



CATHOLIC RURAL LIFE

Agricultural Ethics for a Global Generation

Pure Water: A Sacramental Commons

Water is Earth's lifeblood. Water gives nourishment and life to the Earth commons. Without water, life could not exist on Earth. Water provides life nutrients. Water provides for life.

Water is a material good, but we come to see water as a spiritual good when we recognize the providential presence of the Spirit as we drink the water that sustains our life.

When water is pure, its life-giving role can be fulfilled. When water is polluted, it endangers health and life, not only for humankind but for all the biotic community.

Water is a common good and for the common good. When water is privatized, it can lose its function to provide for the common good. When water is polluted, it loses its life-giving properties and its essential role in the cycle of life. It is no longer a sign in nature of the Creator Spirit.

The Bible speaks of "living water" in both a material and a spiritual sense. As a life-giving and life-providing nourishment, water is "living" when it flows pure and free.

We are called to cultivate and to care for earth's resources. In exercising this care for the land and the waters, we learn the importance of our solidarity and communion with nature. Water connects us all into one web of life.

Adapted from "Living Water" by John Hart; Catholic Rural Life Magazine, Vol. 45, #2

Whoever believes in me, as scripture says: 'Rivers of living water will flow from within him.'
-John 7:38

He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life."
-Revelation 21:6