

## Streams of Life-Giving Water

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*This reflection by Laura, [Companion in Mission](#) (CiM)  
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I don't often thirst for committee work. Nor, after 10 years of being a CiM does the theme of *I Thirst* thrill my soul. Moreover, I am in a season of spiritual greyness and feel as flat as the Canadian prairies. I dutifully read the words offered in the morning and evening prayer but rarely do they lead me to an honest conversation with God. Then how is it that I find myself on the annual CiM retreat committee with the theme of *I Thirst*? Never doubt the power of the Spirit working in a reluctant soul.

Huddled around Sr. Susan's computer, Skyping with pioneer CiM Dolores in Calgary, I am excited in spite of myself. As we begin brain storming and exchanging material about the *I Thirst* theme, the Spirit let me know, in no uncertain terms that I had barely scratched the surface.

*O God, you are my Beloved, and I long for You, my soul thirsts for You.*

*All that is within me thirsts,*

*as in a dry and barren land with no water.*

*So I have called you in my heart, sensing your power and your glory.*

from Psalm 63 in *Psalms for Praying* by Nan C. Merrill

Psalm 63 invites me to honestly identify for what or who I am thirsting. Digging deeper, I ask myself about the nature of that thirst. Is it a little scratchy dryness which I can largely ignore or completely forget about in the busyness of life? Is it one of those desperate "I'm dying of thirst" that one might feel after an hour of exercise on a hot day? Am I easily distracted from my thirst by social media or am I running on empty? My answer? I am parched without even a drop of saliva in my mouth. It is as if I forgot to take the jar to the well and I am standing in a stupor under the midday, July sun. I am so dry I could hardly call out to God. And what will I call out? I wish it was something amazingly spiritual, pleading for a closer union with God or total surrender to his will. The truth is I want God to give me back my familiar, comfortable life. And while he is at it, he might as well renovate a few of its features, a more reliable memory and a couple of new knees would be welcome. And if not that, God could at least make what he is offering me more tolerable.

*Like a sponge,*

*dried up and brittle*

*I wait, longing to be soaked, softened and*

*made heavy by God's eternal reservoir.....  
ever longing to be filled and swelled by God in me.*

from the poem *Dryness* in *Growing into God* by [Edwina Gateley](#)

Edwina Gateley describes well how I am feeling and for what Jesus would invite me to thirst. However, it is still all about MY thirst and what LAURA needs. The Spirit is not through with me yet. When Sr. Susan mentions *Apostolic Thirst*, the thirst to go beyond myself to others, my reaction is; "That is definitely not what I thirst for right now. I am just trying to survive. I am too busy, too tired, too worried, too committed to too many people to even think about it. But two lines of Scripture wake me up:

**“ Jesus stood up and said in a loud voice. “Whoever is thirsty should come to me and drink. As scripture says, ‘whoever believes in me, streams of life-giving water will pour from their hearts.’**

*John 7: 37-38.*

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Back to the retreat. Once again to my dismay, I find myself volunteering to talk about apostolic thirst! It is the week of the retreat, my mind is still blank, and I am just short of panic. The Spirit looks kindly on me this time. In the middle of the night, Jesus' voice wakes me up. Believe me, this almost happens in my life. He asks: *What did I do on the cross? Who were my neighbours? Even when my life blood was pouring out, I became the life-giving water. I offered forgiveness and salvation to the Good Thief and a home for my widowed mother, kneeling at the foot of the cross.*

Jesus' words convert me. The Spirit reminds me, "Jesus did not heal every leper in Israel and don't forget about that mustard seed." Now each time I go into a store I use the cashier's name and try to make a personal connection. I phone a few people who I know are lonely but avoid because they talk so long my ear gets numb. I make a coffee date with a troubled friend that I am sure I don't have enough energy for. Small things but a start. And so it is that in the midst of my greyness when all I know is the "poor me" thirst, I become a fountain of life giving water. Now I pray with Mary Oliver that

**“ I wake with thirst for goodness I do not have” but know that the Spirit can provide.**

*Mary Oliver, 'Thirst'*

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**“ Demandons à notre Seigneur de nous donner l'esprit de la Société de Jésus, et puisque nous avons ses Constitutions, la volonté de Dieu est que nous ayons aussi son esprit ”**

*Marie Madeleine d'Houët*

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