



Photo by Jenniter Hardy/CRS

YOUTH ACTS: WATER

empowering young people to act in solidarity with our sisters and brothers around the world

THE ISSUE:

Today, 750 million people - 1 in 9 - lack access to safe water. More than three times as many, 2.5 billion people - 1 in 3 - don't have access to improved sanitation.

World Health Organization and UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP). (2014). Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation, 2014 Update.

THE CHURCH SAYS:

"Insofar as a gift of God, water is a vital instrument, indispensable for survival and, moreover, a right of all."

John Paul II, Message to Brazil's 2004 Fraternity Campaign

as individuals & families, we can...

Pray in the shower with gratitude!

Water is essential to life, but almost 1 billion people don't have access to water. Prayerfully reflect on how water gives life and how we, as a Catholic community, have the opportunity to live out the Gospel call to uphold the dignity of each human person.



Photo by Mark Metzger/CRS

Kick the water-bottle habit... and use personal water bottles!

Bottled water is much more expensive than tap water. Drinking 64 ounces of water a day from bottled water would cost over \$1000 a year, from the tap costs less than 50 cents for the whole year!

Only 20% of water bottles are recycled in the U.S. Plastic water bottles fill our landfills and often end up in water systems, from streams to oceans!

It takes about 1.5 gallons of water to manufacture a single plastic bottle (plastic bottles are always made from new plastic!)

Use a personal water bottle and encourage your friends and family to do the same!

Conserve water at home... every drop counts!

- ❖ Take shorter showers. (Half of all water use inside a home takes place in the bathroom!)
- ❖ Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth or shaving and save up to 200 gallons of water per month.
- ❖ Use a dishwasher! If you must wash-by-hand, fill the sink or washing tub rather than running the faucet continuously. (Hand-washing can use 20 gallons of water whereas an energy-efficient dishwasher uses as little as 4.5 gallons.)
- ❖ Encourage your family to select water-efficient products that help save the environment and help you save money. Look for products bearing the WaterSense label.
- ❖ Wash fruits and vegetable in a large bowl instead of using your faucet as a power-washer.
- ❖ Use excess water from cooking, your washer, or dehumidifier to water your indoor and outdoor plants. For outdoor watering, install a rain-barrel to capture rainwater draining from your roof.
- ❖ Mulch well and create a water-smart landscape outside using regionally appropriate, low water-using, and native plants.

Calculate your personal “water footprints”!

Go online and access a “water footprint calculate” to estimate your daily water usage from the tap as well as the “virtual water” that goes into producing your food, clothing, gadgets, and more.

Eat Lower on the Food Chain!

The food we eat accounts for more than 2/3 of our total water footprint, mostly because a huge amount of “virtual water” is needed to produce that food. For instance, a single pound of beef takes, on average, 1800 gallons of water to produce. Animal products - like meat and dairy - and processed foods - like soda and chips - require far greater amounts of water to produce than do vegetables and grains. Consider “going vegetarian” one day a week on “meatless Mondays”. When grocery shopping, try to buy more whole foods like vegetables

that are in season, and a variety of grains, legumes, and seeds. Buy local and from sustainable farms. If possible, grow your own food.

Buy Only What You Need!

Every year, Americans waste about 40 percent of our total food supply, which also wastes 25 percent of all freshwater consumed annually. Plan ahead and only shop for what you need. Eat all leftovers. Compost scraps.

Recycle! Print Less! Go Paperless!

Saving paper, plastic, aluminum, and glass equals saving water!

Advocate for the full implementation of the Water for the World Act (2014)!

Go online and join Catholics Confront Global Poverty (CCGP) - and, with a click of a button- urge our nation's leaders to defend the life and dignity of people living in poverty throughout the world! Through CCGP, you can help ensure US support goes where it is needed most- including to the 2.5 billion people who do not have access to a toilet and to the 750 million without safe drinking water!

Resist the corporate control and privatization of water!

Multinational corporations are seizing control of public water resources and prioritizing profits over the needs of communities. Seek to promote, protect, and ensure public funding for our public water systems and challenge the misleading marketing of the bottled-water industry. Learn more and take action with resources online.

GIVE the Gift of Clean Water!

Donate to Catholic Relief Services to improve lives around the world! CRS has more than 80 water and sanitation projects in 30 countries- helping people develop, protect, manage and improve sources of clean water for drinking, cooking, washing, caring for their livestock, and irrigating their fields.

For more of these stunning facts and helpful tips on water conservation, visit the websites of the US Environmental Protection Agency and Grace Communications Foundation.

as a community, make an impact...

Create a Catholics Confront Global Poverty Sign-Up Drive!

Educate your community about our nation's urgent obligation to respond to those that suffer from the global water, sanitation, and hygiene crisis. Create a CCGP sign-up drive in your community using the online resources. Together, urge our nation's leaders to fully implement U.S. policies that promote justice, peace and prosperity for impoverished people and protect natural resources. (confrontglobalpoverty.org/get-involved/action-center)

SPREAD THE WORD!

TWEET

Tweet @CatholicRelief to let us know what you're doing!

SHARE

Post about the issues you care about:

Too often, extraction of natural resources in the developing world leads to conflict and deeper poverty. Protect families, improve lives and serve God's creation. STAND WITH THE POOREST at confrontglobalpoverty.org

Observe World Water Day (March 22)

Guide other young people toward creating a World Water Day awareness campaign that includes bulletin/ school announcements, education booths, speakers, prayer services, and suggested action steps for personal and communal actions for conservation and activism. Consult the Catholic Relief Services, United Nations, and WaterAid websites for more ideas and resources.

www.unwater.org/worldwaterday

www.wateraid.org/us/get-involved/world-water-day/

Create a Water Conservation PLEDGE for your school or parish!

Host a speaker or a movie screening on water scarcity around the world. Create a pledge- with a water conservation/ water-bottle commitment statement and sign-ups. Using online resources, create a hand-out to help your community calculate their personal “Water Footprint”. Create and hang posters near water fountains about the safety, cost savings, and environmental benefits of drinking from the tap and conserving water at home! Purchase water bottles and host a water-bottle-decorating-party to individualize them.

Create service-learning opportunities for your school!

H2O for Life seeks to raise awareness about the global water crisis while providing funds for water, sanitation, and hygiene education for partner schools in developing countries. Learn how your school can get involved.

h2oforlifeschools.org



Photo by Michael Stulman/CRS

Take the H2O Challenge from the H2O Project!

Make non-bottled water your only beverage for two weeks. Donate the money you would have spent on other drinks to Catholic Relief Services. Wristbands, brochures, scorecards, videos, handouts, and other resources are available from the H2O Project at

theh2oproject.org

As a community, GIVE the Gift of Clean Water!

Combined with community education and advocacy, consider creating a fun fundraising campaign to donate money to Catholic Relief Services to improve lives around the world! CRS has more than 80 water and sanitation projects in 30 countries- helping people develop, protect, manage and improve sources of clean water for drinking, cooking, washing, caring for their livestock, and irrigating their fields. With \$30, build a hand-washing station to protect children from diseases like diarrhea, cholera, and typhoid. With \$160, train a water pump mechanic to keep clean water flowing. With \$420, build a community latrine to improve sanitation and significantly reduce the risk of disease. For more information and resources, visit CRS's gift.crs.org.

For Prayer and Learning resources, visit the CRS Education website at education.crs.org