

Water and Fire:

Life in the Balance

Rev. Patrick Stephens

Third Week of Lent

Friday March 25

Scripture

John 19:28,30

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), 'I am thirsty.' ... Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit

Matthew 23:37-38

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you, desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'

Reflection

As Jesus approaches the final moments of his life, he calls out in thirst. This is a simple expression of the fully human experience of being in pain and in need of hydration. Dying in such a public and violent way, Jesus offers us a glimpse of the fullness of his humanity and vulnerability.

Long before Jesus' crucifixion, and long after as well, the same familiar refrain cries out from all corners of humanity, and from creation itself.

People need access to safe, clean water. It is one of the most basic and universal needs which unite us. Water is life-giving, cleansing, and refreshing when it is present. When it is absent or contaminated, water becomes a very real symbol of suffering and vulnerability.

Not only people, but entire ecosystems depend on water for their health. Along with deforestation and pollution, the effects of climate change expose new vulnerabilities in the life of the earth on a regular basis.

When Jesus cries out in thirst, he gives voice to a very real threat faced by many people and ecosystems in our own time. PWRDF responds to this call by helping to secure clean water sources in communities around the world and by helping to mitigate the effects of drought in vulnerable ecosystems and farmlands

Prayer

*God who brought water out of the rock,
God who quenched the thirst of those dying in the wilderness,
God who in Jesus gave the living waters
so that those who taste them would never thirst,
God who in Jesus died on the Cross thirsty,
for there was none to quench his thirst,
listen to all those who truly confess
and grant us forgiveness so that we act responsibly in our use of water,
become sensitive to the desperate needs of those without water,
and gain wisdom in conserving
and preserving water so that rivers roll out in justice among all nations and all peoples.
Amen.*

From prayers related to SDG#6, World Council of Churches and Student Christian Movement, India

Clean drinking water in Pikangikum

A lack of access to clean drinking water is a significant health and quality of life issue for many First Nation communities across Canada. On June 20, 2018, Indigenous Services Canada listed 78 First Nations that have long-term drinking water advisories in effect. The Indigenous people of Pikangikum, a remote fly-in Ojibwe community in northern Ontario, know what it's like not to be able to drink water directly from the tap they have been under a boil water advisory for more than a decade. Not only that, just 109 of the 500 homes in Pikangikum even have a tap the rest must travel to one of six watering points in the community to collect water in buckets for drinking or cooking. The elders of the band identified finding, and implementing, a solution to providing access to clean drinking water in homes as a top priority for their community. They tasked this problem to the Pikangikum Working Group (PWG), a volunteer-run group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who have offered their professional experience to identify actionable solutions to some of the major issues facing this First Nation community. Tasked with bringing clean drinking water to 10 more homes in the second phase of the project, the group reached out to Habitat for Humanity Manitoba.

Read the whole story at

<https://habitat.ca/en/stories/clean-drinking-water-in-pikangikum>