




DOMINICAN SISTERS OF SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

Fourth Sunday of Lent, March 31, 2019

“Prodigal” is defined as “spending money or resources freely and recklessly, wastefully extravagant.” All too often we are prodigal in our use of water and other gifts of Earth—to the point of affecting the health and well-being of our planet and its climate. May we have the courage to “return home” this Lent to right relationship with our Creator and all creation. May our “homecoming” draw us into healing and sustainable relationships within the Earth community.

	Goal 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all What would my life be like if I had no access to clean, safe water?
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Too many people still lack access to safely managed water supplies and sanitation facilities. Water scarcity, flooding and lack of proper wastewater management also hinder social and economic development. Increasing water efficiency and improving water management are critical to balancing the competing and growing water demands from various sectors and users.

1. While Earth’s surface is 71% water, only 3% of all that water is fresh and of that 3% only 1% is available for us; the rest is salty and found in the ocean or locked up in glaciers and at the poles.
2. That makes only 0.5% of all Earth’s water, fresh and available.
3. 650 million people in the world do not have access to safe water. This is roughly one out of every 10 people on the planet.
4. 2.4 billion people have no safe sanitation facilities or latrines. That’s one out of every three people worldwide.
5. Every minute, a newborn baby dies from infection caused by a lack of safe water and an unclean environment.
6. Water in Accra, Ghana, costs three times as much as in New York City
7. Unfortunately, humans have proved to be inefficient water users. (The average hamburger takes 2,400 liters, or 630 gallons, of water to produce, and many water-intensive crops, such as cotton, are grown in arid regions.)
8. Consistently buying bottled water contributes to the privatization of water, which ought to be a public good, not just for humans but all of life.
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>
<https://maryknollogc.org/article/laudato-si-and-water>

Even as the quality of available water is constantly diminishing, in some places there is a growing tendency, despite its scarcity, to privatize this resource, turning it into a commodity subject to the laws of the market. Yet access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity. —Pope Francis, Laudato Sí §30

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html



Goal 13 – Climate Action

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

What kind of world do I want to leave those who come after me?

The year 2017 was one of the three warmest on record and was 1.1 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial period. The world continues to experience rising sea levels, extreme weather conditions and increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases. This calls for urgent and accelerated action by countries.

- As of 9 April 2018, 185 of 197 parties have ratified the Paris Agreement. Pres. The Administration has pulled the US out of the Agreement.
- Thus far, 17 US governors have joined the Climate Alliance and more than 156 US mayors have joined 9,000 international mayors in the Global Climate Covenant, pledging to follow the Paris Agreement.
- Wind and solar technology is advancing, fossil fuel divestment is growing, international youth movements protesting the failure of political climate action are on the rise.
- The Green New Deal has been introduced in the US House of Representatives.

I should like to address directly my brothers and sisters in the Catholic Church, in order to remind them of their serious obligation to care for all of creation. The commitment of believers to a healthy environment for everyone stems directly from their belief in God the Creator, from their recognition of the effects of original and personal sin, and from the certainty of having been redeemed by Christ. Respect for life and for the dignity of the human person extends also to the rest of creation, which is called to join all in praising God.
—Pope Saint John Paul II, World Day of Peace Message, No. 6, January 1, 1990

...the ecological crisis is ... a summons to profound interior conversion. It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an “ecological conversion”, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.
—Pope Francis, *Laudato Sí* §217

Jesus, source of living water, you sanctified water at the beginning of Creation as Your Spirit hovered above the waters. You created water as indispensable to all life. We pray for those who do not have access to safe and affordable drinking water. Purify, protect and multiply water sources for those who suffer from water pollution, scarcity and lack of sanitation. Grant us forgiveness when we do not act responsibly in our use of water.

God of Creation, open our eyes, to the urgent challenges of climate change. Give us a deep sense of concern for the future of our environment. Help us to make choices that will bring an end to the exploitation of Earth. Teach us to be responsible stewards protecting and respecting the gift of creation you have placed in our care. Give decision makers around the world the wisdom to find creative solutions to ensure climate justice. Amen