

## Laudato Si - Essay Contest

*Americans Without Water* highlights the many victims of the clean water crisis in America. Over 2 million people in the United States don't have access to clean water. One of the themes of Catholic Social Teaching is the Life and Dignity of the Human Person. It teaches us that all human life is precious. Without clean drinking water, sacred human life cannot be protected, and threatens the life and dignity of the human person. We see another connection in the video that points toward the Call to Family, Community, and Participation. One woman who had a young child did everything so they could have clean water. She had to find a small trickle of water from an abandoned mineshaft and collect it every few weeks.

Each one of these stories highlights the struggles of poorer, less fortunate people with contaminated water to no water. The Laudato Si states, "One particularly 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, including those caused by microorganisms and chemical substances." (LS 29) If the people in this story did not go out of their way to collect clean water, they would not be able to survive. Much of the water that was there in the tanks was contaminated and tested positive for harmful chemicals. The situations of the less fortunate people in the video relate to the Laudato Si in various ways. Another example is, "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) This quote shows how important not just clean water is but purified clean drinking water. It is the basis for all human life and without it, we could not live.

The Laudato Si teaches us many things. It teaches us the importance of fresh drinking water. It teaches us the struggle for poorer people to have safe, clean water. But most importantly for us, it teaches us how to help. Although it doesn't seem like you are making a difference at first, every little act of water conservation helps. It is important to remember how fortunate we are to have running water that is clean enough to drink. There are many things I can do to help conserve water. First, I can remember to turn the water off when brushing my teeth. This is important as it wastes a lot of water when you are not even using it. Second, I can take much shorter showers. Realistically, it only takes me 5 minutes to shower. However, if I stay in the shower unnecessarily long I am wasting a lot of water. Another way I can conserve water is by reusing unfinished water for plants. This is a great way to water plants and find extra use for leftover water instead of throwing it out. One last great way to save water is to turn off the water when scrubbing dishes. The water only needs to be on when rinsing.

By using the Laudato Si, I can understand the importance of conserving water. I can be informed of the water crisis in poorer areas, including America. I realize the importance of caring for nature and much more.