**Water: Sacred Gift, Sacred Trust**

**Introduction**: The oceans of this precious planetary jewel we call our home are one. They greet each other in countless places, sharing their waters and releasing them. Waters once called Atlantic are sooner or later Pacific, or Arctic. Waters once swirling around our northern lands will, or have, graced the shores of India and Antarctica. The sacred gift that we call water journeys through stream and river, sky and earth to find communion with itself in other waters. In its search for union and oneness, it calls to the human community to also seek communion.

 Always, water is a sacred gift, with the sacred trust given to it by the Creator to bring life, healing, and transformation. These are water’s instructions from the Creator. Beautiful and powerful, ever ancient yet ever new, it relies upon us to care for and protect it, enabling it to carry out the Creator’s instructions.

**Opening Prayer**: (Together)

Creator God, we give you thanks for the precious gift of water. We remember the instructions you gave to water, and we long to ensure that your sacred gift will forever bring life, healing and wholeness to all creation. Amen.

**Welcoming the Waters Ritual**

I am the water that stands in ***east***: the water of newness, the water of life.

 Just as the morning light dispels the darkness, so also I dispel death and destruction. Where drought, flood, quake, tsunami or frost destroys, I bring new life. Green appears, hope arises, community forms. I seek your care and protection.

I am the water that stands in the ***south***: the waters of healing.

 Where sickness prevails, I heal. Yes, I carry disease, but it is not mine by nature. By my nature and my call I bring healing. My instructions are to carry nutrients and goodness for healing, but I am forced to carry contaminants, pollutants and disease. I seek your care and protection.

I am the water that stands in the **west**: the water of transformation.

 From the beginning I have used my power to transform, shaping land and shore, rock and mountain. My power brings life and death. Whether I come as vapour, mist, liquid, ice or snow I transform. But others have sought to control and use my power for their profit. I seek your care and protection.

I am the water that stands in the ***north***: the water of wholeness.

 Like the blanket of snow in the north that brings all together as one, or the ocean that becomes one with the horizon. I call all to know the oneness of life, the kinship of all creation. In the wintry cold, I am the promise of new life. I am given for the wholeness of creation, for the life of all creation. Yet there are some who take possession of me as though I belong to them alone. I seek your care and protection.

**Response**: We remember: Water is a sacred gift that connects all life. It is a shared legacy, a public trust and a collective responsibility. We do care. We will respond.

**Leader:** Let us listen to water as it speaks to us

I, the surprise of the snowflake and the blessing of the babbling brook, reflect your inner beauty and magnificence. We vibrate with the same energy. Help us attune to that energy.

**Response: We are listening, show us the way**

**Leader:** I, the ancient liquid of the stars, precious, pure and holy, am a limited resource. I am asking you to treat me as a rare gift, to use me sparingly with respect and reverence.

**Response**: We are listening, show us the way

**Leader:** I, who am the delight of the soul and nourishment of the body, will be contaminated with pollutants which carry disease, deformity and death. I am pleading with you to listen to the wail of my weeping.

**Response: We are listening, show us the way**

Water has rights too and we now ask WATER for forgiveness:

**Response: Forgive us and show us the way**

* For our carelessness and waste of water causing a scarcity in other countries …
* For the ways in which we pollute pure water …
* For our use of pollutants and chemicals …
* For our carelessness about water safety …
* For our misuse of huge volumes of water in fracking the earth …
* For our failure to recycle water from home to garden and to collect rainwater …
* For our over-use of showers and sprinkler systems …
* For our failure to consider the needs of the underdeveloped world in our political decisions around water …
* For selling water as a commodity for profit rather than seeing it as a human right for all …

Final Blessings (to be prayed together)

May the ancient wisdom of water well up within us!

May the holiness of water heal our land!

May its cleansing power wash away our guilt!

May its cosmic power capture the imaginations of decision makers!

May its majesty inspire us to live in a way that enables the full flourishing of all beings!

Amen.

Prayer adapted from “Water: Sacred Gift, Sacred Trust” by S Priscilla Solomon CSJ

Also adapted from “A Prayer Service for World Water Day” prepared by Kathleen Glennon RSM, Marcella O Connell RSM, Kathleen Somers RSM and Carmel Bracken RSM, members of the MGAN Cosmology and Eco Justice working group and the MGAN Fracking working groupmen. Used with permission.

**Hymn:** *Canticle of the Sun*

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