

Our Dream of the Earth. Can we prevent further destruction?

Water and Ocean Reflection Series

Photos: Kristin McDermott

MESSAGE FROM

POPE FRANCIS

'In tropical and subtropical seas, we find coral reefs comparable to the great forests on dry land, for they shelter approximately a million species, including fish, crabs, molluscs, sponges and algae. Many of the world's coral reefs are already barren or in a state of constant decline. "Who turned the wonderworld of the seas into underwater cemeteries bereft of colour and life?" This phenomenon is due largely to pollution which reaches the sea as the result of deforestation, agricultural monocultures, industrial waste and destructive fishing methods, especially those using cyanide and dynamite. It is aggravated by the rise in temperature of the oceans. All of this helps us to see that every intervention in nature can have consequences which are not immediately evident, and that certain ways of exploiting resources prove costly in terms of degradation which ultimately reaches the ocean bed itself.'

Pope Francis, Laudato Si #41



CONNECTIONS AT THE UN

Biodiversity refers to variety and variation. The more variation and variety of plant and animal species there are is an indication of good health. Yet, many scientists believe that our planet is now on the verge of a sixth mass extinction event, and that this event is a result of human activity. Human induced climate change is resulting in extreme weather events from more destructive storm systems to longer or more pronounced droughts. Within our oceans, the slow warming of waters, as well as ocean acidification is changing the marine ecosystems rapidly – species are struggling to adapt to these changes.

The theme of 2017 International Day of Biodiversity is 'Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism'. Many Tourist ventures promote the wild and diverse biology of an area... whale watching or diving on coral reefs to view and explore the diversity of marine life.

Our dream of a healthy and sustainable Earth with wide variation and variety of life can be realized within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). SDG 14 which focuses on life below water, and SDG 15 with a focus on life on land, have elements within their targets that focus on protecting and restoring biodiversity.

TAKE ACTION

- RESEARCH WHAT AREAS ARE BEING RESTORED AND PROTECTED IN YOUR LOCAL REGION.
- WHAT ROLE CAN YOU PLAY TO BRING AWARENESS AND SUSTAINABLE ACTION TO THIS REGION?

Reflection



Take a walk along a drain, stream, river, estuary or beach....notice pollution and pick up rubbish.

Study the geologic and ecologic history of the area....what was it like before human development? What was it like before humans arrived?

From your walk, draw or take pictures.

Write a poem, short story or reflection on what you discover on your journey.



Prayer

Creator God

We thank you for the richness of life
The amazing colours and diverse forms
The sounds, all praising your glorious creation
We ask for wisdom, clarity and sense of purpose
To understand our role within this great melting pot of life.
Amen.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Oceans cover 70% of the planet, but we know so little of the life within them.
- A square kilometer (km²) of a coastal ecosystem such as Mangrove forest can store up to 5 times more carbon than the equivalent area of mature tropical forests.

Source: www.iucn.org