



A Lenten Journey

*What have we
done to the earth
and to ourselves?*

**Thursday
March 19, 2009**

It is the heart of sin that man uses what he ought to enjoy. It is also, says Thomas, of the heart of sin that man is content to enjoy what he ought to use...our Lord moves always in his speech from the source of joy, that man is loved by the holy, to the theater of joy, that man must serve the need of the neighbor...If the creation, including our fellow creatures, is impiously used apart from a gracious primeval joy in it the very richness of creation becomes a judgment...Abuse is use without grace; it is always a failure in the counterpoint of use and enjoyment.

-Joseph Sittler, "The Care of the Earth" [Joseph Sittler, "[The Care of the Earth](#)" from The Care of the Earth, copyright © 2004 Augsburg Fortress Press.]

How often do you stop to enjoy a glass of clean water—to marvel that just a small movement of your hand brings water flowing from your tap, to appreciate the way water satisfies your thirst and cleans your body? Although Earth's population is growing, we have an unchanging and very limited supply of fresh water. Water is sacred, precious, and essential, but it is scarce and it is threatened by increased human activities. Too often in our use of water resources we do not enjoy, but abuse.

In the United States our drinking water comes from two sources, surface water, which is subject to pollution, overuse and drought, and underground aquifers, which are underground layers of rock and soil that are saturated with groundwater. In Midwestern and Western states, huge aquifers supply water for wells, irrigation, hydroelectric generation, grazing and municipal water needs, but the rate of use for all these activities is resulting in more discharge than recharge, threatening the long term water supply for many states.

Be Aware

Find out where your drinking water comes from and get information on water quality from your [local supplier](#).

Something to think about: No matter where you live in the United States, no matter whether there are rivers you can see or only dry

streambeds or seasonal wetlands, you live in a watershed. Find out the name of your watershed and locate community groups who are working to protect it on the Environmental Protection Agency website "[Surf Your Watershed.](#)"

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