



Sister of Mercy, Mary Schmuck, serves with the Archdiocese of Louisville Catholic Charities Parish Social Ministry Department.

Thoughts on Privatization Of Water

Recently I was asked to provide a presentation on the privatization or commodification of water to 3 classes of young women at a high school in downtown Louisville.

Former high school teacher that I am, I worked hard on the presentation, and on the day its delivery got pretty good by the third time! (I must have gotten rusty over the past couple decades...?)

I don't know if the students have thought much about it since, but I surely have. Some of the key points that keep bouncing around in my mind and heart.

What's going on about water

- We humans depend on it profoundly—to drink, produce all foods (plant + animal).
- When sold it is very expensive. Tap water costs about \$0.005/gal versus the cost of a gallon of bottled water.
- Bottled water is loosely regulated—less than tap water! One-fourth of bottled water is tap water anyway!
- Plastic bottle manufacturing, transport and recycling take oil plus energy. Disposal volume troubles grow.
- Bottled water undermines trust in tap water.
- Who owns/operates the local water works is an important question, too: decision-making, use of "profits."
- Battles over water occur now in our U.S. West and between/among countries:
 - 1/5 world population in 30/210 countries have water shortages

- 1/3 world's people live in water-stressed conditions. This will double by 2025?
 - With speeding up climate change, especially the disappearance of glaciers and droughts, these conflicts will grow.
 - Some visionary people believe our next resource wars will be over water.
 - We waste it pitifully—using drinking quality water for lawns, car washing, leaving it running, leaky pipes. The average African family uses about 5 gallons per day. I use: ____
- What to do to protect our basic human right to water: SEE—JUDGE—ACT.

SEE

- Pay attention to what is going on about water.

JUDGE—in light of Sustainability + Reverence + All is connected!

- Study and embrace one's religious social teaching
- Water should not be available only to those who can afford to buy it. It is fundamentally needed for human life. It is God's gift. It is a sacred symbol for all traditions. Our faith tells us to be just, not to exploit persons who are poor.

ACT—spectrum of action needed:

- Mindset<...>public policy<...>lifestyle choices
- Don't waste it—When brushing teeth, bathing, doing laundry, in restaurants, water lawns at cool times, use water-saving equipment
 - Avoid bottled water. Get one's own hard plastic

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2 Thoughts on Water Privatization

- or glass bottle and keep refilling it from a good water source.
- Greatly simplify one's lifestyle, "wants," "needs". Almost all products need water in their manufacture—and almost all transportation vehicles need water in their engine coolants.
 - Support public water works: Fight to protect the right to water for all—a MORAL issue.
 - Join organizations supporting the just use of water:
 - Corporate Accountability International campaign, Sierra Club.
 - Some helpful websites:
 - www.water.org;
 - www.oxfam.org/uk
- www.stopcorporateabuse.org;
 - www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/
 - Simply voice one's reasons for conserving precious water. This helps build the public support needed for us as a society to make some of the needed bigger changes.
 - Study: developing information about our universe, global climate change, trade treaties development, globalizing business
 - Pray: to see all of this from God's point of view, asking for the wisdom and generosity needed to use water well and with gratitude. God is counting on us!

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