



# A Memorial Observance

The Reverend Vern Barnet, DMn, 1942-20xx



**Venue:** Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral with the collection of sacred waters initiated by Vern and used at Kansas City area interfaith events.  
**Presiding:** The Very Reverend Peter DeVeau, Dean of the Cathedral, and the Reverend David E Nelson, DMin, CRES associate minister.  
**Other participants** are listed on an accompanying insert.  
**Gifts** in Vern's memory may be made to the Cathedral, the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council, or CRES, Box 45414, Kansas City, MO 64171.

We welcome all, especially members and friends of the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council. Everyone is welcome to participate in whatever ways are comfortable, from sitting throughout to taking Communion or receiving a blessing at the chancel rail. Vern prepared this liturgy and its pauses, adapted from portions of the *Episcopal Book of Common Prayer* and other materials, specifically so that his request for no eulogy would be honored. He wrote that "My love for many faiths and many peoples may be best remembered by also showing my love for my own tradition and community."

## Words of Faiths

All are welcome to greet one another until the Carillon and Prelude are heard, during which silence is kept.

### Carillon

**Prelude** Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 565 — J. S. Bach



**Processional** The people stand, as able, singing together  
"Brief our Days" — K. L. Patton / J. S. Bach — *Werde Munter* [336]

Brief our days, but long for singing, / When to sing is made our call,  
For a million stars now flinging / Light upon this earthly ball.  
In a setting of what splendor / Are we given chance to render  
Tribute for the whirling sky / Where we live and where we die.

Planet earth for all us dwelling, / Cool in wind and warm in light,  
In its praise our song is swelling, / Grateful for this day and night.  
We, the citizens of heaven, / Riding earth as it is driven  
Down the spangled course of space, / Know the glory of this place.



**Words of Arrival** Spoken together

**From a world broken, corrupt, and suffering, we enter sacred time,  
which is to say: every moment, even now, in the procession of the ages.**

**From a world broken, corrupt, and suffering, we enter sacred space,  
which is to say: the space within every place, even here.**

**From a world broken, corrupt, and suffering, we sojourn on the path of life,  
which is to say: above the slopes of death.**

**From a world broken, corrupt, and suffering, we gather to affirm surprise and beauty,  
kindness and compassion, the abiding holy presence of the Infinite and the Eternal.**

## **Invocation** Celebrant

Faith is not confined to a particular book, or blind allegiance to a single tradition, or obedience to any establishment; but rather faith is a decision to follow a path of worthy living. Spirituality is not immersion in obscure or spooky things, or the accumulation of trinkets or charms or private thoughts; spirituality is breathing with a sense of the sacred — in nature, within oneself, and in community.

Civilization is made out of the lives of people. Culture is the essence of the lifetimes of a thousand generations. Although theologies, and sacraments, and psalms, may express and enrich us under variable skies, religion is an inheritance, not so much of them as of human beings encountering the miracle of existence, giving thanks for these wonders to God, or gods, or chance, and offering service to others.

## **Hymn** Singing together

"Every Night and Every Morn" — Wm Blake/Ralph Vaughn Williams — *The Call* [487]

Every night and every morn Some to misery are born;  
Every morn and every night Some are born to sweet delight.  
Joy and woe are woven fine, Clothing for the soul divine:  
Under every grief and pine Runs a joy with silken twine.  
It is right it should be so: We were made for joy and woe;  
And when this we rightly know, Safely through the world we go.



## **Our Company** Spoken together

**We are one with each other, mixed together as we remember one of our company now dead, whose features are forwarded in ways that cannot be named, in us as we move forward in our own paths from the encounters.**

## **Considerations of Our Common Finitude** The people sit.

Reader 1. — The universe alternates in complex rhythms. The tides rise and fall. The day turns to night. The seasons progress, each with its own dignity and dangers. The joy of spring brings the threat of floods. The refulgent summer can turn to drought. The gorgeous colors of autumn can easily fade into depression. The pure beauty of winter can bring isolation and freezing death.

Reader 2. — The single process of nature is both wondrous and defective. The clear, peaceful sky can quickly cloud, giving threat and disaster. The beautiful summer hills and the raging tornado are from the same alternating source.

Reader 3. — It is difficult to see the sunshine and the storm as varied aspects of the same atmospheric engine when we ourselves are devastated and bereft, broken and denied, shattered and made waste.

Reader 4. — There are no words to form an answer to this alternation. We are finite human beings. We love intensely, but our small vision finds it hard to encompass, and even harder to accept, the larger patterns of the universe.

Reader 5. — Only when we experience the darkness, and come at last to face the terror of the void, are we ready for that larger perspective, to see that the universe's support for the fragile gift of life is both beautiful and fallible.

Reader 6. — Religion searches not for faults but rather embraces our limitations and conditions, and produces compassion.

Reader 7. — Religion is not in certitude, but in confidence, confidence in healing, in restoring, in renewing, in the face of public and private grief and calamity and severance, as we celebrate that larger perspective which embraces all sorrows, but which also calls us, irrepressibly, to thanksgiving and wonder, to give praise for the gift of their time with us, and the time given to us.

Reader 8. — The flow of the universe is uncertain, but we give thanks for the flow. Death is painful, but we give thanks for life. Even in loss meaning survives.

Reader 9. — Our celebration of those gone before us, into the dark abyss, cannot be restrained. The human spirit, in loves, in desires, in hopes, in joys, lives on in the cherished memories of friends, in the secret and public meanings of their names.

## **Ladling of Interfaith Waters** Celebrant

With words we now shall hear, and with this ladle, from this collection of Holy Waters of the World and of the Faiths of our Community, blessed in many previous interfaith occasions, members of our various faiths transfer portions of these mingled waters into this smaller pitcher, so that this interfaith solution may be poured upon the earth, as life is drawn from many sources and returns to the ground of being, to bring in turn new life.



American Indian.— O Great Spirit, may the Thunderbeings' cleansing rains caress our Mother the Earth. Aho, mitakuye oyasin.

Bahá'í.— All men and women are waves of one solvent sea.

Buddhist.— The stream is purified as the waters of awareness flow. Metta.

Christian, Orthodox.— With Noah, as the flood receded, the promise of the rainbow was given. Amen.

Christian, Protestant.— The parting of the sea that Moses knew is ours as well when we seek freedom. Amen.

Christian, Roman Catholic.— The baptism of Jesus in the Jordan bespeaks the life ever renewed by faith. Amen.

Jewish.— At this moment and at all times, let us hear the prophet: "Let justice well up like fresh water, and honesty roll in full tide." Shalom.

Hindu.— From the mountain to the sea, from the sea to the sky, from the sky to the mountain, the pilgrimage of water unites every domain. Shantih.

Muslim.— As water cleanses us before prayer, so may our lives wash one another with kindness. Salaam.

Pagan.— The gurgle of the river stream is Gaia singing. May we join in that song. Blessed be.

Sikh.— As water removes stains, so may Truth wash away our illusions. Sat Nam.

Sufi.— As the bucket dances above the well, so are we ready to be filled by what is beyond our reach.

Unitarian Universalist.— Water yields its level and its shape; so now we yield to death's dispersal. Let it be.

Zoroastrian.— As the Wise Lord made rain for parched soil, so may the drops and dust from this life refresh the community soul.

Free-Thinker.— We are made of water; we flow as many steams, yet we are one.



### Hymn

adapted by Vern Barnet from "In Memory of W B Yeats" — W H Auden / Ralph Vaughn Williams — *The Call* [same tune as the previous hymn]



Follow, pilgrim<sup>†</sup>, follow right / To the bottom of the night,  
With your unconstraining voice / Still persuade us to rejoice;  
With the farming of a verse / Make a vineyard of the curse,  
Singing of human unsuccess / In a rapture of distress;  
In the deserts of the heart / Let the healing fountain start,  
In the prison of our days Teach us freely how to praise.



### First Reading

—RD Laing, *Knots*  
"Although innumerable beings have been led to Nirvana, no being has been led to Nirvana."  
—*Diamond Sutra*

Before one goes through the gate  
one may not be aware there is a gate  
One may think there is a gate to go through  
and look a long time for it without finding it  
One may find it and

it may not open  
If it opens one may be through it  
As one goes through it one sees that the gate one went through  
was the self that went through it

no one went through a gate there was no gate to go through  
no one ever found a gate no one ever realized there was never a gate



### Psalm 90:1-6, 15-17

*Domine, refugium* Chanted by choir

- 1 Lord, you have been our refuge \* from one generation to another.
- 2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the earth were born, \* from age to age you are God.
- 3 You turn us back to the dust and say, \* "Go back, O child of earth."
- 4 For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past \* and like a watch in the night.
- 5 You sweep us away like a dream; \* we fade away suddenly like the grass.
- 6 In the morning it is green and flourishes; \* in the evening it is dried up and withered.
- 15 Make us glad by the measure of the days that you afflicted us \* and the years in which we suffered adversity.
- 16 Show your servants your works \* and your splendor to their children.
- 17 May the graciousness of the LORD our God be upon us; \* prosper the work of our hands; prosper our handiwork.

<sup>†</sup>"poet" in Auden's poem



## Second Reading

—Vern Barnet, *The Kansas City Star*, 1998 July 29

I believe that when we encounter the Holy, we naturally feel awe; that awe matures into gratitude; and that gratitude is complete only in service to others.

I believe that we are born to love unconditionally, but rewards and punishments place conditions on the Holy and distort us, dividing us within ourselves, from each other and from the world of nature.

I believe such conditioning puts us in a secular trance, deepened by perverted desires for pleasure, status, power and wealth; and that as this fragmented trance obscures the Holy, we are numbed to the suffering of others, to our own inborn natures and to the environment.

I believe that religions, through story, ritual and compassion, can restore us to the embrace of the Infinite, but that often religions have justified the trance with fear, greed and violence.

I believe we may be emerging from this trance as the process of spiritual evolution unfolds in atom, cell, person and society; and that the universe, making many mistakes, may yet come to behold itself though us.

I believe this process includes today's concourse of the world's religions and offers their mutual purification; that, for us, this free nation, where most of us are children of immigrants, is the best place for authenticity; and that honoring differences can extinguish the selfish, addictive trance, awaken us to the Holy and call us to service together.

I believe there's a lot of work and play and loving to do.



## Sequence Chant "Gloria in excelsis"

— Blue Episcopal Hymnal S280 (front section)



## Procession and Gospel Reading

Matthew 5:3-10 [New English Bible, degenderized]

Deacon: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People: **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

How blest are those who know that they are poor;  
the kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

How blest are the sorrowful;  
they shall find consolation.

How blest are those of a gentle spirit;  
they shall have the earth for their possession.

How blest are those who hunger and thirst to see right prevail;

they shall be satisfied.

How blest are those who show mercy;  
mercy shall be shown to them.

How blest are those whose hearts are pure;  
they shall see God.

How blest are the peacemakers;  
God shall call them his children.

How blest are those who have suffered persecution for the cause of right;

the kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

People: **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**



## Prayers of the People

The people respond to every petition with *Amen*.



## The Peace

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: *And also with you.*

Please take a moment to greet your neighbors; if you wish, introduce yourself; and if you are a member of a faith community, please name it as part of your introduction.

# The Holy Communion

*The celebration of Holy Communion at the Cathedral include these customs:*

- ▶ In the heart of the city, this Cathedral with its civic mission is a House of Prayer for all people. All — members of any religion or none — are welcome to partake of the Holy Mystery of Communion or to receive a blessing at the chancel rail. Information for guests appears below.
- ▶ The Episcopal Church recognizes four orders of ministry: the laity, deacons, priests, and bishops. When possible at the Cathedral, all orders are represented at the Holy Table. Although ordained a Unitarian Universalist minister, Vern loved his place in the Cathedral parish as a baptized layman and is thus remembered as a layman at the Holy Table by the jar of inter-faith water.



### Offertory Sentence Celebrant

Walk in love, as Christ loved us, and give himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God. —Ephesians 5:2



### Offertory

Bread and wine are brought to the Holy Table to be offered to God and the people.



### Offertory Anthem "Alleluia" — Randall Thompson, 1940



### The Great Thanksgiving Eucharistic Prayer A — Red Book of Common Prayer, page 361

The people stand as able.

#### "Lift up your hearts"

Musical notation for the 'Lift up your hearts' section, featuring alternating parts for the Celebrant and the People. The lyrics are: 'The Lord be with you. And also with you. Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and praise.'

Celebrant: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. . . .

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Celebrant and People

#### "Holy, holy, holy, Lord"

Musical notation for the 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord' section, featuring alternating parts for the Celebrant and the People. The lyrics are: 'Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might, heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.'

Music: From *A Community Mass*; Richard Proulx (b. 1937).

The people stand or kneel (or sit). If you stand, please be sure those kneeling behind you can see the Holy Table.



Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself, and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world. On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."



*Celebrant*

There - fore we pro - claim the mys - ter - y of faith:

*Celebrant and People*

Christ has died. Christ is ris - en. Christ will come a - gain.

Music: Ambrosian chant; adapt. Mason Martens (1933-1991). Copyright: © 1971 Mason Martens. All Rights Reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-710278.

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ: By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever.

Celebrant and People: A - men.

Celebrant: And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

Celebrant and People: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Celebrant breaks the bread and a period of silence is kept.

Breaking of the Bread: "Become to us the living bread"

Be - come to us the liv - ing bread - by which the  
 Chris - tian life is fed - re - newed and great - ly com - for -  
 ted. Be - come the ne - ver fail - ing wine -  
 the spring of joy that shall in - cline  
 our hearts to bear the cov - e - nant sign.

Words: John 6 and Miriam Drury. Music: Morfydd Owen/Elwick. All Rights Reserved. Permission granted from Westminster John Knox Publications.

## COMMUNION

Whether you are a member of any faith or none, all cherishing the love Christians find in Christ are welcome to partake of the Holy Mystery of Communion or to receive a blessing at the chancel rail. Ushers will indicate the order in which people may go forward. To take communion, receive the bread in the crossed palms of your hands (for gluten-free bread cross your hands palms down). If you wish also to receive wine, drink the wine from the cup, or holding the bread in your hands, wait for the minister to dip the bread in the wine and place it on your tongue. If instead of communion, you wish a blessing, cross your hands over your chest.

The Bread and the Cup are given to the communicants with these words:

Server: The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven. Communicant: Amen.

Server: The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation. Communicant: Amen.

### Communion Anthem


"Sanctus" from *Requiem*, 1947, by Maurice Duruflé

### Communion Hymn

"All creatures of our God and King" — Francis of Assisi — *Lasst uns erfreuen* — Episcopal Hymnal 400, verses 1-6

 **Post-Communion Prayer** Please stand, as able.  
Celebrant and People


**Almighty and everliving God,  
we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food  
of the most precious Body and Blood  
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ;  
and for assuring us in these holy mysteries  
that we are living members of the Body of your Son,  
and heirs of your eternal kingdom.  
And now, Father, send us out  
to do the work you have given us to do,  
to love and serve you  
as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.  
To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,  
be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.**

 **Recessional Hymn** Singing together  
"Now the green blade riseth" — Episcopal Hymnal 204  
— *Noël nouvelet*

 **Responsive Benedictions** Kitaro Nishida, William Blake,  
Tao Te Ching, Vern Barnet

Celebrant — The world is one; Its name is also many.  
All — **Now is eternal; here, infinity.**  
Celebrant — We trust the life that gives us being for a time  
All — **And relax in its ultimate motion.**  
Celebrant — For life is a gift, our estate is sacred,  
and love endures forever.  
All — **The ease we praise and shake unites us all.**  
Celebrant — As we depart, we leave the slopes of death  
to live on these same slopes.  
All — **We leave this place with thanksgiving  
and promise.**  
Celebrant — Behold: Even as we return to a world broken,  
corrupt, and suffering, we say:  
From wonder to wonder existence opens.  
All — **Behold:**  
**From wonder to wonder existence opens.**

## Transition Hymn


 CMD. (8686.8686) (Episcopal) #[692] Tallis, The Third Tune

The sacred is this place and hour  
for holiness is here  
within the universal heart  
and every eye and ear  
as we awake in faith and grace  
and find ourselves in all;  
expanse of time each moment brings,  
the infinite in small.

Each death is but a spreading light,  
a journey's star made swift  
from cosmic start that made the world,  
transforming void to gift.  
Each change becomes a dwelling place  
yet still we travel long  
remaining as we pray and move  
and find ourselves in song.

## Dismissal

Deacon Let us go forth into the world,  
rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.  
People **Thanks be to God.**

 **Postlude** "Toccata in F" from *Symphony No. 5*, 1879  
— Charles-Marie Widor

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## Acknowledgements

*Please see the program insert for a list of participants  
and the last page for background information about water used in this observance.*

# Pouring of Water and Reception

Following the Postlude, the water in the pitcher co-mingled by many faiths  
will be poured in the Memorial Garden in a moment of silence.  
Then you are invited to a reception in Founders Hall.

## Water — An Interfaith Symbol

Water, used for its spiritual significance in many faiths, has become a symbol of interfaith cooperation here, drawing on our “City of Fountains” designation. (Kansas City is said to have more fountains than any city in the world except Rome.)

For years I have been collecting water, from my journeys and from friends as they travel. Into a jar I have poured water drawn from the Rhine, Seine, Tiber, Danube, Nile, Jordan, Thames, Mekong, Amazon, Ganges, St Lawrence, Yangtze, Volga, Colorado, Mississippi, Missouri, Euphrates, Kaw, the Bosphorus, the Sea of Japan, and many other rivers, lakes, puddles, and such around the world. This collection has been the basis of the waters described below.

In 2001, at Kansas City’s first interfaith conference, “The Gifts of Pluralism,” water was collected from 14 area fountains — from Independence to Lenexa — and 14 representatives of different faiths poured the waters together to emphasize that our many faiths make one community. These were added to the collection of waters of the world noted above, just as folks from around the world have come to Kansas City and blessed us with their traditions.

When the 250 participants unanimously adopted a Concluding Declaration, and came forward to sign it, each person received a vial to dip into the mingled waters to take home to pour on something to grow, as a reminder of the growth we experienced by mingling with one another. This added meaning to the logo for the “Gifts of Pluralism” conference.

On the morning of September 11, 2002, members of many faiths gathered for an observance on the anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks by pouring waters from their own religious centers into the pool at Ilus Davis Park, between City Hall and the Federal Justice Center, to represent the tears we have offered for those who have suffered because of the violence, and for all who have been injured in any way. CBS-TV showed a portion of the ceremony in a nation-wide broadcast.

The waters thus joined were taken to Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral where the city’s central observance was held that evening. There each Council member accepted a portion of the mingled water to take to each respective religious community.

It was said, “Peoples of many faiths were killed by the terrorists. Tears are an honorable part of our response to the horrors. In our common grief, we are united. But now it is time to transform the water of tears into waters of purification, renewal and refreshment. Holy waters can extinguish the fires of hatred, wash away our self-righteousness, and well up as

healing fountains of the heart.”

The waters were also taken to sites around the metro area for use in other interfaith services that evening. For example, St Mark’s Catholic Church liturgist Susan Walker, with her interfaith ritual team, used the water to speak the best of America at the Community of Christ Auditorium.

The fountain on the rostrum was silent until Independence Mayor Ron Stewart and Raytown Mayor Sue Frank received buckets of water being passed the entire length of the north aisle, hand to hand, by more than 50 uniformed police officers, fire fighters, emergency medical personnel and others. As the fountain filled, the water began speaking, circulating and spilling from an upper basin to the larger lower pool.

With the physical act of handing off buckets, the brigade volunteers became members of each other, and those who were witnesses gazed deeper into the best of humanity, and found comfort and consolation.

Something as ordinary as water, transformed by the intentions of those of many faiths in ritual reminder, can speak to us as words cannot. A simple action like handing a bucket of water to another person, deepening community, helped us face a tragedy that is unspeakable.

In observing the tenth anniversary of 9/11, Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral used the mingled waters to recognize our shared humanity and the sacred in every faith.

Water as an interfaith symbol speaks of cleansing, renewal, rebirth, and refreshment. But it also recalls the countless people who found ways to respond to the tragedy, including the emergency workers. (It evokes memories of frontier America: if the barn caught fire, the entire community came out, formed a bucket brigade from the nearest water source, and did their part to put out the fire.)

The waters have also been part of interfaith explorations of students. For several years, high school students gathered at the Kauffman Foundation for a day of encountering students from other schools and other faiths. American Indians, Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, FreeThinkers, and others have brought water collected from their institutions to share with the others, and taken a vial of the mingled waters home with them as a reminder of the shared experience of growth.

One more example, an important one, a national one. In 2007 Kansas City hosted the nation’s first Interfaith Academies, with international scholars and students. As they assembled here to learn about doing interfaith work, they brought water. And each also brought a rock.



“Holy waters” mingled from around the world and KC interfaith activities with, behind the jar, the 2001 logo for “The Gifts of Pluralism” conference.

Ceremonially, one by one, they poured their water into the 3-gallon clear glass jar, dropped their rocks into it and voiced their hopes as the Interfaith Academies began. At the end of the fortnight, the participants retrieved a rock someone else had brought, washed but undiluted by the mingled waters gathered from previous KC interfaith events and from the waters each of them brought here, and celebrated the gifts of learning from one another and from the spiritual richness of Kansas City, to take home, and beyond.

On the 10th anniversary

Jews may bathe in a *mikvah*, Christians practice baptism, Muslims observe ablutions, the Shinto tradition includes *misoge* — almost every faith has some way of using water to develop a sense of transcendent reality. While the different ways the various faiths use water should not be confused, water is a natural symbol of the spirit in interfaith settings. Without water, we die.

About *misoge* — At the Tsubaki Grand Shrine in Mie Prefecture some years ago, I came to understand what encountering *kami* might be like. After dressing in a white loin-cloth and headband, clapping and bowing, some physical exercises, and a drink of sake with salt, I was placed under a waterfall so strong that I felt I merged with the stream, itself considered *kami*. My skin vibrated as much as the water, it seemed. This ritual cleansing aims to restore the union of *kami* and human.

The rush of the water and the loss of my sense of personal identity in its flow helped me understand why sometimes *kami* is considered more a verb than a noun. The divine is not so much a being as a process. *Kami* is less a way of saying that there are gods and more an affirmation that the universe is “god-ing,” like water flowing onward, outward, inward.

—VERN BARNET ON HOLY WATER

### Some Favorite Water Quotations

Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs through it. The river was cut by the world’s great flood and runs over rocks from the basement of time. . . . I am haunted by waters. —Norman Maclean, *A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT*

You could not step twice into the same river; for other waters are ever flowing on to you. —Heraclitus

And he showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God . . . —Revelation 22:1-2

How do you preserve a drop of water? Throw it back into the ocean. —The Buddha

The best is like water. Water is good; it benefits all things and does not compete with them. It dwells in [lowly] places that all disdain. This is why it is so near to Tao. —Lao-tzu

The fall of dropping water wears away the stone. —Lucretius