

# INTERNATIONAL WATER DAY

## "Water as a Common Good".

### Global Day of Action for Water



## 1. Opening Prayer

O God! You are creator of Life, source and inexhaustible wellspring of love. We gather on this day to thank you for our sister water, precious and sacred liquid, which today more than ever is at risk. It is so, not only because we are polluting it, but also because people want to turn it into an object of the market. We gather to ask for the wisdom of the Holy Spirit so that we may be able to preserve and protect it.

*We invite you to watch the following video :*

**World Water Day 2021 - Global Mobilisation**

## 2. Context

Unfortunately, nearly three billion people in the world do not have access to water, which is particularly essential today for the prevention of Covid-19. Without water, hand washing – one of the primary preventive strategies for this virus – becomes impossible.

This year, the UN invites us to focus our attention on water and climate change, as they are inextricably linked. It is done under the slogan "WATER COMMON GOOD".

By preventing climate change and its effects, we can save lives and cope up better with health problems. If we use water more efficiently and if we demand that large companies also follow the same, then we can reduce the emission of greenhouse gases.

### ***Three key messages for this day***

- We cannot afford to wait. Climate policymakers must put water as a Common Good at the center of action plans.
- Managing water as a Common Good can help combat climate change. Sustainable, affordable and manageable water and sanitation solutions exist. It is time to implement them.
- We all have a role to play. In our daily lives, there are surprisingly easy steps that we all can take to address climate change. So too, at the political level, we can demand from companies and governments to fulfill their commitments, not to pollute water sources and not to allow water to become an object of the market.

## 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. The General Assembly adopted the resolution, declaring March 22nd of each year as World Water Day.

This celebration was later followed by specific annual water-related events (e.g., the International Year of Water Cooperation 2013) and decades of action (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 every March 22 to remind us of the relevance of this essential liquid. Despite the fact that all social and economic activities depend to a large extent on the supply of freshwater and its quality, 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 action to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6: Water and sanitation for all by 2030.

## 3. Bible Reading

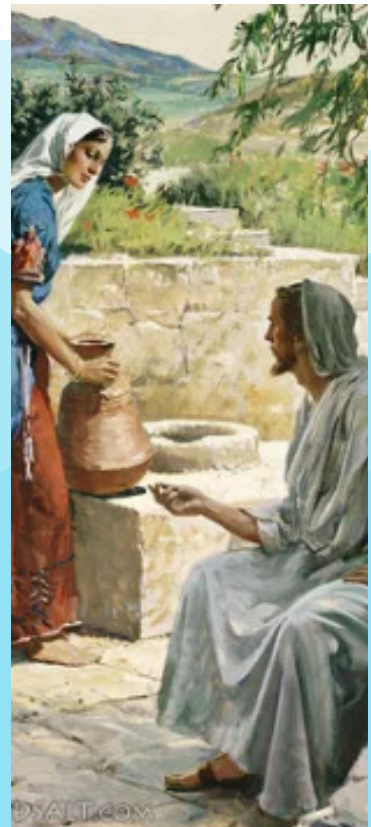
*"You drench its furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops. You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance. The grasslands of the wilderness overflow; the hills are clothed with gladness. The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain; they shout for joy and sing".*  
(Psalm 65:10–14)

Flowing water is an appropriate metaphor for the Holy Spirit and the new life we receive in Christ. Throughout the scriptures, we can see the importance of rivers. In fact, the Bible begins and ends with descriptions of flowing water. From the Garden of Eden flows a spring that forms the source of the four rivers that water the earth: the Pishon, Gihon, Tigris and Euphrates (Genesis 2:6–10).

In the Genesis we can read "and the earth was rough and hard, and I created the oceans with water as a stream". We see how water is part of the transformation and creation processes of the God of life.

Water in the Bible indicates origin, beauty and clarity. Water is also present as a symbol of salvation: Moses was saved from the waters; the people of Israel crossed through the waters to go to the promised land.

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



## 4. Claret: Water, source of life and health

Water appears as one of the four elements (water, earth, fire and air) of the Forge, the spiritual itinerary lived by the Saint. Water is essential to temper the form that the blacksmith works in the fire on the anvil. It is the element from which life springs, which washes and refreshes, which makes it grow and gives vitality. It is the element that contains beautiful forms, emotions and feelings and is associated with the feminine.

One of the first references that we find in the Autobiography of Claret is his experience of feeling saved from the sea. Claret discovers God in the events of his life: "Divine Providence has always watched over me in a particular way" (Aut. no. 7). This means that Anthony discovered God not only in the temple, not only in religious things, but also in the events of his life. We could say that Claret saw the providence of God: "One day I went... finding myself on the shore of the sea, it was suddenly disturbed and a big wave took me away and after that one, another one. I suddenly found myself far out to sea and I was amazed to see that I was floating on the water without knowing how to swim and, after having invoked Mary Most Holy, I found myself on the seashore, without even a drop of water having entered my mouth" (Aut. no. 71)

Also, in the Autobiography, we find some direct references in which Claret highlights and describes the illnesses and difficulties that caused by lack of clean water (Aut. nos. 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 told the queen 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".

Further References : Auto. n° 17, 18, 118, 336, 680

## 5. Call to Action

### Declaration in Defense of Water as a Common Good (read in chorus)

(All) Rooted in our Missionary Charism, and contemplating what is most Urgent, Timely and Effective, always seeking the greater glory of God and the Salvation of Humanity, we as the Claretian family

#### **AFFIRM:**

- Water is a sacred gift that binds all life.
- Access to clean water is a basic human right.
- The value of water for the common good takes precedence over any commercial value.
- Freshwater is a common legacy, a public good and a collective responsibility.



Therefore, as members of the Claretian Family and assuming our prophetic dimension, we **COMMIT**:

- To do all we can in our personal and community lives and in our missionary presences to educate ourselves and to share with others what we have learned, to take action in defence of water as a common good; to educate ourselves on this and to share with others what we have learned.

**WE WILL SUPPORT** actions and policies that:

- Ensure universal access to sufficient, affordable and safe water for all, especially the most vulnerable.
- Protect drinking water as a sustainable and renewable resource.
- Implement the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda, especially Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

**WE OPPOSE** actions and policies that:

- Put the world's supply of fresh water at risk.
- Deprive humans and other species of access to adequate and safe water, essential for life.
- Encourage the privatization of water as a commodity to be bought, when in fact it is commons.
- We oppose extractive practices (mining and fracking) that contaminate water.

## 5. Concluding Prayer.

Creator God! Your Spirit fluttered over the surface of the waters; you gather the seas in their places and direct the course of the rivers and you send rain upon the earth to bring forth life. We praise you for the gift of water. Instil in us a sense of wonder and delight for water and for all your gifts that we may receive them with gratitude. That we may care for them with love and generously share them with all your creatures for the honor and glory of your name. AMEN



Claretian Water Project in Cameroon

Join this worldwide action in defence of water taking place in over 20 countries of the global north and south. We unite to act against the contamination and the mining operations of the large corporations who are endangering nature.

**WATER IS LIFE!!**

