



The Epistle

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If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.... those who drink of the water | will give them will never be thirsty. The water that | will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life. John 4:10,14

You may have heard me confessing this in a recent sermon, but our Senior Warden, Peter Gordon, has hooked me on reading books by the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh this summer. I read his book Going Home during my family's vacation on Long Beach Island. One early morning, as John and Lucy slept, Rosemary gave me that most precious summer resource: time *alone* to sit on the beach with a book.

That morning I read the story of when Thich Nhat Hanh was a little boy, climbing a small mountain with hundreds of other school children to have a picnic. He didn't bring enough water for the journey and once they reached the top he was very thirsty.

But Tich Nhat Hanh was thirsty in more than one way, even as a child. He had been told there was a hermit on the top of this mountain who he was very much hoping to meet. However, the children were told that the hermit was no longer there when they arrived. Tich Nhat Hanh was discouraged and wandered off by himself in a forest, not ready to give up hope that he would find the hermit. What he found instead was a well of water. He sat down and took the water in his hands and drank.

Even though he tells this story from a child's perspective, it sounds like Tich Nhat Hanh is still convinced that he did meet his hermit. He writes, "*I believed that the hermit had transformed himself into the well in order for me to meet him privately. After having drunk the water I felt completely satisfied... While I was walking, a sentence formed in my head... 'I have tasted the most delicious water in the world' "*

Sitting on a jetty over the Atlantic Ocean with this book and great roaring waves crashing against the rocks by my feet, I began to sob. The verses above from the Gospel of John

