sins. Go therefore and sin no more, against God, neighbour and creation. **Amen**

Act of Commitment (*Water to be placed near the pews with paper cups*)

Leader: As an act of commitment, let us draw water in the cup, lay our right hand on the full cup of water, and pledge before God in a silent prayer to advocate water justice in the knowledge of the various lives that depend on water. To partake in the holy fellowship of solidarity let us drink the water.

INTERCESSION: (kindly be seated)

Display on the table: a glass of clean water, a glass of unclean water, a bottle of cola and an empty glass and a Bible.

Leader: (Hold up the glass of clean water) Let us pray for the whole universe. Lord let this glass of clean water remind us of the available sources of fresh water. Help us to protect the gift of water and utilize it with the spirit of sanctity and responsibility. May our lives be so balanced that greed is shunned and the tendency to waste be overturned.

Response: Fountain of life, wash us clean from greed and sin.

Leader: (Hold up the glass of unclean water) Let this glass of unclean water remind us of the tears of those whose lives have been threatened by the excessive salinization of their water resources. Let those who are responsible for contamination of water shed tears of repentance. They have only contributed to

the wastage of water and promoted marketization of their beverages. May they learn to lead a simple life so that others can 'simply live.'

Response: Creator of new life, transform us so that we may be channels of life

Leader: (Hold up a bottle of cola.) Let us remember those who speak truth to power. God of justice, we pray for all those who are resisting multinational corporations and developmental processes which plunder our natural resources and threaten the livelihood of millions. We pray for all organizations involved in the preservation of water, and with it, your gift of life. Help, guide and sustain them in their endeavors.

Response: God of justice strengthen those who seek to preserve your creation.

Leader: (Hold up the empty glass.) Let this empty glass remind us of the victims of drought and famine. Lord, we pray for all communities involved with the issues of water justice. Give us compassion to walk with those who lack the water for life's sustenance. Help us to empty ourselves of prejudice and fill us with a vision of solidarity and fellowship so that we can work together in conserving the Gift of water.

Response: God of justice give us your vision.

Leader: (Hold up the clean water and the bible) Lord, we pray for the universal church and its mission and vision. Inspire us to work towards water justice. Transform our lives so that we may be channels of justice - not just in what we preach, but in our daily practice. Let your churches be role models within our communities in conserving water and preserving life in all its fullness. Bring churches together to work in unity so that justice will prevail and water will be available for our generation and future generations.

Response: God of hope make us instruments of hope.

Leader: God our maker, we pray for our neighbours around the world who have been and will be directly impacted by the effects of water scarcity and climate change. We pray for wisdom for decision makers around the world, that wealthy nations may make amendments for the harm they have done to the environment and find creative and just solutions to protect all of creation and ensure justice for all. We bring these prayers to you in the name of Christ, our Savior,

Response: Amen.

Closing Hymn

I AM YOUR MOTHER

EARTH PRAYER

Words by
SHIRLEY ERENA MURRAY

Music by
RON KLUSMEIER

1. I am your moth - er: do not ne -
 2. I am your nur - ture: do not de -
 3. I am your lodg - ing: do not a -
 4. God is our ma - ker: do not de -

glect me! Chil - dren pro - tect me,
 stroy me! Love and en - joy me,
 buse me! Ten - der - ly use me,
 ny God, chal - lenge, de - fy God.

I need your trust; my breath is
 sa - vor my fruit; my good is
 sooth - ing my scars; my health is
 threat - en this place: life is to

your breath, my death is your death, ash - es to
 your good, my food is your food, wa - ter and
 your health, my wealth is your wealth, shin - ing with
 cher - ish, care, or we per - ish! I am your

ash - es, 1) dust in - to dust. _____
 flow - er, 2) branch - es and root. _____
 prom - ise, 3) set a - mong stars. _____
 moth - er,

4) tears on my face _____

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Benediction

May the grace of God the giver of life, the ever embracing love of Christ Jesus the living water, and the encompassing and all-embracing fellowship of God the Spirit who hovers around us, ignite our conscience and move us towards becoming just earth-communities. **Amen.**

Worship - 3

Water Security

Introduction

We live in that time of the world where 2 million people die each year due to lack of safe drinking water yet our Constitution boasts of right to safe and clean drinking water as Right to Life. In the year 2016 India was hit by a grave drought that affected a whopping 330 million people. With the rapid increase in population, lower levels of groundwater and contamination of water bodies the worst of the water crisis is yet to hit us.

The government of South Africa announced “day zero” – a countdown to when the city runs out of water that they would turn off the taps in the city and send people to communal water collection points, where they have to stand in a queue to collect 25 litres of water per person per day. This is news from South Africa’s capital city Cape Town. Fortunately the people of the city reduced their usage of water and did not have to go through “day zero”.

After this incident a study came out about the 11 cities most likely to run out of drinking water - Cape Town and Bengaluru are among them. An ironic fact about the Indian water crisis is, many believe the ‘Day zero’ has come and gone in many parts of the country where the taps have given way a long time ago and people are relying on bore wells or having to buy water for survival.

The availability of water today is scarce and the number of deaths due to lack of clean drinking water is rising. According to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) an estimated 801,000 children younger than 5 years of age die from diarrhoea each year. We see people suffering due to denial of basic sanitation facilities besides safe drinking water.

Reflection:

Water is a gift from God and it is essential to life. It is an interesting fact that the word water or waters is mentioned more than 700 times in the Bible. Many of them talk about water in the literal sense whereas some talk about it from a spiritual perspective. In Exodus 15:22-25, the story of Marah, Moses led the Israelites into the desert of Shur and for three days they could not find water. They reached Marah where they found water but could not drink it as it was bitter. Today we see many 'Marahs' in the world. Marah reminds of those places in the earth where water is contaminated or where there is a scarcity of water.

Niger is one of such places situated in the Sahara Desert; the place is extremely hot, sandy and dry. A 26 year old woman by the name of Fadoum spends most of her day, from sunrise to sunset, collecting water from 100-year-old holes from the ground. When few journalists visited the place, they asked the woman what her favourite part of the day was and a monotonous reply came: 'anytime we aren't pulling out water'. Marah reminds of those places on earth where water accessibility to support life has turned into suffering and death of countless people. Genesis 2:15 says, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it." We as people of God are responsible for every gift that promotes life, such as water. We should make every effort to safeguard and sustain it not just for our fellow human beings but for all creation.

Order of Worship

Call to Worship:

L: Your people come from many places with different stories to tell;

All: Show us your steadfast love, O Lord.

L: Your people come weighed down with their unique bundle of burdens;

All: Restore us again, O God.

L: Your people come ready to hear your word proclaimed anew;

All: Revive us again, so that we may rejoice in You.

Song: The Lord's My Shepherd

The LORD's my Shepherd, I'll not want.
He makes me down to lie
in pastures green; He leadeth me
the quiet waters by.

My soul He doth restore again;
and me to walk doth make
within the paths of righteousness,
e'en for His own name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through death's dark vale,
yet will I fear none ill;
for Thou art with me, and Thy rod
and staff me comfort still.

My table Thou hast furnishèd
in presence of my foes;
my head Thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me;
and in God's house for evermore
my dwelling place shall be.

Scripture reading: Exodus 15: 22-25

Sermon/message/reflection:

Prayer of Confession:

L: God's creation is being abused and violated. We as human beings often see ourselves as separate from creation, not woven into the web of life. We are quick to blame and judge others rather than accept responsibility for the part that we play in destroying our environment. We use more than our share of earth's resources. We are responsible for massive pollution of earth, water, and sky. We thoughtlessly drop garbage around our homes, schools, churches, places of work, and places of play. Much of the world struggles for survival--good food, clean water, adequate homes.

All: We are killing the earth, the waters, and the skies.

Silence

All: We confess these sins to you our God, Creator of the universe. You have set before us life and death. Too often we have chosen death. We have not loved the earth as you love it.

Assurance of pardon:

Know that our God is a God of love as well as of judgment. God promises to be with us as we struggle to be faithful. Thanks be to God.

Prayers of Intercession:

For people living with the effects of climate change now:

Leader: For the sake of those facing rising temperatures, drought and water shortages,

All: Creator God, in your mercy, renew this damaged world.

Leader: For the sake of those facing unpredictable weather, disrupted seasons and failed crops,

All: Creator God, in your mercy, renew this damaged world.

Leader: For the sake of those facing flooding, land loss and salination of vital water supplies,

All: Creator God, in your mercy, renew this damaged world.

Leader: For the sake of all those who fear the changing climate,

All: Creator God, in your mercy, renew this damaged world.

Leader: For the sake of the poor, the vulnerable, and the refugee

All: Creator God, in your mercy, renew this damaged world.

Leader: For the sake of us all,

All: Creator God, in your mercy, recreate our hearts that we might partner with you to renew this damaged world.

Song of Commitment: Here I am, Lord

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard My people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin,
My hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear My light to them?
Whom shall I send?

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have born my peoples pain.
I have wept for love of them,
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
Give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak My word to them,
Whom shall I send?

Chorus:
Here I am Lord,
Is it I Lord?
I have heard You calling in the night.
I will go Lord, if You lead me.
I will hold Your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them,
My hand will save
Finest bread I will provide,
Till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give My life to them,
Whom shall I send?

Closing Prayer:

Grant us, Lord God, a vision of your world as your love would have it:
a world where the weak are protected, and none go hungry or poor;
a world where the riches of creation are shared, and everyone can enjoy them;
a world where different races and cultures live in harmony and mutual respect;
a world where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love.
Give us the inspiration and courage to build it, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Ideas for Action Plans:

Personal: Watch what you use. Keep track of the amount of water used in a day and try to work towards minimal usage.

Community: As a community try to keep the shores clean. Make sure water bodies are not dumped with waste. Carry out clean up drives and awareness. Find alternative ways of dumping waste.

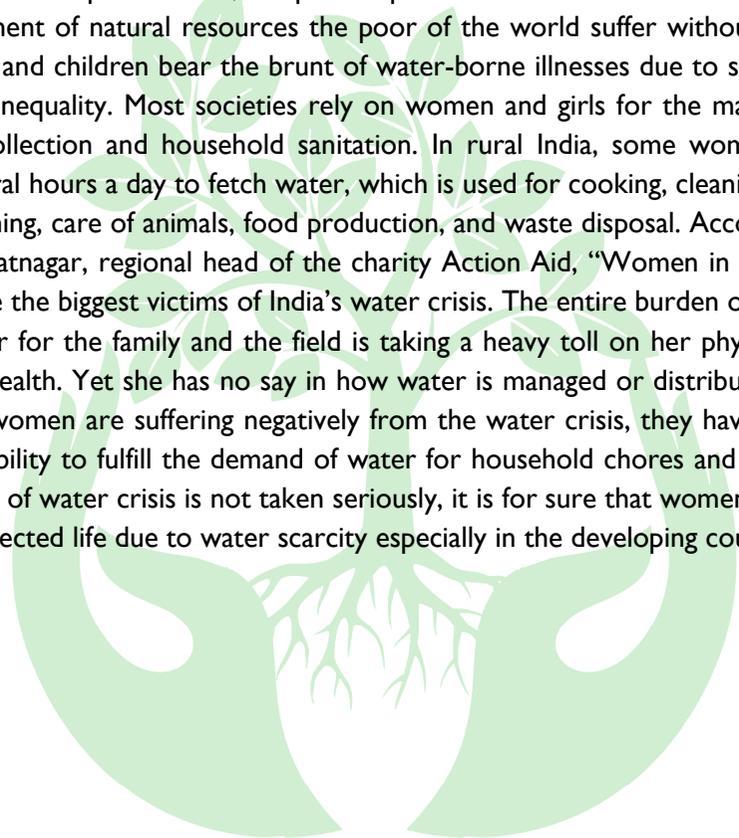
Globally: As a global community, make reduce, recycle and reuse a habit. Reduce the usage of water, recycle and treat water by engaging with the government and community and opening water treatment plants. Reuse the rain water by rain water harvesting, this can be used to water plants and farms, cleaning purposes, and also improve ground water levels.

Worship - 4

The Dynamic Role of Gender and Social Inclusion

Introduction

Scarcity of water makes water resources unavailable for all living beings on the earth. Due to privatization, corporate plunder of resources and ineffective management of natural resources the poor of the world suffer without water. Women and children bear the brunt of water-borne illnesses due to social and cultural inequality. Most societies rely on women and girls for the majority of water collection and household sanitation. In rural India, some women walk for several hours a day to fetch water, which is used for cooking, cleaning, bathing, washing, care of animals, food production, and waste disposal. According to Nirja Bhatnagar, regional head of the charity Action Aid, “Women in the rural areas are the biggest victims of India’s water crisis. The entire burden of providing water for the family and the field is taking a heavy toll on her physical and mental health. Yet she has no say in how water is managed or distributed.” Although women are suffering negatively from the water crisis, they have a huge responsibility to fulfill the demand of water for household chores and family. If the issue of water crisis is not taken seriously, it is for sure that women have to live a dejected life due to water scarcity especially in the developing countries.



Reflection: John 4: 1-15

John unlike other Gospel writers move us with hidden meanings and the weaving of meanings with social issues.

The Samaritan woman meeting Jesus Christ at the well just cannot be an accident. If the Greek word ἵκεν (it was necessary) in verse 4 is considered as divine necessity then the divine plan was not just about the Gospel but Jesus meeting that particular Samaritan woman and for sure no man from Samaria. Jesus chose a perfect place where he can actually meet a woman, to be particular, a woman with derogatory identity. I do not think Jesus who went through Samaria would have mind to preach in a place where many gather but Jesus' plan was meeting that woman and in the right place - 'a well out of the city.'

The conversation of Jesus with the Samaritan woman reveals to us that the woman was aware of the social barriers of that time but tries to help Jesus. She was worried because she believes that Jesus does not have enough knowledge to draw water from the well when it is deep. This is not something surprising to us because it is the reality of our times. It is women who manage water in our houses. Especially in the Indian context, women manage to bring water from far away or stand in a long queue to find water for her family members. Most of the men do not realize the struggles that a woman goes through to find essentials for her family. The Samaritan woman does not realize that Jesus is the Messiah and therefore her doubt that Jesus may not have the experience of drawing water from the well is very genuine.

The woman's innocent plea in verse 15 "*Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water*" reveals the pathetic situation of how tired she was to have to fetch water every day. Moreover, only the woman who suffers her whole life for water can understand the importance of water and can realize the thirst of others in spite of the social barriers.

In our context it is the women from marginalized communities who suffer the most because of water scarcity but none worry about women in this matter. The women and marginalized communities are excluded in finding solution for the alternatives for water scarcity. We should realize that unless the solution or alternatives come from the fringes of society our attempts to solve this issue will be vain.

Order of Worship

Call to Worship

Leader:

Come, let us worship the God, who is the Creator.

Let us worship the God, who is in the Creation.

Let us worship the God, who is in us.

Congregation:

We are here to worship our God, the source of all life.

We are here to focus on our Creator and listen to God's voice that beckons us to live a renewed life.

We are here to open ourselves to God to work in us.

Opening Prayer

Loving God, give us grace to worship you with a sanctified mind and heart full of devotion. Help us to realize your presence in our midst, so that we may be able to recognize different mediums of resistance against exploitation of your creation. We come into Your presence to sense the salvific act of redemption through your creation. We come before you in humility to hear your voice. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Thanksgiving Prayer

Leader: For providing the fullness of the creation; the rivers, the forest, the abundance of wildlife.

Leader: For enabling the forces of resistance; the NGO's, the people movements, the prophetic community.

Leader: For the blessing and experience of reconciliation offered.

Congregation: **We acknowledge the blessings we are experiencing in our journey of faith and we thank God's community for providing the possibilities of our life.**

Prayer of Confession (in unison)

Loving God, we realize our part in not caring for our nature. We have misused the earth's resources due to our greed and benefit, thereby causing harm to our natural environment. We have made many irreversible damages to our

earth. We confess that we often came up with excuses of insufficiency and inability when we are called upon to resist activities that harm nature. Gracious God, forgive us our shortcomings and our failures. Amen.

Absolution

May God pardon our sins and keep us close to God's creation to be prophetic voices to resist the unjust structures. May God help us to exercise resistive initiatives through the medium of God's creation. **Amen.**

Bible Reading: John 4: 1-15

Sermon/message/reflection:

Affirmation of Faith: (in unison)

We believe in God, the creator of all seen and unseen, who enables resistance through creation.

We believe in Jesus Christ, the son of God, born of Virgin Mary through the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed solidarity with resistive powers by taking baptism in river Jordan. He saw life flourishing around the water bodies. He taught us to cherish the relationship with the nature and to reconcile with the whole creation by his crucifixion on the cross, through which he redeemed the whole creation, and rose again and ascended into heaven; he will come to restore the world.

We believe in the Holy Spirit who teaches us through nature, who speaks through the elements of earth and water, who give us discernment to listen to the voices of the water body. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church to be the prophetic voice of the time.

Intercessory Prayers

Let us pray for Mother Nature and all the inhabitants in her; the plant life, the mountains, the rivers and other water bodies, the birds, the animals, and humans.

Silence

Let us pray for those who are facing the exploitation, for those who are suffering the consequences of water contamination.

Silence

Let us pray that we may be able to listen to the groaning of the nature, and to engage in a creative praxis.

Silence

Let us pray for our personal needs.

Silence

Lord in your mercy... **Hear our prayers.**

Lord's Prayer *(in your native language)*

Commitment Song
(In the tune of 'This is my father's world')

Water, God gave us all,
'Here take and share this whole,'
But those in power full of greed
Kept this gem for themselves.

Chorus:

'Give them to those who thirst, the water God disbursed.'
Our cries and strive will never fade for God's strength is with us.

The rivers, lakes, oceans
Part of our devotion
No barriers ever will triumph
We won't let it slay us.

Closing Prayer

God we thank you for enabling us to realize the worth of the creation. Help us to lead a life of resistance and be prophetic voices against the exploitative powers. Enable us to involve in the act of restoring creation and to involve in the healing of relations. Help us to uphold the sacramental aspect of your creation. Help us to live in harmony with your creation. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen**

Benediction

May God the Creator help us to realize the existence of creation, May Jesus Christ the redeemer help us to extend his unconditional love, May the Holy Spirit instill in us new inspiration to engage in restorative and resistive mission.

Amen

Notes:



SCM Solidarity Song

The Song we sing not for ourselves
For those who are oppressed and chained,
Build up a new society;
Lets share and feel with them.

*Come SCM'S unite be one,
Pull out injustice from this world
Live with people, build together,
One day we'll reach a new just world.*

The way we work not for ourselves
For those who are oppressed and poor,
Suffer with them and let us know;
That our struggle will win.

The life we owe not for ourselves,
Women and Men work hand in hand
The unity will triumph
We share the vision and hope.

