



Creation Season

Seventh Sunday of Easter, Year A, May 4, 2008

Water: Our cleanliness/footwashing

A Bulletin Insert for the congregations of the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota

Lessons (Revised Common Lectionary)

Acts 1:6-14

Psalm 68:1-10, 33-36

1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11

John 17:1-11

Collects

Glorious God of the heavens, deliver us from the presumption of so living for heaven that we are oblivious to the rich shower of blessings with us now. From the dewdrop to molten lava, all of creation is full of your glory and they shout hosannas without ceasing. Guide us to fulfill the work you have given us to do in the hour of this world, that we may attain eternity with you in the fullness of your time, through Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit, reign now and forever. *Amen.*

Holy One, you count each flower and blade of grass. You see each sunrise and sunset. You know the just and the unjust. You rejoice at our epiphanies, and weep at our cruelties. Shout with us as we shout for justice. Ride with us as we drive out hatred, violence and oppression against all your creation. Cleanse us through and through for your ministry of reconciliation and justice, and make us ready for the coming reign of Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

In the Gospel of John, chapter 13, Peter protests Jesus preparing to wash his feet. *Lord, are you going to wash my feet?* It is likely that Peter felt a certain amount of embarrassment and awkwardness that someone of Jesus' stature would stoop to perform such a meaningful task. Instead of asking that we take on the Peter's perspective, however, I would call attention to Jesus' viewpoint. His willingness to humble himself to the role of a servant is a powerful witness for us. And it sets up his commitment to living his values with integrity, even to the point of death. What changes might we enact in our lives if we were to pursue a similar spirit of humility? Consider some of these facts:

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Water: Our cleanliness/footwashing

- ☞ A person needs 4 to 5 gallons of water per day to survive.
- ☞ The average American individual uses 100 to 176 gallons of water at home each day. The average African family uses about 5 gallons of water each day.
- ☞ 88 percent of all diseases are caused by unsafe drinking water, inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene.
- ☞ Close to half of all people in developing countries are suffering at any given time from a health problem caused by water and sanitation deficits. For children under age five, water-related diseases are the leading cause of death.
- ☞ 1.8 million children die each year from diarrhea - 4,900 deaths each day.
- ☞ Every 15 seconds, a child dies from a water-related disease.
- ☞ At any given time, half of the world's hospital beds are occupied by patients suffering from a water-related disease.

Many of the solutions that are critical for the equitable development of the world revolve around access to plentiful and clean water. Since there will never be more water than there is now (upon this earth), we can make a powerful witness of solidarity by paying more attention to the amount of water we use. Here are some quick and relatively painless solutions:

- ✓ You can save up to 5 gallons (19 liters) everyday by turning off the faucet while brushing your teeth.
- ✓ It takes about 1,400 gallons (5320 liters) of water to process a meal of a
- ✓ 1/4 lb. hamburger, french fries and a soft drink.
- ✓ A leaky faucet can waste 100 gallons (380 liters) a day.

Repairing leaky faucets, minding our consumption, and eating "lower" on the food chain all help others and protect our own water supply.

We all need to have our feet washed by our Lord as a way to remember the gifts we have been given.

Lord, wash me and I shall be clean indeed.

References available on the MEESC website.

The Minnesota Episcopal Environmental Stewardship Commission (MEESC) has prepared Creation Season materials for the Season of Easter, 2008, with a focus on water. If you find the information on these inserts to be of interest, you may wish to visit the MEESC website for more information (www.env-steward.com). Members of MEESC are available to visit your congregation to assist you in your environmental stewardship walk.