



STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH *All of God's Creation*

Water Is Life

“There is immense power in the availability of clean water. It saves lives, stops the spread of disease, grows food, and so much more....”

This month marks 11 years of conflict in Syria, and one thing is certain: whether directly or indirectly, water crises are often a consequence of war. At this moment, Ukrainians are facing water shortages, as shelling damages water treatment facilities and pipelines, and power cuts mean water pumps no longer function. According to the UN, some 12 million people in Ukraine may need WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) services in the coming year.

This is why *Mercy Corps* works to ensure that people everywhere have access to clean and safe water. Last year alone, their WASH programs reached more than 13 million people across the globe.... And yet, while the international community recognizes WASH as a human right, it is out of reach for so many. Did you know 1 in 3 people do not have access to drinking water? Two billion people are without toilets or latrines? And 2 in 5 people lack access to basic hand-washing facilities?” (*Mercy Corps Newsletter*, March 22, 2022)

“Across the world’s least-developed countries, 50 percent of health care facilities lack water on site and 63 percent do not have adequate toilets, according to a report by the World Health Organization and UNICEF in 2020.” (*America*, March 22, 2022)

When you sign the *Mercy Corps* pledge for clean water, you are committing your support for humanitarian teams around the world working to bring safe water to communities in crisis.

Pope Francis recently addressed an organization of volunteers called *I was thirsty* which promotes access to clean drinking water and “urged nations to put aside conflict over resources and instead join forces to confront universal problems. He began by noting that access to water, especially clean drinking water, is ‘a priority issue for the life of the planet and for peace among peoples.’” (*Vatican News*, March 21, 2022)

While organizations such as *Mercy Corps* and *I was thirsty* are essential to ensuring access to clean water, we must also protect water sources such as groundwater which “can be polluted by landfills, septic tanks, leaky underground gas tanks, and overuse of fertilizers and pesticides.... What we need now to prevent groundwater pollution in homes and cities is to ensure proper disposal of waste and chemicals, promote aquifer recharge interventions at scale, and support efforts to raise awareness such as the [Global Groundwater Sustainability Call to Action](#)....” (World Wildlife Fund, March 22, 2022)

“Thirst does not hurt when there is plenty of water to drink. But we know that if it is lacking, and lacking for a long time, thirst can become unbearable. Life on Earth depends on water; we humans do too. We all need sister water to live!” (*Vatican News*, March 21, 2022)