

**BE THE
CHANGE
YOU
WANT
TO SEE
IN THE
WORLD**



**WORLD
WATER DAY
2023**

**BE THE
CHANGE**

A service aid for
celebrating World Water Day

The story of the humming bird

'One day in the forest, a fire broke out.
All the animals ran for their lives.
They stood at the edge of the blaze,
looking at the flames in terror and sadness.
Up above their heads, a hummingbird was flying back and forth to the fire,
over and over again.
The bigger animals asked the hummingbird what she was doing.
"I am flying to the lake to get water to help put out the fire."
The animals laughed at her and said, "You can't put out this fire!"
The hummingbird replied, "I'm doing what I can."

Here is a beautiful reading of the story by Dr Wangari Maathai
<https://youtu.be/IGMW6YWjMxw>

PRAYERS

The Pool of Siloam.
Today, in response to Your Gospel,
I not only wash in the Pool of Siloam,
I plunge in and I swim.
Open my eyes to the wonder of water,
to the wonder of Your creation.
In Your shimmering Light,
give me wisdom, strength and courage to care.
Sue Halapua

God of unchangeable power,
when you fashioned the world,
the morning stars sang together
and the host of heaven shouted for joy;
open our eyes to the wonder of creation,
and teach us to see all things for good;
to the honour of your glorious name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
Lectionary of Aoteaora, New Zealand and Polynesia:

A Blessing

May God, our Guardian, bless and guide us.
May the love of Christ dwell deeply within our hearts.
May the Holy Spirit strengthen us to act with justice
and empower us with new visions. Amen
Archbishop Winston Halapua

A Pacific Prayer for the Oceans (Moana)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQBbwQZrhkM>

SERMON NOTES

PSALM 23

Psalm 23:1a 2b – The Lord is my Shepherd..... he leads me beside still waters.

This psalm, called a Psalm of David, if not written by the Shepherd King, is likely to have been written to reflect David's relationship with God. For the Psalmist, a shepherd who cares for the flock contributes hugely to the well being of creatures and human beings. Shepherding is no gentle pastoral occupation. It is tough work. It requires vigilance and courage. A shepherd guides and enables the flock to be nourished and sustained. Immersed in the environment, honouring potential to sustain life, a shepherd is close companion to the sheep. The shepherd protects them, at times at great cost.

In the 23rd Psalm God is the Shepherd who knows the sheep intimately, sustains and guides. The Shepherd and the sheep do not have an easy journey. What is certain is the presence of the Shepherd through the greatest difficulties. We have no sheep in Tonga - the land of my birth. A Tongan word used for shepherd is "tauhi" – which refers to someone who is protector or guardian even at cost. God is "Tauhi".

The 23rd Psalm is song of trust in God. It echoes the 40 year journey in the wilderness to the Promised Land. Enemies, danger and death are at hand. The Shepherd leads through "the darkest valley". The use of the word "Guardian" may strengthen for us the familiar image of the Shepherd. The Shepherd/Guardian is a powerful protector. The challenges (war, natural disasters, climate change) in our world, besides those personal to us, may seem huge. For the Psalmist God is there in creation and is there for us.

Psalm 23 uses vivid images from creation,

including that of water. When in New Zealand recently a State of Emergency was called because of unprecedented flooding, followed by the devastating impact of Cyclone Gabrielle. Human beings may actively cause the destructive powers of water. But water is a great gift. Water is essential to life.

The watering of the sheep is a prime task. The 23rd Psalm speaks of a Guardian who leads "beside still waters" where sheep drink safely and find not only survival, but abundant life. God's people are to enjoy and share abundant life. We are to work towards water being safely accessed and towards water not threatening existence.

JOHN 9: 1-41

John 9: 26 I was blind, now I see

John 9 is alive with the themes of John's Gospel: light and life. Jesus uses elements of creation in his healing – spit mixed with earth and washed off by water from the pool of Siloam. Here we see a Guardian (referred to above as a "Tauhi") who utilizes God's creation for well being. Jesus, the Guardian, heals and protects and stand firm in face of strong opposition.

This healing story contains interactions and controversy. Here is healing of blindness and reaction. Jesus restores sight to a man born blind. The previously blind man witnesses to what he knows to be true. Religious leaders refuse to "see" the life and light Jesus brings, choosing to remain spiritually blind. The Pharisees reject simple honesty of the man: "I was blind now I see". They refuse to see the truth, remaining blind to reality. Jesus shows great care for the man he has healed. The man believes and worships Jesus (see John 1:14 "we saw his gloryfull of grace and truth".) Born blind and cruelly rejected by those who refused to see God at work, this unlikely man, who now sees in different ways, bears witness to the love of God.

In the Gospel, Jesus heals a man born blind. (Using spit, earth and water.) Jesus, the Guardian, protects the abused and confronts those who deny the reality of God's loving activity. The Island groups of the Pacific are surrounded by the greatest Ocean. We see clearly the damaging effects of sea level rising due to climate change. We see the need to bring awareness in order to address the abuse of creation, not only to secure the safety of the Islands, the Ocean and the Pacific peoples but also for the well being of all lands and peoples of this amazing Planet. God, our Tauhi –Guardian, calls us to togetherness in caring, to becoming tauhi –guardians of this amazing Planet.

We may choose blindness to reality. How are we opening our eyes to the wonder of

God's creation and enabling others to see humanity and creation afresh? How are we celebrating and proclaiming in word and action God's life-giving presence in today's world?

The Gospel ends with a rebuke to those who refuse to see reality. The Psalmist ends with an assurance that goodness and mercy are stronger than all that confronts us

Archbishop Winston Halapua

**Moana – the water of life –
Archbishop Halapua**

<https://www.facebook.com/>

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