

WORLD WATER DAY REMINDS US THAT WATER IS ESSENTIAL FOR ALL LIFE

(World Water Day—March 22, 2012)

By Bishop Michael Pfeifer, OMI

A basic essential element to maintain all life on planet Earth is water. Without water we all die. The need for life-giving water has captured the attention of all of us in West Texas and the entire state as we have been experiencing the driest year for Texas in recorded history. From the death we see around us in nature and the extremely low water levels in bodies of water, we are reminded that indeed water is essential for a life.

To feature the importance of water for maintaining life, we all need to give much more importance to the International World Water Day, which is held annually on March 22nd. This day focuses our attention on the importance of freshwater and advocating for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. This international day to celebrate freshwater, was recommended at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The United Nations General Assembly responded by designating March 22, 1993 as their first World Water Day.

Each year World Water Day highlights a specific aspect of freshwater. This year's World Water Day in 2012 is intended to draw international, national and local attention to the relationship between water and food security. Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. And, water is one of the most fundamental input factors for food production. Without water we all die.

There are 7 billion people to feed on the planet today, and another 2 billion are expected to join by 2050. Statistics say that each of us drink from 2-4 liters of water everyday, however, most of the water we drink is embedded in the food we eat.

When a billion people in the world are living in chronic hunger and worldwide there is a scarcity of water, and resources are declining right here in Texas, we cannot pretend the problem is elsewhere. Coping with population growth and insuring access to nutritious food to everyone calls for a series of action we can all help with:

- Consume less water-intensive products;
- Reduce the food wastage—30% of the food produced worldwide is never eaten and the water used to produce it is forever lost
- Produce more food of better quality, much less water

Questions we all need to ask ourselves are: Do we know how much water we actually consume and use everyday? How can we change our diet and reduce our water input? What can we do to preserve and keep clean our present sources of water? How can we work together to search for new water sources, and look at neighborly ways of sharing water?

The availability and quality of water is increasingly under strain. Even if conditions were to remain constant for the foreseeable future, much of the world would find itself in a state of water-related crisis. To make matters worse, populations are growing most rapidly in those areas where water is already in scarce supply.

WATER! It is essential for life and all of us must take much more responsibility for using this wonderful God-given gift, preserving and working together to find new sources of water that are necessary for all life on planet Earth.

World Water Day calls us to a new awareness about sustaining healthy ecosystems and human well-being through addressing the increasing water quality challenges in water management and to raise the profile of water quality by encouraging governments, organizations and individuals around the world, beginning at the local level and in our country, to actively engage in proactively addressing water quality. How? Through pollution prevention, cleanup, more responsible use of water and working together to find and share new sources of the essential for life—WATER.

A personal dream for World Water Day! I would hope that World Water Day, and the suffering we have all experienced because of the extreme ongoing drought, would be the occasion for our great country to begin to develop a nation-wide master plan of how we can cooperate and share together a national water system that would basically assure freshwater for all people, at all times for all parts of our great country. There is more than sufficient freshwater in our country to make this happen. Already there are some regional efforts in this regard, but it is obviously becoming more urgent that we develop a national system of sharing freshwater with all parts of the country and collecting so much good water that is wasted every year especially through flooding in many parts of the country. Our country has met the challenge of uniting our nation together through transportation, travel, communication, sharing of fuel and energy of various sorts, and bringing our economy and disaster resources together. Now is the time to create a national water system to share the abundant freshwater that we have in various parts of the country and

of capturing the huge amounts of water that is wasted through generous rainfall and flooding. This would require federal and state cooperation and yes, it would be costly, but in the long run it would more than pay for itself and create scores of thousands of new jobs. Think of the billions we have lost just this year due to the drought. Hopefully many will pick up on this dream and make it come true.

Sincerely in Christ,

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