

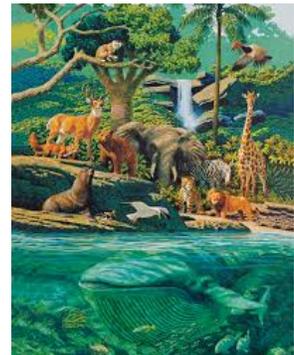
**Mother Earth is Asking Us for Help**  
*Protecting Biodiversity in Climate Crisis*  
*Earth Day 2019 Theme: Protect All Species*

**What is the Issue?**

- We no longer perceive creation as brother and sister and, therefore, we rarely look at the effects of our actions on creation. We no longer perceive creation as a gift from God. We have lost an awareness of the sacredness of all things.
- Despite the risks, 18 billion items of plastic waste end up in our oceans every year. Polystyrene foam—what most of us call Styrofoam—is one of the worst forms of plastic pollution. It never fully degrades, leaving behind tiny particles that remain in the environment for centuries.
- For a bird, fish, or turtle, these small pieces of plastic are easily mistaken for food. When ingested, this waste can block animals' digestive systems leading to death by starvation. If it occurs often enough we may even lose that species.
- We know the plastic waste in our oceans, rivers, and lakes injures or kills wildlife. Millions of marine animals die each year from plastic waste, including starving to death from indigestible micro plastic in their system.
- On Earth Day this year, we recognize together that, as a species, human beings do not recognize the importance and the beauty of biodiversity in our world. We don't recognize that every loss of a species on Mother Earth negatively effects our climate in some way. We often don't see the connections. Brian Swimm teaches us that "Every time we lose a species, we lose a face of God."

**Wisdom to consider on this issue:**

- *If you would learn more, ask the cattle; see information from the birds of the air. The creeping things of earth will give you lessons, and the fishes of the sea will tell you all. There is not a single creature that does not know that everything is of God's making. God holds in power the soul of every living thing, and the breath of every human body. (Job 12:7-10)*
- "As long as we saw all other life as outside and apart from ourselves, we treated it carelessly. Embracing the interconnectedness of all life, we can again weave together the rift between sacred and secular, and the totality will be seen as sacred." -Nancy Jack Todd and John Todd
- Every living form on the planet—including all plant, animal, and bacterial life—speaks through a common genetic language, DNA! The active DNA of human beings is 99.6% identical to the active DNA of chimpanzees.
- The nucleated cells composing all plant and animal tissue were created by the union of what were once free, independent bacteria—the earliest life forms on Earth. Our cells are the first ecological communities.
- "Our goal is...to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening in the world into our own personal suffering and thus discover what each of us can do about it. (*Laudato Si'* 19)
- "We must widen our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature..." (Albert Einstein)



- We have lost an awareness of the sacredness of all things. Thomas Berry teaches us that “We must recover the sense of the sacred within all of creation...as subjects to be communed with, not objects to be used.”
- *Once we start to think about the kind of world we are leaving to future generations, we look at things differently; we realize that the world is a gift we have freely received and must share with others.* (Laudato Si’ 159)



### Acting on Our Corporate Stand for Creation, What Can We Do to Help?

- Refuse plastic shopping bags; use reusable shopping bags instead.
- Use wax sandwich wrap or reusable sandwich boxes rather than plastic sandwich wrap or single use plastic sandwich bags.
- Take some time to educate ourselves by reading some of the articles listed below or others that attract us. There is much on the internet, magazine articles, TV, etc.
- Abstain—Try this week to not use any disposable plastic products.
- Take a few moments to breathe deeply and become aware of the communion of air shared by all breathing things.
- Write or call your members of Congress on an ecological issue that is important to you.
- Have you ever mentioned an ecological sin in confession?
- Pray for those most affected by climate change. Farmers’ whole livelihood can be destroyed by irregular seasonal changes.
- Natural disasters create the social chaos that promotes human trafficking. Acting for climate justice also helps fight human trafficking.

### Taking Time to Educate Ourselves ...

[www.rainbowlight.com/ecoguard/docs](http://www.rainbowlight.com/ecoguard/docs)

[www.onegreenplanet.org/animalsand](http://www.onegreenplanet.org/animalsand)

[www.ourendangeredworld.com/plastic-pollution](http://www.ourendangeredworld.com/plastic-pollution)

[www.EcoWatch](http://www.EcoWatch)

[www.iflscience.com/environment/rock-formed-plastic-found-beach](http://www.iflscience.com/environment/rock-formed-plastic-found-beach)

[www.oewplasticpollution](http://www.oewplasticpollution)