

Spiritual Resources Exploring the Theme of Service

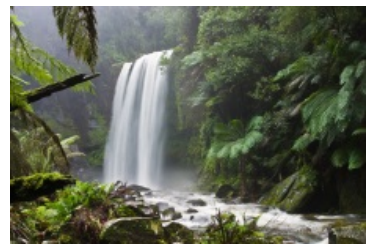
Created by the Marist Association Pastoral Team

What happens when the well runs dry?

Tapping into the Spirit within.....

Gathering

Take a minute to look at these images.
Which images best reflects how you feel today?



Prayer

Dear Lord,

I come to you for refreshment,
in all humility I ask that you fill my heart with
living waters.

Let my heart overflow with love for everyone,
with every intention of my will,
with every word upon my lips,
in all the work I do.

Allow my soul to be a vessel of your love,
so that all whom I encounter may find within me,
the loving and abiding presence of your love.

May the spirit of your love never lay dormant within me,
but instead flow forward to embrace, comfort, guide and sustain those I meet.

I pray that your living water will constantly renew and refresh me in my
mission of making You known and loved in all my relationships.

Amen



*In our spirituality we find our thirst quenched
at the streams of 'living water'. In turn we
become 'living water' for others.*

Water from the Rock no. 14

Introduction

The Communities in which we work are busy places! Have you ever reached the end of the week and thought, wow, where did that week go as you were involved in so many things? In your work day to day, have you ever felt your work load getting bigger and bigger with people demanding more and more of your time? We are pulled in so many different directions with little time to rest! When is the last time you had a chance to sit and talk to a colleague without rushing off to do yet another job? Yet we see this role is a vocation, something we were called to do!

Recently I caught up with a mate of mine who happens to be a teacher. He seemed a little flat and in the course of our conversation admitted that with so many demands in school and trying to balance life with family, he feared that his well was running dry. He was conscious that soon he may have nothing left to give! It made me think that often the things that give us life are the very things that drain us. We are called to give so much of ourselves in what we do that we forget to nourish ourselves and take time out to rest and re-energize. What happens if your well runs dry? What happens if you don't allow the living water of Christ to constantly refresh and renew you? In continuing with our theme #Serve, today we reflect on how we take care of ourselves, how we nourish ourselves in order to be the best people we can be and in turn give of our best to those we encounter.

Scripture

John 15:10-17

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.



This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving

you these commands so that you may love one another.

Reflection:

We are chosen to be living waters for others but often we find obstacles that cause our 'well' to dry up. What things in your life stop you from being living water?

Input

Personal Spirituality

There is a tremendous need to nourish the spiritual dimension of our lives - this dimension which can so easily be overlooked or forgotten in our crazy, hectic, tightly scheduled, work-oriented lives.

Too often we separate our spiritual life from the rest of our life. It is so easy to put it aside for more seemingly urgent or significant aspects of our days. These external aspects seem more urgent, yet are often

empty without benefit of inner refreshment and nourishment. We can so easily give in to discouragement or forget our visions and dreams when we do not take time to integrate our outer world with our inner world. We remain fragmented instead of drawing together all the pieces into a wholeness that gives our life meaning. This integration is accomplished by taking time to look at the very ordinary parts of our day, to pray them by holding them up to the light of the scripture, to celebrate them in the depths of our being by pausing to reflect

and reverence them, knowing that the God of graciousness is always there, immanently present, active, drawing us into a deeper love relationship. I am firmly convinced that we are effective in Christian leadership only if our hearts as well as our minds have come to know the God of our lives. I believe that this 'knowing God' comes about in many ways but that it can only be deeply rooted in us with the nourishment of regular personal prayer.

Sister Joyce Rupp, OSM

Participants will take some time out in meditation. The leader will guide participants through the relaxation exercise and then read through some guiding questions.

Breath Meditation

Musical Suggestion if needed – 'Be Still' by Kari Jobe

Ask participants to sit in a comfortable position and close their eyes gently.

With your eyes closed, imagine your whole body sinking into a large soft cushion. The biggest cushion you've ever seen. Feel your legs sink into the cushion....feel your arms relax...allow the cushion to hold all your weight....notice any part of your body that feels tight or uncomfortable and gently relax that part. Listen carefully to the sounds you can hear. Listen for sounds outside. Listen to the sound of your breathing. Notice your chest going in and out as you breathe in air and then breathe it out. Notice the rhythm of your breathing....feel the air going inside you, refreshing you. Take a few deep breaths inand release them letting all the tensions of the day away with every exhale.

Notice how relaxed and comfortable you feel.

Participants sit in silence for a few minutes then are taken through the following questions.

The Holy Spirit lies at our very core. As Christians, the Spirit is our life giving energy. It brings joy and vitality and is a constant reassurance that Christ lives in us. The spirit within allows our gifts to shine out to others, nurturing us as individuals but also nurturing those whom we encounter. This spirit can be dulled when we don't pay attention to it, nourish it and at times, rest with it.

What things/ people/ places in your life nourish your spirit?

What things in our lives encourage us in our mission?

What things stop you paying attention to the spirit within?

What do you need to do to allow yourself to be spiritually nourished?



Trust in God

Spirituality from Water from the Rock:

17. Marcellin's relationship with God, combined with knowledge of his limitations, explains his unbounded confidence in God. The depth of this trust amazed those who worked with him, and scandalized some who judged his actions as reckless. In his humble way, Marcellin saw God at work, and so acted with courage and commitment. *Let us not offend God, asking him very little. The bigger our demand,*

the more we will be pleasing to God. Marcellin's oft-expressed invocations *If the Lord does not build the house* and *You know my God* were their spontaneous expressions of this confident trust.

18. We endeavor to develop our relationship with God so that, just as for Marcellin, it is our daily source of renewed spiritual and apostolic dynamism. This vitality makes us daring, despite our short-comings and limited

resources. Drawing from Marcellin's experience we embrace the mysteries of our life with confidence, openness and self-giving.

30. Marcellin and the first brothers were united in heart and mind. Their relationships were marked by warmth and tenderness. In their discussions about living together as Brothers they found it useful to compare the spirit of their community life to that of a family. Like our early communities, we are inspired by

the home of Nazareth to develop those attitudes that make family spirit a reality: *Love and forgiveness, support and help, forgetfulness of self, openness to others and joy.* This style of relating has become characteristic of our way of being Marist.

36. This spirituality of simplicity shapes the whole life of the disciples of Marcellin. In humility, we seek to know ourselves in our strengths and weaknesses and readily accept the help we may need. We grow to be at peace with the person God has created.

83. Our community prayer offers us the opportunity to share in faith what we live in our mission. Each one's presence

helps create a sense of our communion that enables us to bring into prayer our dreams, achievements, struggles, personal experiences, and community or family projects. Communal days of recollection renew the interior unity of our active life. Community prayer is a special place for us to discern and jointly make our decisions for mission. We create communal spaces where we are helped to experience and celebrate the guidance which Mary gives to our lives.

89. In our times of solitude, we cultivate an interior life that strengthens our love of, and communion

with, the world. In this way we become more sensitive to life. Through this we experience the poverty of our limitations and failures, we also recognize the beauty and wonder of humanity and of all creation.

90. Day after day, we feel called to commit ourselves to the world; to contemplate the world with the eyes and heart of God. Our spirituality draws us to deepen our relationships with Christ and in trust to give ourselves in service in community living and mission.



Group Reflection

- ◆ How do these passages speak to you?
- ◆ Is there any particular word/phrase that inspires you in your role?
- ◆ In your community how do you nourish and strengthen one another?

Final Prayer and Commitment

Prayer — A Litany of Generosity

Response to each: *Gracious God, give us generous hearts.*

To share whatever gift it is that you have given to us. . .

To acknowledge you as the giver of all good gifts. . .

To give without counting the cost. . .

To share without expecting something in return. . .

To be wise in the way of caring for ourselves and others. . .

To hold all of our treasures and values with open hands. . .

To have Gospel priorities and to align our life, love and time in their light. . .

To be gracious and unbegrudging in our giving. . .

To recognize the abundance of blessings in each passing day. . .

To know the freedom that comes with true generosity. . .

To experience the heart of the widow giving her mite. . .

To accept our talents, whether many or few, and to use them in the service of the Kingdom. . .

To grow in giving thanks for everything. . .

To be happy with having what we need and to be wise enough to know what it is that we want and do not need. . .

To fall more deeply in love with the God of all generosity so that our hearts are strong enough to give away freely whatever is asked. . .

O gracious God,
Who so generously lavishes our lives with goodness,
Create in our hearts a deep center of gratitude,
A center that grows so strong in its thanksgiving
that sharing freely of our treasures becomes the norm and the pattern of our existence.
Remind us often of how much you cherish us,
of how abundantly you have offered gifts to us, especially in the hours of our greatest need.
May we always be grateful for your reaching into our lives with surprises of joy, growth, and unearned love.

Amen.

<http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/books/excerpts.php?id=15815>

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord,

Help us to cultivate love, energy and joy in our lives so that we may be spiritually nourished.

Strengthen us to bring the gift of your living water to the lives of others.

Grant us wisdom to recognize times when we need rest and solitude to revitalize our spirits.

May we be continually comforted in the knowledge that you walk with us in all we do, constantly refreshing and renewing us.

Mary our Good Mother, **Pray for us.**

St. Marcellin Champagnat, **Pray for us.**

St. Mary of the Cross, **Pray for us.**

And let us always remember, **To pray for one another.**

Amen

