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World Oceans Day 2020

Theme: Innovation for a Sustainable Ocean

Introduction: Leader

Pope Francis reminds us in *Laudato Si'* of the challenge given us in the Earth Charter which followed the Earth Summit in Rio. Pope Francis says: "Here, I would echo that courageous challenge: 'As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning...Let ours be a time remembered for the wakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.'"⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ *Laudato Si'* # 207

Laudato Si' is not only a prophetic call to conversion but also an indictment of the destructiveness of our technologically aggressive, neo-colonial consumer society which is rapidly polluting and destroying the earth and the waters of the earth.

Pope Francis reminds us, in # 48, that: "The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation. In fact, deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet..."

Some of the ways we humans are doing incredible, and mostly invisible, damage to the oceans are through huge fishing factory-ships, over-fishing, pollution, oil spills and the ever-increasing mass of our discarded plastics. We are also putting at risk the people living in island and low-lying countries, many of whom depend on ocean-life for their food.

Today, we celebrate the gift of oceanic life hoping to protect it and increase its sustainability, at the same time as we lament the ever-increasing harm we are doing to it.

Opening Prayer: All

God of the Seas and the Skies, God of Mercy and Compassion, hear our prayer as we give you thanks for the gifts of the ocean: beauty, food, power, renewed life for our planet. We seek wisdom to care for all waters, including the oceans, so that their gift of life will be here for future generations. Grant us the grace of repentance for the harm humanity has done. Grant us conversion that we might find life-protecting ways to encounter the life of the oceans.

Amen

First Reading:

In Chapter One of Laudato Si', in addition to speaking of the current issues affecting the blue planet and our common home, also known as our mother earth, Pope Francis says:

"Oceans not only contain the bulk of our planet's water supply, but also most of the immense variety of living creatures, many of them still unknown to us and threatened for various reasons. What is more, marine life in rivers, lakes, seas and oceans, which feeds a great part of the world's population, is affected by uncontrolled fishing, leading to a drastic depletion of certain species. Selective forms of fishing which discard much of what they collect continue unabated. Particularly threatened are marine organisms which we tend to overlook, like some forms of plankton; they represent a significant element in the ocean food chain, and species used for our food ultimately depend on them." LS #41

Did you Know?

Canada proposed setting a World Ocean Day during the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio.

The first UN designated World Oceans Day was June 8, 2008, so-designated by the UN.

The www.unworldoceansday.org website indicates that this day is "for celebrating the role of oceans in our everyday life and inspiring action to protect the ocean and sustainably use marine resources."

Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans sets four goals for World Oceans Day:

- **"Change attitudes**— to think about what oceans mean to each of us and what oceans have to offer.
- **Learn**— discover the wealth of diverse and beautiful creatures and habitats found in the oceans, and how our actions affect them.
- **Change your ways** – become a caretaker of our oceans, helping to protect and conserve them for our future.
- **Celebrate** – organize or participate in ocean events, whether you live inland or on the coast." www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/oceans/.html



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Second Reading: from Dr. Sylvia Earle

"Everybody has the capacity to do something! Even if you never have the chance to see or touch the ocean, the ocean touches you with every breath you take, every drop of water you drink, every bite you consume. Everyone, everywhere is inextricably connected to and utterly dependent upon the existence of the sea. Human beings are sea creatures, dependent on the oceans just as much as whales, herring or coral reef". "Sylvia Earle." AZQuotes.com. Wind and Fly LTD, 2020. 15 May 2020. https://www.azquotes.com/author/4303-Sylvia_Earle

Reading from the Gospel of John: John 10:10

"I came that they might have life and have it to the full."

Leader: Ponder this scripture verse for a moment.

Psalm Response: Psalm 104 (adapted)

All: My soul, bless the Life-Giving God.

O Gifting One, how great you are!

Left Side: Gifting God, what variety you have created,

Arranging everything so wisely!

R. All: My soul, bless the Life-Giving God.

O Holy One, how great you are!

Right Side: Earth is completely full of the things you have made:

Among them vast expanse of ocean,

Teeming with countless creatures, creatures large and small,

With the ships going to and fro

And Leviathan whom you made to amuse you.

R. All: My soul, bless the Life-Giving God.

O Life-Giving One, how great you are!

Reflection: Leader

We naturally think of Jesus' promise of abundant life in reference to humans. But Paul tells us that all creation is groaning for salvation. Take a few moments to think about Jesus' message in relation to every form of life in the oceans of the world. They also long and struggle for life

to the fullest. Will we, by our daily choices, help them find that life or will we join in the thoughtless destruction of that life?

Silent Reflection:

What attitudes do I need to change to be a protector of ocean life?

What am I willing to do in order to learn more about the oceans?

What concrete action(s) can I take, keeping in mind that what I do to protect and preserve any water, will also protect the oceans?

Post in your room an ocean picture; or write a poem, a verse, a prayer in gratitude for the oceans. Commit yourself to one action to protect the oceans.

Closing Prayer:

We give thanks Creator God for the gifts of the oceans and seas – their beauty, wonder, strength and nourishment. We commit, on this World Oceans Day, to protect your gift of the Oceans by which we in Canada are surrounded on three coasts. Let us always remember that each part of creation and its whole reflects you. (credit M. Rowell, C.Carbotte, 2018 Prayer)



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