

### Laudato Si': A Letter From Pope Francis

God created us so we could be loving to each other. We were created to show our love for God and for his creation. And, yet, we don't do that. We treat others like they are lower than us. Human life is sacred and we can't treat them like they are dirt. Many humans are facing problems today that some people don't care about. Pope Francis explains that we are building a tower of arrogance. If a slave who is building a tower drops the brick he is holding to add to the tower, he is brutally punished. But if he is the one that falls off the tower, then no one cares. He is just replaced with another slave. We cannot keep adding bricks to the Tower of Arrogance. One problem that people are facing today is water. A problem that we thought was long behind us. Some people don't have running water, and some do have running water, but it isn't clean. And here we are, adding another brick to the tower of arrogance. No one is doing anything about this problem. No one is helping them.

What if we were the ones that were living like this? What if we turned on the faucet and nothing came out? Or the stuff that came out wasn't clear and clean, but brown and dirty? Then maybe we would finally realize how hard it is to have such a terrible problem and have no one help you. If I had to live like this, then life would be so, so hard. Every day when you come home from work or school, you probably take a shower or wash your hands. Or maybe you come home and you're thirsty, so you get some water. If I lived like this, then when I would come home, I'd have to wait to wash my hands and take a shower. I'd have to wait for my dad or mom to come home with the water supply. Then I could finally drink or take a shower. It would be terrible. Or maybe I would have to wait for my mom to come back home from the store with a box of plastic water bottles that would last us a month. Or barrels of clean water that would last us a week, then on a Monday, my parents would have to drive back to the place where we get our water supply and refill the barrels, then come home with our only chance of having our hands clean and staying healthy. Without clean water coming out of the sink, I wouldn't be very healthy. We all know that washing our hands frequently is a defense against COVID, but what if we didn't have water to wash our hands? Or the water isn't clean? What if my water had viruses that could make me very ill? Or maybe I would get COVID, and I couldn't wash my hands? The water would be too dirty to use, so we would have

to go to a place to get our water supply. You know how in stories, people have to go to a well to get water? Well, some towns actually have to deal with that! What if, every night, I had to wait for my mother to come home with water so I could wash my hands? Then healing would take a long time. Or, worse, what if the virus gets stronger, and I don't have enough water? I could die, just because no one cares.

Water is a right. There is no one less than us, no one higher than us. God made us equally, and we aren't defined by how much money we have, or how we live. Water isn't just anything. It's a very important resource. It's more important than gold. The rich and the poor have equal dignity. There is no, "That person is just poor, ignore them." We are really all the same. God made us all. He made each person, so every life is important and should be protected. God wants us to help make sure everyone is safe and healthy and can have a good life. He made everyone, so we are all brothers and sisters. Instead of adding bricks to the Tower of Arrogance, demolish it. We need to care about others and we need to help them. If they can't solve their problems, help them solve them. God made the environment, and we need to work together to take care of it. Happiness doesn't come from adding bricks to the Tower and being mean. It comes from helping others. If people keep living like this, it will affect everyone's future. We need to think about the environment and others. And with each step of kindness we take, we make the world the way God meant it to be.