

Creation Care

November 2022 Issue 4



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*O God, you are my God,
for you I long;
For you my soul is thirsting.
My body pines for you
like a dry weary land
without water.*

Psalm 63:2,3

Water is a precious gift. Life itself depends upon it. Up to 60% of the human body is composed of water. It's used for growing crops and processing food, for cleansing and recreation. We need water for transportation and many people depend upon the ocean as a source of food. For Catholics it's the sign and symbol of the new life we receive in our baptism. Water is life.

Minnehaha Falls in Minneapolis is dry. The low water levels on the Mississippi are threatening barge traffic. Crop yields are down. The Twin Cities metro area is now in an extreme drought area. It's too soon to tell if this is weather, a temporary situation, or a sign of a change in the climate.

In many parts of the country and world, the situation is much worse. Wildfires rage in the west and people who depend upon the Colorado River for their source of water are in deep trouble. Droughts in African are causing crop failures and famine.

A newsletter for and by people who care about the future of life on the planet and want to do what they can to preserve and protect it.

In Africa, at least 36.1 million people were affected by severe drought in October 2022, including 24.1 million in Ethiopia, 7.8 million in Somalia and 4.2 million in Kenya. Many well digging efforts in the past couple of decades have provided water for Africans, but what happens when the water table is depleted? A lack of water means crop failure and widespread famine.

Water is life.

In Laudato Si, Pope Francis writes:

Water supplies used to be relatively constant, but now in many places demand exceeds the sustainable supply, with dramatic consequences in the short and long term. (28) ...One particular serious problem is the quality of water available to the poor. Every day, unsafe water results in many deaths and the spread of water-related diseases...Underground water sources in many places are threatened by pollution...Our world has a grave social debt to provide clean water and sanitary services among the poor. But water continues to be wasted...This shows that the problem of water is partly an educational and cultural issue, since there is little awareness of the seriousness of such behavior within a context of great inequality. (30)

So what are WE to do? See p. 2 for ideas.

Francis Corner: *from St. Francis*

*Be praised, My Lord,
through Sister Water;
she is very useful, and humble,
and precious, and pure.*

Canticle of the Sun

Contact Mary Higgins at mjgh5174@gmail.com to unsubscribe, contribute an article or comment.

November Eco Tips

41. Nov. 7: REDUCE PLASTICS

EASY: Keep vegetable bags for reuse at grocery.

CHALLENGING: Buy loose products (without plastic wrapping) as much as possible. Reduce frozen food that comes in plastic packaging. Buy fresh when possible.

42. Nov. 14: CLOTHING

EASY: Swap clothing with friends and neighbors!

CHALLENGING: Reduce microfibers from entering waterways and the atmosphere by washing your clothes less often. Spot clean as needed and air dry clothing. Mend and patch to extend the life of clothing.

43. Nov. 21: Thanksgiving GIFT GIVING

EASY: As a gift to the environment...spend one evening this week in candlelight with all of the electric lights off.

CHALLENGING: As a gift to your community, do a family service project together.

44. Nov. 28: SPIRITUALITY

EASY: Pray for nature and for leaders to support environmentally sustainable policies/laws,

CHALLENGING: Talk to your pastor, rabbi, faith leader, etc. about mentioning during a religious service how the climate crisis is a spiritual crisis reflecting we humans putting the planet in danger and jeopardizing future generations.

Tips for Conserving Water (Information provided by the EPA)

While it may seem as though we have plenty of water in Minnesota, we don't know what the future will bring. Learning to conserve water will help us to remember those in the world for whom clean water is in short supply.

- Don't let the water run while shaving or brushing teeth.
- Take short showers instead of tub baths. Turn off the water flow while soaping or shampooing.
- If you must use a tub, close the drain before turning on the water and fill the tub only half full. Bathe small children together.
- Don't pour water down the drain when there may be another use for it - such as watering a plant or garden.
- Keep drinking water in the refrigerator instead of letting the faucet run until the water is cool.
- Wash fruits and vegetables in a basin. Use a vegetable brush.
- Don't use water to defrost frozen foods: thaw in the refrigerator overnight.
- Use a dishpan for washing and rinsing dishes.
- Scrape, rather than rinse, dishes before loading into the dishwasher.
- Add food wastes to your compost pile instead of using the garbage disposal
- Operate the dishwasher only when completely full.
- Use the appropriate water level or load size selection on the washing machine.
- Sweep driveways, sidewalks and steps rather than hosing off.
- Wash the car with water from a bucket, or consider using a commercial car wash that recycles water.
- When using a hose, control the flow with an automatic shut-off nozzle.
- Avoid purchasing recreational water toys that require a constant stream of water.
- Raise your lawn mower cutting height - longer grass blades help shade each other, cut down on evaporation, and inhibit weed growth.
- Minimize or eliminate fertilizing which requires additional watering, and promotes new growth which will also need additional watering.