



PRAYERFUL REFLECTION ON THE
UN Sustainable Development Goal 14:



Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Let the sea and all it holds thunder praise...at the presence of the Lord.

Ps.96:11,13

We are called to awaken to the Spirit of God present and active in all that exists to a spirituality of being in communion, and to participate in the universal mission of Jesus Christ.

Our Way of Life (C3).

The oceans are described as the womb of life, as the vital blue heart of the planet. All life begins in the oceans, our life-support system. The oceans, our common home to about 97% of life, provide water for all creatures, generate about half the oxygen we need, absorb about 30% of the carbon dioxide we humans produce, and forms our weather and climate. Yet, unfortunately, we treat the oceans, lakes and rivers abominably, causing the UN to declare SDG14 which reads: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

The Impact of Climate Change on the World's Marine Ecosystems

Pope Francis' *Laudato Si* is a wake-up call for all humanity to serve as responsible stewards not just of our lands and atmosphere, but of our vast blue realm as well.

“Today, however, we have to realize that a social approach; it must integrate questions to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of



true ecological approach always becomes a of justice in debates on the environment, so as the poor.” (49)

Ocean-bound water pollution is a serious threat to life. Industrial waste, detergents and chemical products, commonly used, pour into our oceans, lakes and rivers. (30, 174)

Nothing is ever isolated. Protection of vulnerable species must include the unborn, endangered animals and the exploited. (91, 120)

Rising sea levels can create extremely serious situations, leaving people faced with the likelihood of becoming the world's first climate refugees. (24)

The melting in the polar ice caps and in high altitude plains can lead to the dangerous release of methane gas, while the decomposition of frozen organic material can further increase the emission of carbon dioxide. (24)

Carbon dioxide pollution increases the acidification of the oceans and compromises the marine food chain. If present trends continue, this century may well witness ... an unprecedented destruction of ecosystems, with serious consequences for all of us. (24)

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. (40)

In tropical and subtropical seas, we find coral reefs ... that shelter approximately a million species, including fish, crabs, mollusks, sponges and algae. The disappearance of ecosystems sustained by mangrove swamps is a source of serious concern. (41, 39)

The livelihoods of around 3 billion people around the world depend on marine and coastal resources.

*Ban Ki-moon
UN Secretary General:*

Scientists are telling us that we are pushing our ocean system to the point of collapse and without proper governance, we are putting food security, global prosperity and our own health and livelihoods at risk.

60% of the world's major marine ecosystems — that sustain the world's populations — have been significantly degraded or are unsustainably used.

Responsible Stewards:

- No one is without power. Everyone can do something. We have the duty to save ourselves and the world with thoughtful choices and new awareness.
 - Our call is to regain the conviction that we need each other and that social love is the key to authentic development.
 - The fundamental virtue is hope. The universe is still coming into being.
- *What thoughts and feelings arise as you hear the concerns of Pope Francis in his 'wake-up call' to all of us?*
- *What do I dream about the future so that people, especially the poor, do not suffer?*
- *Can we think of a small change of mindset needed to protect our planet and oceans?*



We turn to God in Prayer.

O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

Pope Francis

Let us join hands and hearts in protecting the vital blue heart of the planet.

Things we can do:

You may log on to: www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/takeaction

<http://ocean.nationalgeographic.com/ocean/take-action/10-things-you-can-do-to-save-the-ocean/>

<https://www.nrdc.org/stories/10-ways-reduce-plastic-pollution>

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