

## **Ideas for Franciscan Federation 2006-07 Water Campaign**

According to the resolutions passed at last summer's convention, the Federation is encouraging members to "*take actions individually, collectively and in solidarity with people throughout the earth to address concerns of water scarcity and water quality*" and "*to preserve, respect and use wisely, the gift of water.*"

Calls to action in the resolutions included:

- No longer buying or using bottled water
- Contacting local water companies to ascertain where tap water is coming from and what the quality of water is.
- Contact congresspeople regarding what the US is contributing toward the issue of safe/clean water in the world.
- Visit [www.wateruseitwisely.com](http://www.wateruseitwisely.com)
- Commit financial resources to support water needs in an economically poor area by working with Water Partners International or Catholic Relief Services/CARITAS.
- Work with Corporate Accountability International (CAI)
- New Mexico Nuclear Disarmament.

Other ideas provided to us from the Polaris Institute include:

*1) The Tap Water Challenge:* The CAI has developed a campaign where community members set up a table in a place with foot traffic to challenge the community to taste the difference between tap and bottled water. This is a good opportunity to provide education around water use and quality at a local and global level. All the campaign materials have already been developed. See the CAI website.

**Action 1: Organize Tap Water Challenges in your constituents' communities. Maybe this event can be stationed adjacent to a remaining local water fountain, which can be promoted through this event. This could be really interesting if media is available.**

*2) Sponsoring a water fountain:*

**Action 2: Members could sponsor a remaining water fountain for a year. Members could place ribbons around it, or do education activities around it, etc.**

*3) One year boycott of buying and drinking bottled water:*

**Action 3: Boycott bottled water.**

4) *Municipal waters campaign*: Polaris is currently developing a municipal waters campaign to mobilize communities to become aware of the bottled water production, consumption and disposal cycle in their communities. Community members will be calling on city officials and municipal leaders to increase water rates for water sellers, to cap commercial water extraction from municipal systems, and to lower water bills for residents in communities where Coke and Pepsi extract municipal waters.

**Action 4: Involve your Ontario members in the Ontario Municipal Waters Campaign. Engage with Polaris in the development of this campaign in US cities.**

**Action 5: Organize a city tour of the water source (i.e. river), water filtration plant, water bottling plants, and landfills.**

5) *A water fast*: During the month of Ramadan, Muslims around the world cease to drink or eat during daylight hours as a way of recognizing the suffering of others and strengthening their personal relationship with the Creator.

6) *A water ceremony*: While, it is likely too late to integrate Rosh Hashanah into this event (September 23 – also the first day of Ramadan) there is a ceremony during this holiday called Tashlikh (“casting off”) where observers walk to flowing water, such as a creek or river, on the afternoon of the first day and empty their pockets into the river, symbolically casting off their sins. While this practice is not discussed in the Bible, it is a long-standing tradition.

**Action 6 & 7: The Franciscan Federation could consider organizing a day long water fast and/or a walk to flowing waters in their communities, and a releasing of their impurities to the cleansing power of the waters. The idea is to create consciousness around water scarcity in different regions of the world, and to the value of water. A prayer committing participants to protect the waters throughout the year can also be made.**

**As a way of bridging the water resolutions with those concerning human trafficking and the situation in Darfur, a water fast could be in solidarity with those in Sudan and victims of human trafficking. A symbolic connection with their suffering.**