

## Water: Our Life, God's Gift

Do you prefer the Tower of Babel or God's Clean Water?

Water is the magic of our life. Often times, we forget how much water can make our life thriving. If there was no water at all, people would be thirsting in a desperate search for water. Water is a vital source for our body. It helps us to live in a normal, healthy, and nourishing environment. People cannot live in good health without water. We think that there are unlimited supplies of water in our world. But there isn't. The *Americans without Water* video tells us that today, more than two million Americans live without running water and basic indoor plumbing. The scarcity of water is one of the biggest problems we are facing today and prompts us to take action to solve the water shortage or at least slow down. As Pope Francis warned in *Laudato Si*, climate change can cause the world to suffer from wildfires, droughts, earthquakes, floods, or cyclones. Those who live or have lived in California may have had such experiences due to such climate change impacting on lacking water. Droughts have become a severe issue in California. It gets rarer for us to have rainy or snowy weather in this state, and many people lost their lives and homes from the unexpected wildfires. One day, I woke up to an orange-flaming sky in the morning. My school canceled the class and we were asked not to open the windows at home because of poor air quality wildfires brought. Sadly, we see more victims from these catastrophes in low-income areas. Although some people may think it as a one-time event or not always happening, it is a real warning of our sick earth, and we should be alarmed. Our mother earth keeps sending us signals through such natural disasters.

Clean water is God's holy spirit. In the Bible, water symbolizes purification, healing, and life. While human's selfishness was constantly developing the world with new technologies, our mother earth became gray, not green, and sick, not healthy. Pope Francis used a metaphor of the *Tower of Babel* to explain that people are building the tower of human's arrogance with the power of bricks. People neglected the great nature created by God and started to threaten the existence of our environment. Water cannot be an exception. It is now getting more deficient and what is worse, it is being polluted by harmful chemicals and toxic waste we dump every day. Water pollution can not only reduce biodiversity but also destroy the ecosystem. Imagine we have no access to water, and people of all ages will have to walk to find water spending the whole day. Imagine also that we have only access to dirty water. It would affect humans, animals, plants, and the environment surrounding us. Polluted water will make us ill and even die. Water contamination may not damage our health immediately but can be harmful after long exposure. Unless we stop worsening our mother earth because of our unlimited desire right now, there would be no bright future to harmonize living things and nature. Like the Tower of Babel, no matter how hard we try, our arrogance and our nonchalant behavior of the earth will never defeat God. Our nature is sacred. That sacred, needs to be brought back.

Now, it is time to think of Saint Francis of Assisi. Saint Francis of Assisi was a man of poverty, a man of peace, and a man who loves and guards creation. He listened to the voice of the poor, the voice of the sick, and the voice of nature. As the seed of nature and love planted by Saint Francis of Assisi is growing in many hearts, it is our responsibility to water the seed and blossom it into healthy green trees. We can save our mother earth, our biodiversity, and our future from the environmental crisis today. It cannot be done without scientists alone, one

individual, or one community. As Pope Francis emphasized, we should alert ourselves to the world climate crisis and put our efforts together like singing in a choir. Every voice and every action will be important to save our mother earth. Always remember that we aren't by ourselves, but we are millions of people, trying to save one world created by God. The last but big question is, "Do you want another Tower of Babel, or do you want Clean Water?" The answer is too obvious, and it is an urgent homework we all have to respond together.