

The Cyril Hally Lecture: The Water of Life
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I am very happy to be invited here to give this First Cyril Hally Lecture. Cyril is almost an institution in the Australian religious world. To do justice, even in a summary way, to his many achievements and the range of topics that he has addressed over the years would take many lectures. He is recognised as a significant commentator on culture and religion, on human rights and social justice issues. Despite a hectic schedule Cyril has always been very generous with his time and, over the years, he has encouraged many of us who are here tonight to enter, wholeheartedly, into these great debates of our time.

Cyril has had a profound impact on my life. When he came to teach in the Columban seminary in Ireland in 1963 he made a profound impact on the students. He used his weekly class in Gregorian Chant to talk about anthropology, linguistics, or current affairs like the Vietnam War. The phrase I remember most from Cyril's lips was "in my opinion".

Cyril expected missionaries to have opinions about a broad range of issues based on solid reflection and research. But the seminaries of the 1960s were not famous for encouraging people to think for themselves.

Their function in the eyes of many was to pass on a pre-assembled body of teaching to the seminarian which he, in turn, would communicate to others during his priestly ministry. Cyril, thankfully, did not see things in that way. He nurtured a spirit of inquiry especially about the interplay between relevant contemporary issues and religious faith.

After my first few years in the Philippines I was asked to study Canon Law in Rome. Canon Law was not my idea of where the Church was in the early 1970s so a letter from Cyril helped persuade my superiors then that I would be more suited to study anthropology than canon law.

Among Cyril's many accomplishments is an expertise in canon law.

During the past 8 years I have researched and written on the ethics of genetic engineering and patenting living organisms. My interest in this area began when Cyril gave me Geoffrey Lawrence's Capitalism in the

Countryside: Rural Crisis in Australia in the late 1980s. Even my interest in tonight's subject WATER dates back to Fred Powledge's book Water: The Use, and Future of Our Most Precious and Abused Resource which Cyril gave me when I was teaching here in 1984.

At this moment in history, the year 2002, it is clear to any serious researcher or commentator that we are facing a global water crisis. 1.2 billion people have no access to clean water. 2.5 billion have no sanitation and if we continue with a business-as-usual way two-thirds of the world will not have sufficient water in 30 years time.

Human activity is polluting water in rivers, aquifers, lakes and the oceans around the world. The situation is extremely serious and poised to get worse unless concerted action is taken at local, national and global levels. In mid-February 2000 a cyanide spill from a gold mine in Northern Romania entered the river Tisza, a tributary of the Danube, destroying aquatic life for hundreds of miles down stream (¹).

Pollution and lack of water is also a problem in Asia. The Indus, and Ganges two of the great rivers of Asia, are heavily polluted as are many of the rivers in China. I worked for over two decades in the Philippines and visited the country again recently. The majority of the rivers are polluted through soil erosion, agricultural and human waste and mine tailings. The Pasig was once a beautiful river linking lake Laguna with Manila Bay. It was celebrated in poetry and song. Today it is little more than an open foul-smelling, sewer.

Fresh Water

The Global Environmental Outlook published by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in May 2002 in preparation for the UN meeting on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg tells us that only 2.5 per cent of the waters of the world are fresh water. Most of this fresh water is found in ice and snow in Antarctica, Greenland and the Arctic.

About one third of the world's population lives in countries suffering from moderate-to-high water stress -where water consumption is more

¹ . Juliette Terzieff "Romania counts the cost of cyanide river disaster", The Sunday Times, February 20, 2000, page 27.

than 10 per cent above of the renewable water resources. It is estimated that in 30 years two-thirds of the world's population will be living in water stressed countries.

World wide the demand for water is doubling every 21 years. By the year 2020 water use is expected to have increased by 40 per cent. The major factors that account for the increased use of water are population growth, industrialization and irrigation agriculture. Over 60 percent of the world's largest 227 rivers have been dammed in order to supply water for human needs.

Supply cannot keep pace with demand as populations soar and cities explode. At present the global population is 6.4 billion. This is expected to rise to 8 or 9 billion by the year 2025. It is easy to see how the demands for clean, potable water will become acute in the next few decades.

Water Distribution Inequitable

Only one per cent of the fresh water of the world is available for human use in either agriculture, industry or for domestic purposes. This available water is distributed in a inequitable way. It is estimated that a family needs 50 litres of water each day; 5 for drinking, 10 for sanitation and hygiene, 15 for bathing and 10 for preparing food (2). Poor families do not have access to this amount of water and as missionaries know women and children often have to walk miles each day to fetch water for their basic family needs.

The cost of water also fall much heavier on the poor than on the rich. If you live in Tanzania you will pay 5.7 percent of your daily wages on water. If you live in the United states you pay 0.006 percent of your wages on water (3).

Water and Health

Even then the water you buy may be contaminated and cause health problems. Polluted water is one of the main causes of illness in poor

2 . Paul Brown, "Failure to manage water kills two million a year-UN", The Guardian, April 11, 2002.

3 . Earth, The Guardian, August 7, 2002, page 7.

countries. As a result two million people, mainly in Africa, die needlessly each year (4). This is the equivalent of 10 jumbo jets crashing each day. One of the saddest statistics of all is that about 6,000 children die each day from water-borne diseases like gastro-enteritis. This figure is almost twice the number of people killed in the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon which led to massive retaliation in Afghanistan and huge resources being poured into the so-called war on terror. Unfortunately, there is no crusade to provide clean water for everyone on the planet despite deaths every not just on September 11, 2001.

Water pollution is particularly acute in megacities like Dhaka in Bangladesh and Lima in Peru. Unfortunately, the problems associated with lack of access to water are poised to increase as an exodus of some 160,000 people moves each day from the rural areas to city slums. It is estimated that at least 600 million people in Africa, Asia and Latin America now live in squatter settlements without any adequate sanitation. First World Governments and their Western aid programmes have been slow to address this appalling situation. At the moment, for example, only 3 percent of the British Overseas Aid programme goes to helping improve water and sanitation facilities. The tragedy for the millions who live in areas with poor access to water sanitation is that it would be relatively inexpensive to address this problem (5).

Problems with groundwater

Until very recently humans relied mainly on streams, rivers and lakes for their water needs. At present according to the Global Environment Outlook research two billion people depend on ground water for their water needs. In recent decades groundwater has been depleted and polluted on an unprecedented scale. The demands on groundwater from agriculture have also increased in California and the Southern Great Plains of the United States. In India “the number of tubewells used to draw groundwater have surged from 3,000 in 1960 to 6 million in 1990 (6). In most continents aquifers are being drawn down much faster than they are being refilled.

4 Paul Brown, “Failure to manage water kills two million a year –UN”, The Guardian, April 11, 2002.

5 John Vidal, “Disease stalks the megacities”, The Guardian, March 23, 2002, page 16.

6 . Ibid page 11.

Because groundwater takes so long to recycle, polluting it, is much more serious than polluting rivers. Now we are doing that at an alarming rate forgetting “that the average recycling period for ground water is 1,400 years as opposed to only 20 days for river water” (⁷). Heavy rains can flush out rivers whereas it will take generations to clean up aquifers. Around the world humans have polluted groundwater with a variety of chemicals from industry and agriculture. Organochlorines like DDT are still contaminating groundwater in the US thirty years after the pesticide has been banned. Organic waste from sewage and animal waste is also a huge problem. It is often forgotten that in a country like the US, for example, farm animals produce 130 times more waste than the entire human population. Much of this ends up in streams and rivers and some seeps into the ground water. The level of nitrates in groundwater has also increased in recent years (⁸). High concentrations of nitrates in drinking water can cause infant methemoglobinemia or the blue-baby syndrome.

The Chemical Experiment

Unfortunately the “full consequences of today’s chemical-dependent and waste-producing economies may not become apparent for another generation” (⁹). In December 1999, Dr. John Peterson of the W. Alton Jones Foundation in the United States told a conference of scientists in Japan that “a hundred or more novel chemicals are swilling around in our bloodstream, chemicals which, before this century, were not found in human beings. It makes all of us, as well as our children and grandchildren, a walking experiment –one with completely unknown results” (¹⁰).

Some of these chemicals disrupt the endocrine system and therefore effect all aspects of human and other animal development from the embryo onwards. Because the chemical and pharmaceutical industries are so central to modern economies, governments have been slow to investigate, regulate and ban these substances. Scientists and NGOs like Friends of the Earth are worried about the long-term consequence of these chemicals and have demanded that substances that are suspected of acting as

⁷ Payal Sampat, “Groundwater Shock” WorldWatch, January/February 2000, page .

⁸ Ibid page 14-15.

⁹ .ibid page 20.

¹⁰ Paul Brown, “Contamination –gender-bender chemicals are now inside all of us” The Guardian, January 12, 2000, Supplement page 4.

endocrine blockers and that accumulate in the human tissue should be banned.

Water and World Peace

Today the water situation in the Middle East and North Africa is precarious. North Eastern China, Western and Southern India, Pakistan, much of South America and countries in Central America like Mexico face water scarcity. Somewhere in the region of 260 rivers flow through two countries or more. Only a handful of these countries have signed treaties regulating their respective access to the water (¹¹). As a result competition between adjacent countries for access to water resources is causing friction which could lead to outright hostilities in the future. Until very recently Egypt, Ethiopia and other countries that share the Nile's waters seem to be on a collision course over access to a fair share of the water. Under the auspices of the United Nations 10 countries have recently reached agreement on equitable access to the Nile's waters (¹²).

We all know that the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is one of the running sores of our time with the potential to destabilise both the Middle East and the World. We seldom hear of what might be called the water dimension of the conflict. I will present a few statistics to illustrate this. Out of a potential annual flow of 1250 million cubic metres (MCM) of water from the Jordan river 565 are utilised by Israelis. The pumps that Palestinians used to access the waters of the Jordan were destroyed by the Israelis after the 1967 war. There is also inequity and controversy over access to ground water. The Western Aquifer System is a good example of this inequality. It has a safe annual yield of 362 MCM. Israelis now use 340 MCM leaving a meagre 22 MCM to the Palestinian population ¹³.

But the potential for water wars is not confined to the Israelis and Palestinians. In March 2002 there was a stand-off between Malaysia and Singapore over the threat by Malaysia to cut water supplies to the island nation of Singapore. Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's founding father,

¹¹ Dr. William Reville "Water, water everywhere-but not for everyone", The Irish Times, May 15, 2000, page 9.

¹² . Paul Brown, "Failure to manage water kills two million a year-UN", The Guardian, April 11, 2002.

¹³ Isaac. Jad, "Water Conflict in the Holy Land". Thinking Mission, published by the United

warned that any threat by Malaysia to cut water supplies to Singapore even though its own citizens are experience a severe drought, could lead to “serious consequences” (¹⁴). It is no wonder that Ismail Serageldin, The World Bank's vice president for environmentally sustainable development, is on record as stating that many of the wars of the last century (20th) were about oil, but wars of this century (21st) will be about water.

Tourism

International tourism now the world's fastest growing industry is putting huge pressure on springs, rivers and aquifers from Ibiza to Barbados. Of the seven underground springs in Ibiza, five have already been overdrilled. As a result sea water is seeping in making the water unsuitable for drinking or agriculture. The World Wide Fund for Nature has estimated that a typical tourist to Spain uses 990 litres of water per day compared to 250 litres by local people. Most people will appreciate the demand that swimming pools make on water resources. Golf courses are equally demanding. In a hot, dry country an 18 hole golf course can consume as much water as a town of 10,000 (15).

Australia

While the poor find it difficult to get water rich people around the world can afford the luxury of fresh-water swimming pools. Many first world countries also use water in a wasteful way. In Australia, for example, each individual uses more than I million litres of fresh waste each year. This compares with 2 million for North Americans (US/Canada) 600,000 for Europeans; 550,000 for Asians, 350,000 for South Americans and 200,000 for Africans. The problem, of course, with wasting water in Australia is that you are living on one of the driest continents on earth.

The Global Environment Outlook reports that in Australia the quality of water in many inland waterways has declined due to human activities within catchments. Sediments, nutrients, and toxic materials as well as

¹⁴ John Burton “Malaysia puts the screw on Singapore over water”, Financial Times, March 7, 2002, page 8.

¹⁵ Addley, Esther, "Tourists' water demands bleed resorts dry" The Guardian, May 12, 2001. Page 13.

excessive growth of aquatic weeds have affected aquatic ecosystems (page 106)

The Bishops' 2002 Social Justice statement A New Earth: the Environmental Challenge acknowledges this. It states that the "health of our rivers is a national issue. River stress is a major issue in the Murray Darling Basin, and for all the south-east coastal rivers systems of Victoria and New South Wales, the agricultural regions of south and central coastal Queensland, the south-west of Western Australia and northern Tasmania. We can still enjoy and protect the great rivers of the continent's far north which remain mostly pristine, free and wild.

The health of the Murray-Darling epitomises the ecological crises. This once great waterway now surrenders 80 per cent of its flow for human consumption. Since European settlements between 12 and 15 billion trees have been lost from the Basin. This river system, which is a major artery of Australia's agriculture, is exhausted and dying. Because of water removal for irrigation, the river at times has not the strength to reach the sea. Terry Plane and Andrew McGarry wrote in The Australian (September 18, 2002) that the mouth of the Murray is only a mere metre from choking (16).

On the eastern coast of Queensland the world's largest living organism, the Great Barrier Reef, is threatened with a slow death due to increased water temperature and toxic sediment run-off from the mainland. This unique and magnificent 2000 kilometre necklace of multi-coloured coral reef, which nurtures about 1500 species of fish, and is a breeding area for humpback whales and endangered green and loggerhead turtles, is facing extinction".

Destruction of the Oceans

More than 97 per cent of all the water on Earth is sea water. During the UNESCO proclaimed International Year of the Ocean, in 1998, it emerged that the oceans are being over-fished and polluted at an unprecedented rate. Important areas of the oceans, close to the continental shelf, are contaminated with human, agricultural, industrial and radioactive waste. Much of this is toxic and carcinogenic. Because we

16 Terry Plane and Andrew McGarry "Murray mouth only a metre from choking" The Australian, September 18, 2002, page 5.

have tended to treat the oceans as sewers, the Baltic, Mediterranean, Black, Caspian, Bering, Yellow and South China Sea have all been seriously damaged in recent decades. The waters of the Black Sea, once a flourishing eco-system, is now considered to be 90 per cent dead. Each year the Danube dumps an estimated 60,000 tons of phosphorus and 340,000 tons of inorganic nitrogen into its waters. It has little chance of being flushed clean since it takes 167 years for the water from the Danube delta to reach the Mediterranean, and much longer to reach the Atlantic.

Coral Reefs and Mangrove Forests

Important marine ecosystems like coral reefs and mangrove forests are in a lamentable state. A study coordinated by the University of Hong Kong in 1997 checked 300 reefs in 30 countries and found that a mere 32 per cent of the reefs had living coral cover. As we saw earlier even Great Barrier Reef is under threat because of rising ocean temperature and agricultural pollution.

Over-fishing is depleting the oceans and leaving them barren. It is like killing the goose that lays the golden egg. Many people feel that the oceans are so vast and the variety of fish so abundant that there would always be vast quantities of fish in the sea. We are now learning how false those assumptions are. According to a report by the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) in 1995 over 70 per cent of the world's marine fish stocks are either "fully-to-heavily exploited , overexploited, or slowly recovering (6).

The shortage of fish in the North Atlantic is having an impact elsewhere. More and more fish are imported into Europe and North America from other parts of the world like West Africa and Asia. To date this has hidden the crisis from the ordinary citizen and consumer. The scientists maintain that only radical and comprehensive action can save the North Atlantic from an ocean-wide collapse in fish within the next 10 to 20 years. Reg Watson, a researcher from the University of British Columbia, who was involved in the study has predicted that "Within 10 years we'll be talking about fish as if they were a myth". Scientist have urged that marine reserves be introduced immediately, that fishing fleets

6 .Don Hinrichsen, "The Ocean Planet" People and the Planet 1998, 6-7.

be cut back and that government subsidies to fishing that presently amounts to \$2.5 billion per year be scrapped.

It is essential that human beings begin to recognize that the destruction of the oceans impoverishes the planet for all future generations. The main losers in the human community are 200 million small scale fishermen in Third World countries like those in Mauritania. They have lived for generations off the catches they have made around their native shores. Fish has also helped to feed these communities and has often provided the main source of food, especially protein.

Water Sustains our Emotional and Spiritual Lives

Water sustains not just our physical life but our spiritual and emotional life. Think of Handel's water music. One of the first poems I learn as an Irish person was Yeat's

- *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*

*I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honeybee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.
And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evenings full of the linnet's wings.
I will arise and go now, for always night and day

I hear the lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.*

Water in the Christian Churches

Water has a central role in the liturgies of many religions. In the Christian Churches the different symbolic functions of water are highlighted in the blessing of the baptismal water in the Catholic Rite of Baptism. At the very beginning of creation "your Spirit breathed on the waters, making them the wellspring of all holiness". "The waters of the great flood you made a sign of the waters of Baptism, that make an end of sin and a new beginning of goodness". Water is also a sign of liberation "through the waters of the Red Sea you led Israel out of slavery, to be an image of God's holy people, set free from sin by baptism".

One of the most powerful visions in the Hebrew Scriptures is found in Ezekiel 47:1-12. It is a vision of fruitfulness, abundance, extolling the healing and life-giving qualities of water. Sadly the prophet did not understand the role of marshes and mudflats in marine ecosystems. Without them there would not be such an abundance of marine life!

The prophet sees water pouring out from beneath the Temple. Initially it reached his ankles, then his knees and waist welling up into a river that could not be crossed. The river *"flowed into the sea and made its waters wholesome. Wherever the river flows, all living creatures teeming in it will live. Fish will be very plentiful, for wherever the water goes it brings health... There will be fishermen on its banks. Fishing nets will be spread from En-gedi to Eneglaim. The fish will be as varied and as plentiful as the fish of the Great Sea (Mediterranean). The marshes and lagoons, however, will not become wholesome, but will remain salt. Along the river, on either bank, will grow every kind of fruit tree with leaves that never wither and fruit that never fail; they will bear new fruit every month, because this water comes from the sanctuary. And their fruit will be good to eat and the leaves medicinal"* (verses 9-12).

Christ's own baptism in the Jordan is linked to his mission to bring about justice and peace for all. "In the waters of the Jordan your Son was baptised by John and anointed by the Spirit." Fr. Killian McDonnell described the cosmic dimension of the baptism of Jesus. He recalls the picture of Gregory Nazianzus who has Jesus "carrying the cosmos with him as he ascends out of the water of the Jordan". He goes on to argue that "the cosmic dimensions of the baptism of Jesus are part of antiquity's broader conviction, rooted in incarnation and resurrection, that the material

universe, as the home of a redeemed humanity, is destined for transfiguration through the power of the Spirit manifested in the risen body of Christ" (¹⁷).

Based on our belief in baptism McDonnell argues that "the ecological movement should have as its goal not only the preservation and restoration of the natural environment because we live and die here. Creation should be worthy of its vocation to praise. *"Praise him, sun and moon. Praise the Lord mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars! Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds"* (Ps 148). The cosmos lives in hope. The Universe is destined for God and for transformation" (¹⁸).

Water was important in Jesus' teaching mission. The incident with the Samaritan woman at the well in St. John's gospel afforded Jesus the opportunity to present his life-giving message for all people. *"Whoever drinks this water will thirst again; but anyone who drinks the water that I shall give will never be thirsty again: The water I shall give will turn into a spring inside him/her, welling up to eternal life"* (Jn 4: 14).

Baptizing with water was to be a sign of entry into His community. After his resurrection he told his disciples: go out and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. In a world where water is being polluted and abused one could argue that the symbolic connection between living water and the power of the Holy Spirit to incorporate those who are baptized into the Body of Christ is being compromised in a significant way.

Water is important even at the end of time. The vision of Ezekiel is recalled with the belief that when reconciliation and restoration take place in Christ in the New Jerusalem, living, clear and clean water will be abundant and sweet. *"Then the angel showed me the river of life, rising from the throne of God and of the Lamb, and flowing crystal-clear down the middle of the city street"* (Rev. 22:1).

The Oceans in the Bible

Because the Israelites were not seafaring people like the Phoenicians or the Vikings the oceans get very little attention in the Bible. The

¹⁷ Killian, McDonnell, 1996, The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, page 243.

¹⁸ Ibid. page 244.

fearsome nature of the ocean and the dangers facing seafarers riding in fragile boats is emphasised. " *He spoke and raised a gale, lashing up towering waves. Flung to the sky, then plunged to the depths, they lost their nerve in the ordeal, staggering like drunkards with all their seamanship adrift*" (Ps. 107:25-27). Jonah's trip from Joppa to Tarshish, the lone sea journey in the Old Testament, reinforces this negative image of the sea as a dangerous place, possibly not far from the gates of the underworld (Jon. 2:7). Even in the New Testament the sea is presented as a dangerous place. The demons that terrorised the Gerasene demoniac beseeched Jesus to allow them to enter the swine who then 'charged over the cliff into the lake, and there they were drowned' (Mk. 5:13).

There is, of course, a more positive approach to the oceans in the Bible. The oceans are created by God (Gen. 1:9-10). Because they are God's creatures the Psalmist invites the 'oceans and all that move in them' to praise God (Ps. 69:34). We find the same theme in the Song of the Three Young Men 'seas and rivers! Bless the Lord (Dan 3: 78).

As Christians living in a world where the oceans are under threat from human activity we need to develop this positive strand in the biblical teaching in order to shape a positive theology of the oceans which will help us to protect the seas in our modern world.

Water is life. Life began in the oceans 3.8 billion years ago. It remained there for almost 2 billion years. All the creatures in our world emerged from a watery environment and carry around this water with them. Human beings are almost 70 percent water. If we continue to abuse and poison water then humans and all other forms of life will be adversely affected. If our waters are polluted our tears will be toxic and the water in the wombs of women who nurture new life will also be toxic.

Johannesburg 2002

At the recent world summit on sustainable development in Johannesburg the agreement on water and sanitation was presented as a major victory for the poor of the world. I am not too sure that this accurate. The summit committed the international community to halve the number of people not connected to potable water supplies to 550 million by the year 2015 and to halve the number without proper sanitation to 1.2 billion by the same year. There is no doubt that such an initiative could save tens of thousands of lives. But typical of the woolly nature of the

Summit's thinking there are no clear guidelines or effective strategies for achieving such laudable goals. In fact according to the New Scientist (19) individual countries and even corporations are "left free to pursue approaches to managing water that are either wasteful or damaging to the environment" According to the water direction of the World Wide Fund (WWF), Jamie Pittock "summit agreements to improve water will not work if natural sources of water are not conserved and water used more efficiently". Transnational building corporations would like to promote large building programmes like dams and piping systems. Torkil Jonch-Clausen of The Global Water Partnership feels that the summit has played into the hands of TNCs by "reducing the debate on water supplies to arguing about money and pipes. There is no discussion about managing our river systems. It is a step back to the 1980s, before Rio.... It is a prime example of how the development lobby (TNCs) have snatched back the sustainable agenda from environmentalists" (20).

One final reflection on Johannesburg. I am always appalled at the cavalier way statisticians, who have plenty to eat and drink themselves, talk about reducing the number of people without potable water from 1.2 billion to 550 million by 2015. Why should anyone be drinking polluted water in 2015? The Guardian newspaper in Britain published a supplement for the Johannesburg meeting entitled Earth. In an article on "Food and Trade" it was estimated that it would cost \$170 billion to provide clean water and healthy sewage for all. Surely such a cost is not beyond the resources of our present global economy. The Gulf War of 1991 cost \$80 billion. This week an adviser to President Bush, Dr. Lindsey, estimated that it would cost between \$100 billion to \$200 billion to wage a war now. According to him it would be about 1-2 percent of GDP and amount he characterised as "nothing" (21). This shows how totally skewed our value system is. There is always plenty of money to fight wars but none to end poverty and environmental degradation.

Ending

19 Fred Pearce, "Partnership don't live up to the hype", The New Scientist, September 7, 2002, page 7-8.

20 Ibid 8.

21 Peter Hartcher, "US counts on boost from war", The Australian Financial Review, September 18, 2002, page 12.

Water conservation must become a way of life especially for those of us living in First World countries. Many suggestions have been made on how to cut down on water consumption, from using low-flush, more efficient toilets to installing water-saving nozzles on showers and using it in a more targeted and sparing way in agriculture. All of these options must be explored and we must continue to put pressure on local and national governments to develop and implement policies that will reduce pollution from animal, human and industrial sources.

Caring for water globally and locally is a major ethical and religious challenge for Christians today. There is an onus on each local Christian community to ensure that the water they use for baptism is really "living water" with the ability to carry all the symbolic dimensions highlighted and not merely industrial water or H₂O. We need to respect water like Jesus did and do all in our power to ensure that it remains living water and continues to be a source of life for all creation. With Francis we ought to be able to say *Praise to You, my Lord, through Sister Water, Which is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.*

I would like to end with a poem by the New Zealand poet, Anne Powell. This is to acknowledge Cyril's roots in that beautiful country and the fact that he has been a blessing to many of us who have over the years joined the struggle to build a more peaceful, just and sustainable world.

Blessing

May the soft light
At the end of day
Heal you.

May the purr of the sea
On the shells of the beach
Heal you.

May the dance of the wind
On the grass dunes
Heal you.

May the Maker of water
And air and fire
Heal you
Who walk the Earth.

September 19, 2002