

Today is 2022, and our world is deeply rooted in new innovations and technology. Medical care, technology, food and housing has all been advanced thanks to science. As far as we know we are living a better life than our ancestors; but there is something that is unspoken of. The world is facing a water crisis where billions of people are left with no running and safe water. In California there is drought, in Africa there is literally no water (only during the rainy seasons), and in multiple American states there is contaminated water.

From the video *Americans Without Water*, one of the stories that stuck to me was the story about Keystone West Virginia. 73 year old Hattie Avery has lived in Keystone for all her life and she has never seen clean water. The water there is so filthy that people are collecting water from abandoned mines or by the road side. They have to use the water sparingly - sometimes not taking showers for days. Hattie states that water is a right and this can correlate with a quote from Laudato Si: "Fresh drinking water is an issue of primary importance, since it is indispensable for human life and for supporting terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems" (LS 28). Just like what Hattie said, water should be a right; it's implied that humans need water to survive, after all humans are nearly made up of 70% water. The Laudato Si quote emphasizes that you can not just eliminate water from human life. It's a necessity and just as implied in the 25th article of the UDHR (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights) - "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services....". Water is not written in the article but as lawyers would imply texts like these, the standard of living should suggest water. The lack of sufficient drinking water for everyone connects to the CST Life and Dignity of the human person. Everyone is a human being and so everyone deserves to have the basic needs for life. The fact that certain rich areas have abundance of water while others barely have any is unfair. This should not be a problem in 2022.

The responsibility of each person regarding the use of water is to save water and restore it to the planet. We have been given the task by God to protect his creation. So far we are doing very poorly. If we were restoring the healthy clean water that God has bestowed on us, we wouldn't be contaminating it with plastics, garbage, oils and chemicals. Our lack of conciseness has led us to pollute the entire world; and this has gotten us stuck in an endless cycle. The more pollution we create, the more extreme the weather eventually leading to less water or ice. Our responsibility should be cleaning up the ocean and bodies of water, and making sure everyone has equal access to water. Just like what was written in the *Message of His Holiness Pope Francis* on the Occasion of "World Water Day 2019", " Water is an essential good for the balance of ecosystems and the survival of humankind, and it is necessary to manage it and to care for it so that it is not contaminated or lost" (Message Of, 1). We need to preserve the purity of the water so that everyone can benefit from it. Our treatment of our brothers and sisters is again to see that all of them get equal access to clean water, abundant enough that they can wash themselves, drink 8 cups, cook 3 meals a day, and wash their hands multiple times a day everyday. We are all brothers and sisters and we should not be discriminated against just because of geography, location or economic status. Our responsibility is to care for one another.

What I can do personally to help give more people equal access to clean water is by not being selfish and conserving water. A quote from Laudato Si mentions "An integral ecology is also made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness" (LS 230). My small gestures by recycling and conserving water can still make a difference. Conserving water includes not taking lengthy baths or letting the water run as I do the dishes. Making sure that I recycle and compost correctly can lead to cleaner water. My personal reflection on this issue includes sadness and horror as I know that our world is so advanced and yet easily solved problems like this water crisis are still not fixed. I am surprised that people with money who can actually afford making a change are not addressing this problem. However, learning about this issue has empowered me to do more to help conserve water and give water to parts of the world that lack it.

#### Resources:

<https://sfarchdiocese.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Laudato-Si-Quotes.pdf>

[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uC8CmOOZ3o0>

<https://sosresponds.org/blog/human-rights-and-basic-needs/>

[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2019/documents/papa-francesco\\_20190322\\_messaggio-giornatamondiale-acqua.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2019/documents/papa-francesco_20190322_messaggio-giornatamondiale-acqua.html)