

## **Tuesday Reflection 29th March 2022**

Both of today's Mass readings are concerned with water - Ezekiel's vision of the river of life flowing from the Temple - "where the river flows everything will live" (Ezekiel 47:9) and the healing miracle Jesus worked at the healing pools of Bethzatha for the lame man unable to reach the healing waters.

Water is indeed the primal element; right at the beginning of Genesis we read that "the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" (Genesis 1:2), and we know from science that all life started in the water.

Water is essential to life; access to it is the basic human right. We take it for granted that we have access to clean water at the turn of a tap, so we need to ask ourselves whether we can accept a situation where nearly one billion people, one person out of nine on the planet, do not have access to clean water, where over two thousand children under five die every day because of the polluted water that is their only source of drink. We need to ask ourselves how we have allowed a situation to come about where unsafe drinking water, together with a lack of basic sanitation, causes 81 percent of all sickness and disease in the world. But the big question is 'what are we going to do about it?'

If we are really concerned for the Kingdom of God, we need to see how the poorest and most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters are disproportionately affected by water-related problems, we need to ask ourselves why women and girls still have to trudge miles every day with water jugs on their heads when we have the technology to help put an end to this. Can we turn our backs on the way this daily march exposes women to danger, takes them away from homes, from caring for children, from earning a living. It takes them away from the maintenance of life itself. Do we realise how the lack of acceptable clean water creates a cycle of under-education for girls? This makes a mockery of any declaration of the universal right to education. As Christians we are committed to building the Kingdom, but how serious are we when we are complicit in our brothers and sisters being prevented from developing their God-given talents?

**Michael Townson**