

What We Can Do To Help Ourselves and Others

Water is one of many natural resources that we have on our planet. As civilization has widely developed, many of our resources have been taken for granted. Pope Francis has written a letter addressed to everyone, encouraging us to protect the earth. The encyclical letter, *On Care for Our Common Home*, and Catholic Social Teaching both advise people to be grateful for what we have and to not be selfish or greedy and waste our limited resources. I can learn from my Catholic community and share ways of how I and others can preserve water.

Catholic Social Teaching is about building a just society and living holy lives while exposed to modern society. I think that the problem faced when people aren't exposed to clean or safe water relates to the theme of taking care of God's creation and the life and dignity of humans. Caring for God's creation means to show respect for the world and protect the planet and the living creatures on it. The moral standing of protecting what God has generously gifted to us is important in faith and positively affects the outcome of our actions. For example, when prioritizing the protection of our resources and people we do what is best for others and what will help our surroundings. The Catholic Church preaches that human life is sacred, supporting the protection of the environment, but mainly showing the importance of our lives. If the health of humans is at risk, it is important and should be a priority to protect the community and area that the health risk is affecting. If for example, people aren't allowed access to consumable water, that puts them in the inconvenience of needing to travel and collect water which they can then use. Not only is this an inconvenience but allows for opportunities where those people can be exposed to unhealthy bacteria in water.

Pope Francis has written an encyclical letter addressing the need to protect the planet. Earth is God's gift to us and we shouldn't take its beauty. In *Laudato Si* it says "Nature is usually

seen as a system which can be studied, understood and controlled, whereas creation can only be understood as a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father of all, and as a reality illuminated by the love which calls us together into universal communion” (LS 76). It shows that we should look at our world as a gift from God and how it can bring us together as a community. Another quote that also conveys God's creation uniting us is “When we can see God reflected in all that exists, our hearts are moved to praise the Lord for all his creatures and to worship him in union with them” (LS 87). This quote indicates how God is shown in all things living and by taking care of people and nature as a whole we are showing God our care and love for him. Both quotes communicate that our world unites us, and how important it is to protect it.

What I can do to help our world is preserving water and not wasting resources at home, picking up trash at public clean ups or just when I'm on a walk, or simply communicating to others in my neighborhood the effect that ignorance of the problem has and advertise the importance of taking action on it. Although I may not be able to personally do much to assist, I can make others who can be more aware of the problems. I can try my best to personally help in any way I can and encourage others to do the same. In closing, it is important to take care of our world and life, and it is important to remember how people are affected by our actions and how we take care of resources.