



## Catholic Social Teaching Quote



"As a gift from God, water is a vital element essential to survival; thus, everyone has a right to it. Satisfying the needs of all, especially of those who live in poverty, must guide the use of water and the services connected with it."

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, #484

### Related Catholic Writings & Resources:

- [The Columbia River Watershed](#): Caring for Creation and the Common Good
- [Renewing the Earth](#)



"The fundamental relationship between humanity and nature is one of caring for creation." *Renewing the Earth*, 1991

## Reflections on Good Stewardship

Christian stewardship is not something static. It is a way of life, a specific lifestyle which is faithful to God's call to care for all of His creation with love and respect.

In Genesis, we see that all of God's creation was formed from His love, and all that God created is good. Man and woman are the apex of God's creation here on earth. Adam was appointed steward of God's gifts. Adam was called to care for-- with love and respect—all the wonderful, beautiful and good things of creation as his Creator does. A steward is one "entrusted with responsible management of all that God has given to humanity, including God's plan of salvation, the divine economy."

The practice of Christian stewardship essentially includes concern for the common good. Dominion over the earth necessarily requires that we have in mind the good and welfare of all human beings, not just our own interests. Thus all personal, social and political decisions on the use of the goods of the earth must be morally accountable to God and God's reign. Indeed, even the "most simple choices regarding the environment must be properly ordered to the truth about man [woman] and the world that is his [her] home."<sup>1</sup>

1. Cf. Action Institute, *Environmental Stewardship in the Judeo-Christian Tradition*. Grand Rapids, 2007.

## Water Stewardship—Self Assessment

Below are some questions adapted from [Caring For God's Creation](#) to help you assess your knowledge and use of the water supply and find ways to use this resource more wisely. These questions can be used individually or in community. Try doing the assessment now and again in a month and see what progress you make!

Yes No

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do I know where our water comes from?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do I know whether that source area is under stress from development or industrial and human waste, pesticides, herbicides, or fertilizers? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do I honor the real Source—our Creator- who "made springs flow into channels that wind among the mountains" (Psalm 104:10)                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do I leave the water running when I brush my teeth, wash my dishes, or wash my car?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do I have water-saving (low-flow) showerheads and low-flow aerators on my faucets?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do I have a space occupier in the toilet tank, if I have a 3-gallon, older model?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do I do laundry only when I have a full load?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | If I have a dishwasher, do I run it when it is <u>not</u> full of dishes?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do I use phosphate-free dishwasher detergent?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do I water my lawn?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do I collect rainwater and/or dish rinse water that I can use for watering the garden?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do I have any leaky pipes or faucets?  |

How long does it take for me to take a shower?  
\_\_\_\_\_ minutes.

### Questions for Reflection and Discussion

How might my attitude toward water use change if I had to draw water from a well or a pond and carry it to my home each day (which millions of people must do)?

Based on my self-assessment, what habits can I change to reflect a greater respect for the waters God created?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What can we do in our parish communities or schools to encourage more water conservation?

Who has the responsibility for the use and protection of rivers that run through more than one city, state, or country? Is justice connected to the answer to this question?

## Impact of Water Scarcity on Women

Poor access to water translates into lack of access to educational and economic opportunity, especially for women and girls. Millions of women spend hours each day collecting water for their families, which interferes with their education and job possibilities. Also, the lack of water and adequate sanitation in schools is one of the major reasons that girls drop out.

Summary: Human Development Report 2006, p.17, 37

## Sanitation and Its Impact

- 2.5 billion people don't have access to basic sanitation.
- Diarrhea is the leading cause of illness and death in the world. 88% of these deaths result from a lack of sanitation facilities and unsafe drinking water.
- Every 20 seconds, a child dies as a result of poor sanitation. That is 1.5 million children each year.
- Each year, 443 million school days are lost because of water-related illnesses. Source: Human Development Report 2006
- Each day, 2 million tons of human waste are disposed of in water courses.
- In Sub-Saharan Africa, 12% of the health budget is used to treat diarrhea.

Source: [www.unwater.org](http://www.unwater.org)

## Water Access & Poverty: The Poor Pay More

- Almost 2/3 of people who do not have access to clean water survive on less than \$2 a day.
- Poor people living in slums in Jakarta, Manila and Nairobi pay 5–10 times more per liter of water than wealthy people living in the same city.
- Although getting water from a utility is cheaper than from an intermediary, many poor households cannot afford the utility connection fee. For instance, in Manila, for the poorest 20% of households, the cost of connecting to the utility represents about 3 months' income.
- The poorest 20% of households in El Salvador, Jamaica and Nicaragua spend on average more than 10% of their household income on water. In the United Kingdom, a 3% threshold is seen as an indicator of hardship.

Source: [Summary: Human Development Report 2006](#)

More Water Resources:

- <http://www.unwater.org>
- [Physical & Economic Water Scarcity Map](#)

## The Water Supply

97.5% of the water in the world is salt water. Of the 2.5% freshwater, 70% is located in ice and snow cover in mountainous regions, 30% is groundwater and .3% is freshwater lakes and rivers (numbers do not add to 100% because of rounding).

## JPIC Update:

The MSC dedicated the June 2008 JPIC Corner to raising awareness of torture. Recent updates include President Obama signing three executive orders on January 23, 2009, closing the facility at Guantanamo Bay, ending CIA secret prisons, and requiring all interrogations to follow the noncoercive methods of the Army Field Manual.

## Tell us what you think!

What are some ways you've begun to use water more responsibly? How are you celebrating World Water Day?



We'd love to hear from you! Drop us a line at [jplic@misacor-usa.org](mailto:jplic@misacor-usa.org).

## March 22 is World Water Day

### 3 Ways to Make a Difference This Month

Take the Water Stewardship Assessment. See page 2 or download the separate file [here](#). Take the assessment yourself or make it a family event or parish group activity. Find three ways you can waste less water and pick one or two for this month.

Spread the word. Encourage others to learn more about our water supply and to get involved. Ask your pastor or principal if you can post the World Water Day Flyer at the back of church, in the parish center or at school. Download the flyer at [www.misacor-usa.org/jpicdocs](http://www.misacor-usa.org/jpicdocs).

Play a Game. Test your geography skills at [www.freepoverty.com](http://www.freepoverty.com) and cups of water will be donated based on the accuracy of your answers. Play yourself or challenge your friends to see who can have the most cups of water donated in a single game.

Find more ideas at [www.unwater.org/worldwaterday](http://www.unwater.org/worldwaterday).



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