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Clean Water and Laudato Si'

I watched "Americans Without Water" and was shocked to learn that more than 2 million Americans currently live without clean running water. To get any water, they are forced to take buckets to streams, pumps, and random hoses and pipes. And sometimes that water they get isn't even clean. I also learned these people cannot do much about it and that they have to live like this. It's not their fault. They just wish that they could have clean water and it makes them frustrated. The video described how the government knows about this problem but they have little will to fix it and don't care about it. One woman said that she feels like she lives in "a town that time has forgotten." Another person said these communities without water were "invisible" to the government and wealthy people. I was also saddened to learn that Black and Latino Americans are twice as likely to live without running water.

It's hard to imagine my life without clean water. I use water everyday to brush my teeth, wash my hands, fill my bottle for school and sports, and shower. My family also uses water for cooking, to clean fruits and vegetables, and water the plants. My life would be more difficult without clean water. As an American, it's hard to understand how in 2022 that any of my fellow citizens are living without clean water every day. I thought there were countries in Africa that had problems obtaining clean water, but I had no idea people experienced the same problem in Idaho and Delaware. I'm also frustrated and angry that everyone in America doesn't have clean water. Why should one town

have clean water but not the town next door? That's not fair. Everyone pays taxes, so why shouldn't everyone have water? It makes me think that our government doesn't always use tax money for the right reasons. As the wealthiest country in the world, America should be able to provide clean water for all its citizens. It makes me think our government is lazy. I also feel sad for the people who don't have clean water.

What if I was one of the 2 million Americans who lived in an area without safe running water? If I lived in one of these areas, my life would be difficult. First, it would be hard to have to go somewhere almost every day and carry heavy buckets of water back into my house before I could use the water to do basic things like brushing my teeth or washing my hands. Second, even if I could get water, it might not be clean. I would be worried about drinking it or showering in it and getting sick. I would probably get sick once in a while. Third, I would also feel frustrated and angry that I live in the richest country in the world and I don't even have clean water even though I pay taxes like other Americans and even though people in the next town might have plenty of clean water. I would wonder why I was being treated so unfairly and my government did not have the political will or sense of urgency to help people in my town.

I looked up *Laudato Si'* and learned that it is a book written by Pope Francis' where he sent a message to everyone in the world saying we need to do a better job caring for our common home — planet earth. The key idea behind it is that of “integral ecology”, i.e. that people and the planet are part of one family where the Earth is our common home. It invites people to protect God's creation for future generations, to embrace a lifestyle change for their own good, and to take care of people who are poor and more vulnerable.

When I think about Laudato Si as it relates to "Americans Without Water", I understand that there may be people suffering around us in San Francisco that many people don't know about. I can help by spending time in my community helping others, like the elderly or the poor, who may not have clean water or enough food. I can help protect God's earth by not only not littering, but volunteering to help clean up litter. As I get older, I may be able to help by bringing attention to problems in my community that the government doesn't see (or want to see).