

Have you ever had “A water cooler moment?
A water cooler moment is the daily discussion
that takes place in an office, standing around the water cooler.” or
“A significant moment in television history
that is discussed the next day in the workplace.”
A time to talk about your weekend –
or talk about the last episode of Game of Thrones or This is Us... or perhaps tell a joke
There was once a young man who, in his youth,
professed his desire to become a great writer.
When asked to define “great” he said,
“I want to write stuff that the whole world will read,
stuff that people will react to on a truly emotional level,
stuff that will make them scream, cry, howl in pain and anger!”
He now works for Microsoft, writing error messages.

Hopefully worship creates a water cooler moment –
or at least a word or two over coffee...
but how often do you share with non-church goers... or co-workers
your experience of worship – or Jesus?

I was told this week that March 22nd of every year is –
World Water Day – one day to recognize –
draw attention to the importance of water.
Water has long been a topic of conversation for humanity
as bottling companies take over public water supplies,
the Dakota Pipeline protest was focused partly on the sanctity of
water – the concern over the possibility of pollution.
One area suffers from drought while other areas flood.

As I type this sermon I got a text from the sports co-ordinator
at the community hall where I work
as she was concerned about the piles of snow melting
and flooding and eroding our new playground
– a first world problem –
I was watching the opening of curling in China
and they were discussing the ice – as they usually do,
but China has an interesting problem
in that the water was contaminated –
causing the ice to break up
and the contaminated water to seep through
and make the ice look like a spiders web – a first world problem –
You remember the diving tank in Brazil?
Not fit to swim in –
and as we talk around the water cooler about these events –
we almost forget that in other areas of each of these countries
there are those where contaminated water is a reality every day –
not just in their recreation, but their drinking water –
their life source –

It is estimated 1-8 billion people have access to only water that is contaminated – 842 000 dying because of it per year.

Now Earthly water isn't the point of Jesus' message today – although when he asked for water from the Samaritan woman

he certainly would expect it to be clean.

And if he was here today

and knew about the contamination of our water

it would certainly be of importance to him

and he would want us all to do what we can

so that all receive 'clean' earthly water

But Jesus' message is about another kind of water –

a metaphorical water – a 'living water'

one that cleanses our contaminated selves.

One that gifts to us eternal life.

One that we need to care for as well...

Once upon a time,

a certain town grew up at the foot of a mountain range.

It was sheltered in the lee of the protecting heights,

High up in the hills, a strange and quiet forest dweller

took it upon himself to be the Keeper of the Springs.

He patrolled the hills and wherever he found a spring,

he cleaned its brown pool of silt and fallen leaves,

of mud and mold and took away from the spring all foreign matter,

so that the water which bubbled up through the sand

ran down clean and cold and pure.

It leaped sparkling over rocks

and dropped joyously in crystal cascades until,

swollen by other streams,

it became a river of life to the busy town.

Millwheels were whirled by its rush.

Gardens were refreshed by its waters.

Fountains threw it like diamonds into the air.

Swans sailed on its limpid surface,

and children laughed as they played on its banks in the sunshine.

But the City Council was a group of hard-headed,

hard-boiled businessmen.

They scanned the civic budget

and found in it the salary of a Keeper of the Springs.

Said the Keeper of the Purse:

Why should we pay this romance ranger?

We never see him; he is not necessary to our town's work life.

If we build a reservoir just above the town,

we can dispense with his services and save his salary.

Therefore, the City Council voted to dispense with the unnecessary cost of a Keeper of the Springs, and to build a cement reservoir.

So the Keeper of the Springs no longer visited the brown pools
but watched from the heights while they built the reservoir. When it was finished, it soon filled
up with water, to be sure,
but the water did not seem to be the same.
It did not seem to be as clean,
and a green scum soon befouled its stagnant surface.
There were constant troubles
with the delicate machinery of the mills,
for it was often clogged with slime,
and the swans found another home above the town.
At last, an epidemic raged, and the clammy,
yellow fingers of sickness reached into every home
in every street and lane.

The City Council met again.
Sorrowfully, it faced the city's plight,
and frankly it acknowledged the mistake
of the dismissal of the Keeper of
They sought him out of his hermit hut high in the hills,
and begged him to return to his former joyous labor.
Gladly he agreed, and began once more to make his rounds.
It was not long until pure water
came liltng down under tunnels of ferns and mosses
and to sparkle in the cleansed reservoir.
Millwheels turned again as of old. Stenches disappeared. Sickness waned and convalescent
children playing in the sun
laughed again because the swans had come back.

We know that there is more we can do
each day to reduce water usage –
wash your car less, \
turn off taps when brushing teeth or cleaning pots
We know that there is more we can do each day to re use water – use grey water for our flower beds,
vegetable gardens, car washing

But Jesus' question would be – what about your spiritual spring?

The Samaritan woman was caught in sin –
an outcast in her own community.
She came to get water when no one was there –
likely so she wouldn't be chastised or tormented.

There was no joking for her by the water well...
no sharing the days events.... Until one day...
one day – things were different –
for her it became not about her need for water from the earth –
but the living water – the life that Jesus could give her.
the freedom from contamination,
the removal of the green scum of sin
and the promise of life eternal, the gift of the spirit.

And just as when you taste clean water after dirty water –
you know the difference –
she knew from that moment things were different.
Her, who likely talked to no one –
forgot everything else but sharing this message –
a message that her people knew would one day come –
and she got to deliver it.

Two types of water – both precious – both life giving –
both we are called to share with others
So that all have clean water – and so that all may be made clean.

So how will you help be the keeper of the Springs ?
and how will you care for the living spring with in you?

Drink – and thirst no more –
for it is Christ through the Holy spirit who washes us clean - and asks us to offer his cup to
others that all may have eternal life.

Amen