



**MERCY**  
**GLOBAL**  
PRESENCE

## Distinct Voice: Mercy and the Degradation of Earth - “We are in Need of Respirators Urgently!” Thus Cry Out the Oceans of the World’

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In her reflection for Segment Two, *Faith Traditions and Mercy*, Elizabeth Davis reminds us “of the call to contemplation to dare us to find anew our passion for mercy...Each major faith tradition holds mercy as essential to its life...In Buddhism, the Bodhisattva, Kwan Yin is a spiritual figure associated with compassion. Her name means *One Who Hears the Cry of the World.*” (Reflection for Segment Two, Theme One: Faith Traditions and Mercy)

In this reflection on earth degradation, I awaken myself to a deeper consciousness of the plight of the oceans of the world, suffering both from climate change and the reckless tossing of surgical masks into their depths. Compassion and mercy are needed right now. The oceans of the world are crying out for mercy.

To assist the reflection on the theme earth degradation, I have chosen the video *Storm* which the Rahamim Ecological Centre in Bathurst NSW Australia created for The Season of Creation last year. There was a different video available for each of the Sunday themes, and this one, using quotes from *Laudato Si’* superimposed on ocean scenes, alerts the viewer to ‘climate emergency’ as a worldwide issue. Let’s hear the cry for mercy and justice from the oceans of the world.

And now the oceans are further affected by another worldwide issue which emerged in the past months with COVID-19.

A pandemic of unknown proportions, Covid-19 has strengthened the notion that we are one big cosmic web. If we never gave it a thought before this, we can now see how intimately we are all interconnected with one another and with the rest of the natural world.

Just this week I saw an image of thousands of surgical masks being lifted from the ocean. This both appalled me and inspired me to role reverse with the Oceans of the World. Becoming the ocean I feel the choking sense of refuse from cruise ships, plastics killing the species dwelling within me, my cultural value to all Indigenous Peoples of the world, my sacred identity is all being disturbed and livelihoods created from my waters are being denied.

This month we have a wonderful opportunity to reflect in as many ways that we can think of, on the plight of the oceans of the world - to role reverse with the different oceans of the world wherever we live, and listen to their cry. They help us to breathe and yet they are having difficulty breathing themselves, as pollution mounts and their waters heat.

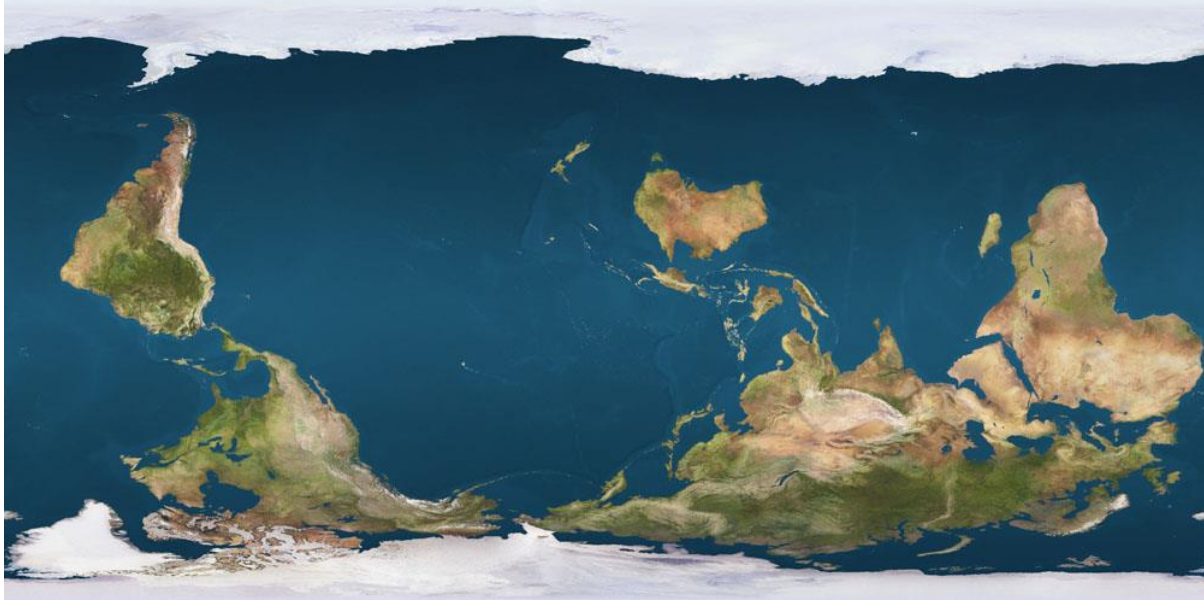


Image: [Wikimedia Commons](#). Public domain

This idea is mirrored in Pope Francis' reflection in *Laudato Si'* -"all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect." (LS' #89)

Pope Francis reminds us that we need to search continuously for ways to have a new dialogue about "...how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation that includes everyone, since the environment challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all." (LS' #14)

### **We are all in this together**

Mindful of the degradation that the oceans are suffering, the United Nations offers some telling facts:

"Oceans play a fundamental role for life on earth, providing over 70 percent of the oxygen we breathe and over 97 percent of the world's water supply, not to mention being a source of food."

"...Yet, our oceans are under threat, with only a tiny fraction—just 3.4 percent—being protected. We have seen the disturbing images of islands of plastic and trash floating in the ocean; turtles with plastic straws stuck in their nostrils; birds dying because of the amount of trash consumed and discarded."

"...And we hear about the impacts of climate change: warmer ocean temperatures are causing the melting of arctic ice caps, and rising sea levels are having an additional negative effect on the ocean circulation."

“Indigenous Peoples are at the frontlines of impact for climate change; about 27 million Indigenous people in nearly 2,000 communities across 87 countries live in coastal communities. Rising sea levels have forced whole communities to relocate.”

“...Loss of access to traditional lands and territories is also linked to loss of ancestral, spiritual, totemic and language connections rooted in those areas.”

“...Seafood is a crucial source of subsistence and closely tied to Indigenous cultures. Overfishing, killing of top predators, pollution, ocean acidification, coral bleaching, and the ocean wide migration of fish due to climate change threatens these resources.”

... “When it comes to the ocean, it’s the common heritage of humankind. There’s no North-South, East-West. If the ocean is dying, it’s dying on all of us.”

<https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/our-oceans-our-future-united-nations-discusses-oceans>

*Perhaps holding the images of the video Storm, and the oceans under threat at the same time, we can experience that, whilst we are woven together in love, we are also woven together to act for changes necessary to create healthy oceans.*