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## Water and Thirst

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## Water and Thirst

A doctor once told me that as we get older, thirst lags behind our need for water, so we should drink even before we become thirsty. Whether or not we have found this to be true in our own experience, we are certainly aware that we need to drink sufficient water to maintain health. More importantly, our spiritual health requires that we “drink,” whether or not we are conscious of our “thirst.”



Some of us might joke about a tendency to give attention to our interior lives only when we are in difficult circumstances. Most of us have heard remarks from people we know about seldom praying except in times of desperate need, or paying attention to inner principles on those few occasions when nothing else seems to work. But we have learned, even if we do not talk about it or admit it consciously, that a meaningful life requires ongoing exercise of our spirituality. We cannot live at peace within ourselves if we do not take care of the needs of our hearts until we become “thirsty.”

Our human relationships and our relationship with God become ever more matters of heart through frequent ordinary interactions, so that when extraordinary deeds become appropriate, we know how to act without thinking about it and with little concern for the cost to us in terms of time and energy. When our spirituality is kept properly “hydrated,” we keep ourselves in condition for all eventualities, similar to the way that athletes make sure to drink enough water before they feel the need.

Those of us who have immediate access to clean drinking water might not appreciate the extent of such a blessing. Many of us not only have water taps in our homes and places of work, but can also find a great variety of bottled water in stores and businesses near us. Even more graciously, life-giving “water” for our spirits is still more readily available, at no cost, and with no concerns about quality. If water from the purest spring is considered healthful for our bodies, all direct personal contact with God is guaranteed good for our hearts.

How easy it is to obtain a glass of water, and drink it. We do not control the beneficial consequences, but we know what happens when we fail to drink enough water: we can grow faint, if our blood volume becomes insufficient for normal functioning. When we pray, which we can do at any time of the day or night, and in any place with or without Wi-Fi or any other electronic or physical connection, we do not create or control the effects in our minds, bodies or spirits. But we are capable of both memory and reflection, so we might be well aware that no matter how we pray, our capacities to think and act, to trust and to love are aided and assisted by contact with Love – contact that is always available to us.

When we meet God within ourselves regularly in thoughts, words, imagination, reflection or in any other movement of our hearts, our spirits will have the life-giving water we need, and we will not grow thirsty.

Randy

(If anyone wishes to receive similar weekly essays, please let me know by sending an email request to: [rroche@lmu.edu](mailto:rroche@lmu.edu) .)