

WATER AND OCEAN REFLECTION SERIES

FROM MARCH 22ND-JUNE 9TH

MERCY GLOBAL ACTION AT THE UN
WWW.MERCYWORLD.ORG



This year the United Nations, New York, will host **'The Ocean Conference'** from the **5th to the 9th June 2017**. The focus will be the **implementation and achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.**

Our planet is primarily a water planet and water is what sustains life on Earth. At least 71% of the Earth is covered in water, and of that 96.5% of all water is held in the oceans. In order, for humanity to be healthy, we need our planet to be healthy and this means the nations of the world need to seriously consider the current state of our oceans and begin urgent action to improve them.

Mercy Global Action at the UN has developed a **12-week reflective resource** to highlight the issues surrounding our planet's seas and oceans. This includes all the fresh and saltwater waterways our planet holds. This 12-week reflection **begins on UN World Water Day (22nd March) and ends on UN World Ocean Day (8th June).**

Each week's reflection will include:

1. Excerpts from **Pope Francis** (primarily using the encyclical **Laudato Si**)
2. A **video clip** that you can watch (just hover your cursor and click the link to watch)
3. An opportunity of **action** and **prayer reflection**

The series primarily involves **walking and reflecting in the same area**. It requires walking along a water source; this can include a **drain, stream, river, estuary or beach**. During that time, you are invited to **notice and pick up any rubbish you find on your journey**. There are opportunities throughout the series to further investigate the impact on this water source. As a way of deepening your reflection, you are invited to record creatively through **photography, drawing, poetry, a short story or journal entry**.

May these 12 weeks be a time of rich discovery, for you a 'planetary pilgrim' on your journey with water and ocean.



"I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all."

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*, #14

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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MUCH OF THIS RESOURCE IS BASED ON THE ENCYCLICAL 'LAUDATO SI' WHICH CAN BE FOUND AT:
[HTTP://W2.VATICAN.VA/CONTENT/FRANCESCO/EN/ENCYCLICALS/DOCUMENTS/PAPA-FRANCESCO_20150524_ENCICLICA-LAUDATO-SI.HTML](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)

Our Connection to Water

WATER AND OCEAN REFLECTION SERIES

Photo: Kristin McDermott

MESSAGE FROM POPE FRANCIS

'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.'

Pope Francis, Laudato Si #30



CONNECTIONS AT THE UN

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

March 22nd- World Water Day

March 23rd- World Meteorologist Day



World Water Day 2017

This significant day first declared in 1993 by the UN General Assembly. This year the theme of the day is 'Wastewater'. As you reflect on water-What comes to mind? What images, questions or ideas are raised?

TAKE ACTION

- RESEARCH THE HIGH LEVEL PANEL ON WATER. THINK OF WAYS YOUR COUNTRY CAN COMMIT TO THE PANELS' 'ACTION PLAN'.
- READ MERCY GLOBAL ACTION'S PAMPHLET ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 6. DEDICATE TIME TO PURSUING THE 'COLLECTIVE ACTIONS'. [\(LINK\)](#)

Reflection



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

From your walk, draw or take pictures. Write a poem, short story or reflection on what you discover on your journey.



Prayer

To the Creator

You wove into existence our home; our blue planet, on the edge of the milky way...
You coaxed life from water – water that surrounds us, refreshes us and connects us back to you.

May you be with us on our journey, as we explore the water that provided us life.
Give us clean water to quench the dry times as we revisit past actions and choices.
Dry our watery tears as we learn the impact of our actions and choices on our planet.

Baptize us anew, with waters that invigorate and clear our vision,
to see the actions and choices we now must make.

Amen.

DID YOU KNOW?

"Globally, over 80% of the wastewater generated by society flows back into the ecosystem without being treated or reused. On average, high-income countries treat about 70% of the wastewater they generate, while that ratio drops to 38% in upper-middle-income countries and to 28% in lower-middle-income countries. In low-income countries, only 8% of industrial and municipal wastewater undergoes treatment of any kind" (Sato et. al, 2013).

Source: http://www.worldwaterday.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Fact_sheet_WWD2017_EN.pdf

THE OCEAN-OUR CLIMATE REGULATOR

WATER AND OCEAN REFLECTION SERIES

Photo: Kristin McDermott

MESSAGE FROM

POPE FRANCIS

'The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all. At the global level, it is a complex system linked to many of the essential conditions for human life. A very solid scientific consensus indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system. In recent decades this warming has been accompanied by a constant rise in the sea level and, it would appear, by an increase of extreme weather events, ...

Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it.'

Pope Francis, Laudato Si #23



CONNECTIONS AT THE UN

Sustainable Development Goal 14 emphasizes 'Life Below Water'. This goal focuses on 'the world's oceans – their temperature, chemistry, currents and life – drive global systems that make the Earth habitable for humankind.

Our rainwater, drinking water, weather, climate, coastlines, much of our food, and even the oxygen in the air we breathe, are all ultimately provided and regulated by the sea. Throughout history, oceans and seas have been vital conduits for trade and transportation.'

The United Nations makes a commitment to promoting 'careful management of this essential global resource is a key feature of a sustainable future.'

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/oceans/>

TAKE ACTION

- RESEARCH THE TARGET GOALS DETAILED WITHIN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 14. IN WHAT WAYS CAN YOU ASSIST IN OCEAN CONSERVATION?
- STUDY THE PROCESSES OF RUBBISH AND RECYCLING DISPOSAL IN YOUR OWN COMMUNITY. WHERE DOES IT GO? DOES THIS SURPRISE YOU?

Reflection



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

Study the rubbish....where does it come from? How did it get there?
How much of it is there?

Try and backtrack sources of pollution....what caused it?

From your walk, draw or take pictures. Write a poem, short story or reflection on what you discover on your journey



Prayer

Thank you God for water...in all its forms.
Clouds, mist and rolling thunderheads....
Hail, sleet, snow, ice cubes and ice bergs...
Clear water, clean water, salt water, fresh water.
Thank you God for life. Life that needs water.
God, remind us to never take water for granted.
Teach us to respect water in all its forms – all
water, all life.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Ocean helps stabilize and regulate our climate by the absorbing and storing of carbon dioxide. Some of the carbon dioxide is used by micro-organisms and other ocean creatures for food (via photosynthesis) and shell formation. However, a sizeable proportion of carbon dioxide is stored in the cooler regions of the oceans. If the oceans warm up...this stored carbon dioxide can easily escape into the atmosphere and contribute to more frequent and violent weather events like hurricanes and cyclones.

WEEK THREE

MEMORIAL DAY THRU
SEPTEMBER 30

Healthy Ocean, Healthy Human

Water and Ocean Reflection Series

Photos: Kristin McDermott

MESSAGE FROM

POPE FRANCIS

"Our commitment to give water its proper place calls for developing a culture of care' (Laudato Si, 231) and encounter, joining in common cause all the necessary efforts made by scientists and business people, government leaders and politicians. We need to unite our voices in a single cause; then it will no longer be a case of hearing individual or isolated voices, but rather the plea of our brothers and sisters echoed in our own, and the cry of the earth for respect and responsible sharing in a treasure belonging to all. In this culture of encounter, it is essential that each state act as a guarantor of universal access to safe and clean water."

Pope Francis address to Conference on the Human Right to Water. 23 Feb 2017



YouTube video Ocean Pollution Harming Humans (3 min 46)

CONNECTIONS AT THE UN

The health of the ocean relies on the health of waterways draining into the seas and ocean. **Sustainable Development Goal 6** which focuses on the sustainable management of **water and sanitation for all**, has as one of its targets:

"By 2030, Improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally."

Source : <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/water-and-sanitation/>

TAKE ACTION

- Familiarize yourself with Sustainable Development Goal 6. Is your country making developments in order to implement this goal?
- Research the water quality in your town. Is this a healthy quality for the environment? (See below in the 'Did you know?' section to learn more about 'water quality')



For Reflection

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

If you are walking along a drain, stream or river:

Study the water quality and the banks along drain, stream, or river. Find out where the water you are walking along begins and where it ends up. Is the water quality and banks the same all along the journey?

If you are walking along an estuary or beach:

Study the quality of the water and the coastline. What drains into the sea where you are? Where do these water sources begin? What is the quality of the water draining into the sea?

From your walk, draw or take pictures. Write a poem, short story or reflection on what you discover on your journey.



Prayer

Where do you go, O drop of water?
Merging, rippling, fluid body.
What do you see?
Travelling down waterways,
joining joyfully with the sea.
God, share with me the story.
Let me understand, let me live...
the vibrant sacred story,
the vibrant sacred dream,
life-giving, life emerging water.

DID YOU KNOW?

Determining water quality involves both assessing its physical and chemical characteristics. A person can look at water visually and think that if it is clear then the water must be good. However, a chemical analysis may determine that the water has a lot of extra nutrients in it (e.g. nitrogen) – thus lowering the quality of water (too many nutrients lower the dissolved oxygen content in water).

What is considered an 'acceptable level' of nutrients for water can be different amongst local regions, between rural and urban councils, and at national and international levels of government. Check the website of your local and regional councils for water quality standards in your area. Are these the accurate levels needed for the health of the environment and humans?

Sacred Waters

Water and Ocean Reflection Series

Photo: Kristin McDermott

MESSAGE FROM:

POPE FRANCIS

'...human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself.

According to the Bible, these three vital relationships have been broken, both outwardly and within us. This rupture is sin. The harmony between the Creator, humanity and creation as a whole was disrupted by our presuming to take the place of God and refusing to acknowledge our creaturely limitations.'

Pope Francis, Laudato Si, #66



CONNECTIONS AT THE UN

Within the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the sacredness of the earth and water are recognized and prioritized. The Declaration states that 'Indigenous peoples have the **right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with** their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used **lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations** in this regard.'

Article 25, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

TAKE ACTION

- RESEARCH THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES.
- CHECK TO SEE IF YOUR COUNTRY HAS RATIFIED THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES.
- IN WHAT WAYS DOES YOUR LOCAL AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS SEEK TO UPHOLD INDIGENOUS VALUES OF LAND AND WATER?

Reflection



Take a walk along a drain, stream, river, estuary or beach....

Spend some time on reflecting on how water is used in many sacred rituals and how water is perceived by the indigenous cultures of the area.

From your walk, draw or take pictures. Write a poem, short story or reflection on what you discover on your journey.



Prayer

God said "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

Genesis 1: 9-10 (NRSV)

DID YOU KNOW?

Mercy Global Action at the UN has worked extensively in the context of the sacredness and importance of water in all communities. We recognize that, while not exclusively detailed within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, water is indeed, to be listed as a right that all peoples, including the poor, vulnerable and marginalized, have access to. It was a great success, after long deliberation of Member States and long hours of advocacy from the MGA UN office, that the human right to water and sanitation was listed within the Preamble, and as a commitment, in Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

Mercy Global Action at the UN takes issues of water injustice, such as fracking, and develops solutions through human rights based approaches to advocacy. To see some of our recent work, in partnership with other NGO's at the United Nations, hover your cursor to read "Water and Sanitation: A Peoples Guide to SDG 6".

The Ocean...Receptacle of all our Actions

Ocean Reflection Series

Photo: Kristin McDermott

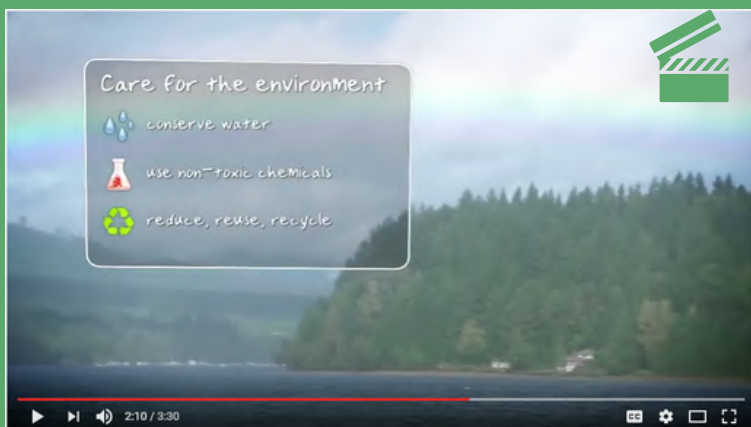
MESSAGE FROM

POPE FRANCIS

'The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth.

In many parts of the planet, the elderly lament that once beautiful landscapes are now covered with rubbish.'

Pope Francis, Laudato Si #21



CONNECTIONS AT THE UN

The United Nations is deeply committed to educating communities on the importance of protecting our oceans. Secretary General Antonio Guterres stated at an event this pas February that 'Oceans ... are crucial for global food security and human health, they contribute to eradicating poverty, and they are the primary regulator of the global climate. Thriving oceans are closely linked with our health, maritime security, peace and prosperity.

Despite this, oceans are continually degraded by human activities and threatened by climate change, marine pollution, the extraction of marine resources, and the destruction of coastal habitats and landscapes.' We must take his words to heart and be concious consumers.

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1277213_Feb_SG_message_IPU_Oceans.pdf

TAKE ACTION

- CREATE A GROUP TO STUDY SUSTAINABLE GOAL 14 WHICH FOCUSES ON CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE OCEANS, SEAS AND MARINE RESOURCES.
- BRAINSTORM WAYS YOU CAN HELP REALIZE THESE GOALS. SEND YOUR IDEAS TO YOUR LOCAL AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS.

Reflection



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

Find out who else comes to visit, use or lives in the area...(human and non-human!)

From your walk, draw or take pictures. Write a poem, short story or reflection on what you discover on your journey.



Prayer

Creator God

Please forgive us...as we mix waters and chemicals and fracture the earth.

Please forgive us ...as poisonous water leaches into aquifers...

Please forgive us...as creation groans in pain and agony...

Creator God

Please forgive us...as we throw that straw on the ground...

Please forgive us ...as we ignore the plastic bag blowing around...

Please forgive us ...as we watch in horror of the giant plastic island gyres growing out to sea

Please forgive us...as we say how did this come to be?

Thank you, God, ...for collaboration.

For providing us with the capacity to see anew creation in all forms...me and you.

Thank you for tree planting days and slow-food days.

Thank you for beach clean-up days and clean stream days

Thank you for giving me voice to air my concern to councilors on lack of action

Thank you for marches and, rallies and community days

Thank you, God, ...for enabling me to action.

DID YOU KNOW?

Every single action that we as humans do has an impact greater than our immediate surroundings – in this case, the Earth's oceans have absorbed our waste, rubbish and pollutants. During the past decade, our awareness has grown, of the harmful impact that our actions have had on the oceans.

The harmful impact on all freshwater tributaries has a flow on effect to the impact of marsh, wetland, estuary and harbor ecosystems – that then moves into the seas and oceans. Many of these ecosystems provide the nursery for a considerable proportion of marine life. Plant species within these ecosystems can capture or trap some of these pollutants...but too much pollutant can affect the health of the entire ecosystem.

A Closer look at Waste

Water and Ocean Reflection Series

Photo: Kristin McDermott

MESSAGE FROM POPE FRANCIS

'There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions, and it is wonderful how education can bring about real changes in lifestyle.

Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us...Reusing something instead of immediately discarding it, when done for the right reasons, can be an act of love which expresses our own dignity.'

Pope Francis, Laudato Si #211



CONNECTIONS AT THE UN

Looking deeper into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), SDG 6 refers to the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

The key concern for the quality of all our waterways and tributaries is the sustainable management of water and sanitation.

Four of the targets under this goal relate to freshwater management and give guidelines for participating Member States to consider in the creation of policies regarding water and sanitation. The danger is in not taking full action...

'We can see that 'Target 6.3 refers to wastewater treatment, which is part of the State's obligations in realizing the human right to sanitation for all. The human right to sanitation requires that waste must be safely disposed of and treated. Target 6.3 aims only to halve the proportion of untreated wastewater so it necessarily falls short of the obligation to guarantee the human right to adequate sanitation for all included in Target 6.2.'

(Amanda Lyons, (2017) Water and Sanitation: A people's guide to SDG 6. A rights-based Approach to Implementation. p8)

TAKE ACTION

- STUDY 'WATER AND SANITATION: A PEOPLE'S GUIDE TO SDG 6. A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION'. ([LINK](#))
- THINK OF WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN ADDRESS THE AREAS WHERE THE TARGET GOALS FALL SHORT. ENCOURAGE YOUR LOCAL AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENT TO FOLLOW THROUGH WITH YOUR CONCERNS.

Reflection



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

Find out where your local town or city's sanitation treatment plant is. Does it have the capacity to treat the volume of human waste it has now?

What about into the future? Where does the "treated water" go? Does it have an affect on the environment? On the Ocean?

Those with septic tanks....when the tank is emptied...where does it go? How is it treated?

Extra: Explore the waste collection and sanitation methods of your closest port. Is it up to standard? Who monitors ship waste collections? Who monitors ships out at sea? Are there rules for or against disposal of waste at sea?

From your walk, draw or take pictures. Write a poem, short story or reflection on what you discover on your journey.



Prayer

Doing the grocery shopping ...without thought.
Bright colours saying pick me pick me!

Rows of plastic containers in different sizes and colours, filled with all the goodies to make our life easy.

Fruit and Vegetable isle....lovely fruit waxed to perfection; vegetables with water spray mist goingmaking everything fresh and desirable ...cut vegetables, cut fruit, wrapped in plastic to make out lives easy.

Hmm...the delicatessen ...I need to get some ready made pasta salads...making my life easy as they put it in the plastic container. Watching a documentary...seeing a turtle struggling to breathe with a plastic six can ring wrapped around it's neck. Not having life easy...

The women, having to purchase water, as the water from the tap, contaminated, a result of the fracking operation 10 km up the road...not having life easy.

DID YOU KNOW?

'Due to population growth, accelerated urbanisation and economic development, the quantity of wastewater generated and its overall pollution load are increasing globally. However, wastewater management is being seriously neglected, and wastewater is grossly undervalued as a potentially affordable and sustainable source of water, energy, nutrients and other recoverable materials...

The costs of wastewater management are greatly outweighed by the benefits to human health, economic development and environmental sustainability – providing new business opportunities and creating more 'green' jobs.'

http://www.worldwaterday.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Fact_sheet_WWD2017_EN.pdf

Fish and Fishing

Water and Ocean Reflection Series

Photo: Kristin McDermott

MESSAGE FROM

POPE FRANCIS

'The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation... For example, the depletion of fishing reserves especially hurts small fishing communities without the means to replace those resources; water pollution particularly affects the poor who cannot buy bottled water; and rises in the sea level mainly affect impoverished coastal populations who have nowhere else to go. The impact of present imbalances is also seen in the premature death of many of the poor, in conflicts sparked by the shortage of resources, and in any number of other problems which are insufficiently represented on global agendas.'

Pope Francis, Laudato Si #48



CONNECTIONS AT THE UN

On the 7th of December 2016, the **United Nations General Assembly proclaimed** that the **2nd of May** would be **World Tuna Day**. The purpose is to primarily focus on this widely-consumed fish around the world. Due to its popularity, much of tuna fish stocks globally, are under threat of collapse due in part to unsustainable and illegal fishing practices.

Sustainable Development Goal 14 focuses on conserving and sustaining ocean, seas and marine resources for Sustainable Development. One of its targets the sustainable management of fisheries:

'14.7- By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through the management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism.'

<https://oceanconference.un.org/sdg14>

TAKE ACTION

- RESEARCH HOW YOUR GOVERNMENT MONITORS THE FISHING INDUSTRY (BOTH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FISHING COMPANIES) IN YOUR COUNTRY'S TERRITORIAL WATERS. IS IT SUSTAINABLE?
- CHECK YOUR COUNTRY'S SUSTAINABLE FISH GUIDE. COMMIT YOURSELF TO ONLY EAT FISH THAT IS SUSTAINABLE.

Reflection



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

Study the creatures that live in the drain, stream, estuary and beach...Are they numerous? Are they healthy? Could their environment be better?

From your walk, draw or take pictures.

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



Prayer

Jesus,

You had friends who were fisherman....who's livelihood was the sea.

We ask for your protection today for life that lives within water...for all the fish, the mammals, the corals and plants and microscopic life that is hidden from most of us on the land.... Protect the vulnerable

species of life from human exploitation. Change the hearts and attitudes of those who view the ocean as commodity, profit and there for the taking. Protect the livelihood of those fisherman who only take what is needed...much like your friends along the Galilee Sea.

Amen.

DID YOU KNOW?

- All three Bluefin tuna species (Atlantic, Southern, Pacific) are endangered or critically endangered and yet they are still fished commercially.
- Another three tuna species (Bigeye, yellowfin, albacore) are in serious decline and are listed as 'threatened species'.

Source: Greenpeace International.

The Problem with Plastic

Water and Ocean Reflection Series

MESSAGES FROM

POPE FRANCIS

'We are always capable of going out of ourselves towards the other. Unless we do this, other creatures will not be recognized for their true worth; we are unconcerned about caring for things for the sake of others; we fail to set limits on ourselves in order to avoid the suffering of others or the deterioration of our surroundings. Disinterested concern for others, and the rejection of every form of self-centeredness and self-absorption, are essential if we truly wish to care for our brothers and sisters and for the natural environment. These attitudes also attune us to the moral imperative of assessing the impact of our every action and personal decision on the world around us. If we can overcome individualism, we will truly be able to develop a different lifestyle and bring about significant changes in society.'

Pope Francis, Laudato Si #208



Photo: Ian L

CONNECTIONS AT THE UN

May 9th and 10th is International Migratory Bird Day. The theme for 2017 is "Their Future is our Future." The topic surrounding this theme will be 'Sustainable Development for Wildlife and People'¹.

Migratory birds share the same planet and the same limited resources as humans. These birds rely on food from the sea for their survival; however, evidence has shown that many of these birds mistake much of the floating plastic in our ocean as food...and are dying slow deaths primarily from malnutrition, due to a stomach full of plastic.

Food threats, due to pollution, is one cause of a decline in migratory bird numbers. Another cause is habitat loss as coastal and inland wetlands and marshes are lost due to development.

Wetlands and marshes provide safe resting places for migratory birds. They also act as filters in the cycling of water on this planet. These ecosystems can trap sediment and excess nutrients that can help improve water quality of our fresh water. Under sustainable development goal 6, one of the targets focuses on protecting and restoring water related eco-systems (target 6.6).

¹<http://www.greeningtheblue.org/event/world-migratory-bird-day>

TAKE ACTION

- FAMILIARISE YOURSELF WITH THE UN ENVIRONMENT #CLEANSEAS CAMPAIGN WEBSITE [HTTP://WWW.CLEANSEAS.ORG/](http://www.cleanseas.org/)
- BECOME INVOLVED IN EFFORTS IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO PRESERVE THE BEACH AND ITS INHABITANTS. BECOME INSPIRED THROUGH GLOBAL ACTION: [HTTP://WWW.WORLDMIGRATORYBIRDDAY.ORG/EVENTS-MAP](http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org/events-map)

Reflection



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

Study the rubbish (in particular, the plastics) you pick up...

What type of plastics are they? Can all the different types of plastics be recycled? Does your area/country recycle it's own plastic waste ...if so where/how? If not? Where/who does it go to and why?

What is your country's position on single-use plastics (primarily associated with medical waste)? Do they have a policy in appropriate and environmentally friendly waste disposal of single use plastics?

What is your country's position on micro plastics? (many countries are now banning micro plastics) From your walk, draw or take pictures.

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



Prayer

Creator God

Fill us with the sound of seagulls singing out at sea...

Fill us with the sound of waves talking to the wind...

Fill us with the sound of oohhs and ahhs of children, the delight and wonder of life in rock-pools, abundant and clear...

Fill us with the sound, of laughter and community of families on the beach...

Create in us the capacity...to look at ourselves and our choices...to make change.

Create in us the capacity....to ensure we don't have silent beaches.

Amen

DID YOU KNOW?

- Plastics will take 1000 years to degrade in a landfill. Plastics need the sun to break-down and buried waste takes longer to decompose.
- The energy saved from recycling one plastic bottle can power a 100W lightbulb for one hour.

Sources : <http://your.caerphilly.gov.uk/kidsgogreen/fact-zone/plastic-facts> ,
<http://www.mrcpolymers.com/PlasticRecyclingFacts.php>

Our Relationship to the Ocean and Our Capacity to Change

Water and Ocean Reflection Series

Photos: Kristin McDermott

MESSAGE FROM

POPE FRANCIS

'This conversion calls for a number of attitudes which together foster a spirit of generous care, full of tenderness. First, it entails gratitude and gratuitousness, a recognition that the world is God's loving gift, and that we are called quietly to imitate his generosity in self-sacrifice and good works...It also entails a loving awareness that we are not disconnected from the rest of creatures, but joined in a splendid universal communion. As believers, we do not look at the world from without but from within, conscious of the bonds with which the Father has linked us to all beings. By developing our individual, God-given capacities, an ecological conversion can inspire us to greater creativity and enthusiasm in resolving the world's problems and in offering ourselves to God "as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable" (Rom 12:1). We do not understand our superiority as a reason for personal glory or irresponsible dominion, but rather as a different capacity which, in its turn, entails a serious responsibility stemming from our faith.'

Pope Francis, Laudato Si #220



CONNECTIONS AT THE UN

Capacity has multiple meanings because it can be applied to a variety of different contexts. The commonality within these contexts can be described as potential.

What is the potential from a change in our thinking, our practices and our choices with new knowledge and understanding? What can we imagine in the future? Our oceans: – what is the potential of our oceans if we give more thought and care to the health and vibrancy of the environment? Or, to the people living along or needing the ocean to survive?

The last sustainable development goal of Agenda 2030 is SDG 17 which focuses on strengthening the means for implementation and revitalizing global partnership for sustainable development. To achieve this, capacity building is needed. Target 17.9 describes the need for '...effective and targeted capacity building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals...'1. Goals like SDG 6 for Water and Sanitation, and SDG 14 related to the oceans will only work if we have capacity (or potential) both at personal, local, national and international levels to want something better that will work for all.

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg17>

TAKE ACTION

- READ AGENDA 2030 (LINK) WHICH ENCAPSULATES ALL THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS THAT NATION STATES HAVE COMMITTED TO ACCOMPLISHING.
- THINK OF WAYS YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY, COUNTRY, AND GLOBAL REGION HAS THE CAPACITY TO ACHIEVE AGENDA 2030.

Reflection



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

If you are walking along a drain, stream or river:

Study and map out the catchment capacity of your drain, stream or river....mark out the areas where there is pollution or water quality issues.

If you are walking along an estuary or beach:

Study and map out the catchment area of the entire estuary/beach....mark out the areas where there is pollution or water quality issues.

If there is major concerns...write to your local council and share your concerns. Write to the Government – with the Oceans conference coming up - place pressure on them to do the right thing.

From your walk, draw or take pictures. Write a poem, short story or reflection on what you discover on your journey.



Prayer

Loving, All Powerful God

Give me eyes to see...not only love and good in the world, but the pain and suffering of all life.

Give me ears to hear... not only the good and joyous sounds of life, but the cries and wail of life in distress.

Give me hands that touch... not only in love and friendship but with compassion and healing,

Give me voice to speak not only the good but to speak out on behalf of those who cannot.

God, give me heart....to respond in love and action to heal our Earth.

Amen

DID YOU KNOW?

A water catchment capacity is the area that drains into a body of water (e.g. drain, stream, river etc.). It covers from the highest point of a geographical aspect to the lowest (imagine rain falling...to what point will it drain to?). As a body of water increases...so does the water catchment capacity associated with it.

For example a small stream may only collect the water draining between a number of hills...a rivers water catchment capacity however includes all the streams flowing into the river as well as catchment area of those streams.

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

Our Dream of the Earth.

What lessons can we pass on to the next generation?

Water and Ocean Reflection Series

Photo: Kristin McDermott

MESSAGE FROM

POPE FRANCIS

'What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?... What need does the earth have of us? It is no longer enough, then, simply to state that we should be concerned for future generations. We need to see that what is at stake is our own dignity. Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us. The issue is one which dramatically affects us, for it has to do with the ultimate meaning of our earthly sojourn.'

Pope Francis, Laudato Si #160



CONNECTIONS AT THE UN

The Sustainable Development Goals are an integrated set of targets with the desire to transform the world so that there is no extreme poverty or hunger.

The success of the sustainable development goals will rely on the collaborative partnership of all stakeholders – at international, national and local levels. From grassroot community groups to the larger national and international groups all working together.

Goal 17.7 outlines the partnerships that are key for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals; this includes "effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships". It is important to form these relationships, learn from each other, and incorporate insights from others in order to make change. Each of us has the capacity to take part in this integral process.

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg17>

TAKE ACTION

- JOIN THE OCEAN ACTION HUB TO ENGAGE IN MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE REGARDING THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING SDG 14 ON OCEANS AND MAKE YOUR OWN CONTRIBUTIONS BASED ON EXPERIENCES. (LINK)
- HOW MIGHT RESTORING, PROTECTING THE WATERWAYS OR WATERSHEDS AND ASSOCIATED MARSHES, ESTUARIES AND SEASIDE HELP YOUR COMMUNITY?

Reflection



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

Study the rubbish you pick up...could any of it be recycled?

Reflect on your personal consumption and waste ... can you cut down on the waste you generate?

**From your walk, draw or take pictures.
Write a poem, short story or reflection on what you discover on your journey.**



Prayer

"God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love for all the creatures of this earth, for not one of them is forgotten in your sight. Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live. The poor and the earth are crying out. O Lord, seize us with your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your Kingdom of justice, peace, love and beauty. Praise be to you! Amen."

Pope Francis, Laudato Si #246

DID YOU KNOW?

Ocean farming (as opposed to mono-culture within the aquaculture industry) has a philosophy based on diversity.

Check out one fisherman's innovative approach in response to climate change and waterway and estuary pollution: <http://grist.org/food/this-ocean-farmer-could-make-you-hopeful-about-the-future-of-the-sea/>

Praying and Working Together...

for our future, for our oceans, for life on Earth.

Water and Ocean Reflection Series

Photo: Kristin McDermott

MESSAGE FROM

POPE FRANCIS

'Let us also mention the system of governance of the oceans. International and regional conventions do exist, but fragmentation and the lack of strict mechanisms of regulation, control and penalization end up undermining these efforts. The growing problem of marine waste and the protection of the open seas represent particular challenges. What is needed, in effect, is an agreement on systems of governance for the whole range of so called "global commons".'

Pope Francis, Laudato Si #174



CONNECTIONS AT THE UN

While the UN Ocean's Conference is from the 5th-9th of June, World Oceans Day is June 8th. The theme for 2017 is 'Our Oceans, Our Future'. World Oceans Day was officially recognized by the United Nations in 2008, yet has been celebrated by many since 1992. Oceans play a significant role for the survival of humanity.

TAKE ACTION

- TUNE INTO THE DISCUSSIONS (LIVE STREAMED) HELD BY THE UN AND YOUR COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVES THROUGH UN WEB TV (LINK). IF YOU MISS A SESSION YOU CAN REFER BACK ON THE WEBSITE.
- READ THE ZERO DRAFT DOCUMENT (CALL FOR ACTION) THAT THE COUNTRY DELEGATES WILL BE DISCUSSING AND/OR WANTING TO MAKE AMENDMENT TO DURING THE CONFERENCE (LINK).
- CALL OR EMAIL YOUR GOVERNMENT WITH PRAISES AND CRITICISMS THROUGHOUT THE OCEANS CONFERENCE.
- EXPLORE THE OCEAN CONFERENCE WEBSITE (LINK)

Reflection



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

Reflect on the journey you have taken over the past 11 weeks.... Have you noticed any change in the environment surrounding your walk? Have you noticed any change in yourself or the people that you have met?

What would you want your local body representatives and national government representatives to do to improve/protect your waterways/coast/ oceans?

From your walk, draw or take pictures. Write a poem, short story or reflection on what you discover on your journey.

Continue to walk and take an interest in your drain, stream, river, estuary or beach environment. Advocate on behalf of the environment that relies on water for survival and health...



Prayer

'A prayer for our earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.'

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si* 246

DID YOU KNOW?

- From a global resource viewpoint, global commons are those areas outside Country State borders...that anybody can have access to. Four internationally recognized global common areas are: the high seas, the atmosphere, Antarctica and outer space.
- Within these global commons are global issues that needs a planetary response to address – air pollution, ocean acidification and climate change.
- Another emerging issue is water and water use. Many waterways and watershed areas cross international boundaries... and the excessive use of water in one country may have detrimental effects to other countries in a region. Concern is growing around the issue of water commodification, where people will have to pay to have water. This becomes more difficult, if a community is in extreme poverty. Water is a human right, which means everyone should have access to water, without having to pay for it.

Concluding Remarks

The twelve-week Water and Ocean Reflection Series is now concluded. I invite you, to continue walking and reflecting along the chosen water source of your 12 weeks of reflection. Your time of reflection has been one that could easily be described as deepening your bioregion relationship. A bioregion is an area defined by its topography and biological, or ecosystem, features. What has been some of the highpoints of your reflection? What has been some of the low points? As you reflect on these past twelve weeks, use this opportunity to revisit topics of interest within the series, as a time for deeper reflection and further study and action.

Some additional resource material you may be interested in reading are:

- Maude Barlow (& Tony Clarke): (2005): **Blue Gold: The Fight to Stop Corporate Theft of the World's Water.**
- Blue Covenant: (2009): **The Global Water Crisis and the Coming Battle for the Right to Water.**
- Blue Future: (2014): **Protecting Water for People and Planet Forever.**
- Vandana Shiva: (2014): **Water Wars: Privatization, Pollution & Profit.**
- Christiana Peppard: (2014) **Just Water: Theology, Ethics, and the Global Water Crisis.**

For those who are comfortable in sharing the fruits of their weekly reflection over this series, or those wanting to further dialogue on the issues surrounding the state of our oceans and waterway, following this reflection process, feel free to contact me through email bridget.crisp@xtra.co.nz .

Many thanks to readers and participants who have sent me thanks over this reflection series time.

The last word go the team in the Mercy Global Action Office at the United Nations...thanks to Sr Angela Reed rsm and Colleen Cloonan (the design and graphics whizz!) who gave their support and encouragement, without which this project would never have got off the ground.

Bridget Crisp rsm



"I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all."

Pope Francis, Laudato Si, #14