**Week Six Lent**: April 13, 2014

***Isaiah 44: 1-3 "But now listen, O Jacob, my servant, Israel, whom I have chosen.***

***This is what the LORD says— he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you: Do not be afraid, O Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.***

***For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.***

Milwaukee has been called “a great place on a Great Lake”. We are blessed with 14,000 lakes in our state, along with numerous rivers—the Wisconsin, Mississippi, Brule, and Milwaukee, to name a few.

Much of the work that I do relates to those waters. Our paper industry spent decades developing new treatment processes to limit discharges of chemicals to the rivers where most mills were built in the days of our grandparents. Cleaning chemicals and petroleum that were spilled decades ago turn up in groundwater, spreading in plumes that are hard to address and that require years of monitoring. Rainwater picks up unintended cargo--oil and other pollutants--and carries it into nearby rivers and streams. Use of groundwater by industry and agriculture has been blamed for a lowering of the water table in the Central Sands region of our state, at a time when an extended drought in the northern part of the state has many lakes at their lowest levels in at least 70 years.

These are the issues within our state, where fresh water abounds. In the west, where it is scarce, even polluted industrial wastewater is a valuable resource that is carefully allocated to users.

While pollution exists in America, it seldom poses a serious risk to our health. When it does, as recently happened in West Virginia, the fact that rules were not followed is of little comfort to those sickened by something that they assumed would be safe. Our friends in Haiti, without Lake Michigan and the Milwaukee Water Works, cannot even assume that access to fresh water will be available.

May we all be grateful for the abundance that we are blessed with, and keep in our prayers the families in Haiti that cannot share the same. **Pete Tomasi**

* **The water and sanitation crisis around the world claims more lives through disease than any war claims through guns.**

**Prayer:** Lord, Creator of All, teach us to be generous as You have been generous with us. Teach us that all we are and have are gifts from You, that gifts, Lord, are meant to be shared. Please accept our gifts to the students of Jeannette in Your name. Amen.

