

# MERCY EARTH CHALLENGE



*“Jesus said: Give drink to the thirsty. Jesus said – I thirst.”* (June 25, [Water: Sacred Gift calendar](#))

“May the words [Jesus] spoke from the cross – “I thirst” (Jn 19:28) – echo constantly in our hearts. The Lord continues to ask that his thirst be quenched; he thirsts for love. He asks us to give him to drink in all those who thirst in our own day, and to say to them, ‘I was thirsty and you gave me to drink’ (Mt 25:35). To give to drink, in the global village, does not only entail personal gestures of charity, but also concrete choices and a constant commitment to ensure to all the primary good of water.” (Pope Francis on World Day of Prayer for Care for Creation, 2018)

We know that water is critical for development and for human survival itself. Access to water is far from universal, leaving many thirsty. Women in particular bear the burden of providing water for their families. Many agree that there is sufficient water to satisfy the needs of persons across the world; rather, access to water is a question of equitable distribution.

- View the video [“Are We Running out of Clean Water?”](#) (4.42 minutes) Despite water covering 71% of the planet's surface, more than half the world's population endures extreme water scarcity for at least one month a year. Current estimates predict that by 2040, up to 20 more countries could be experiencing water shortages. Available in English, with Spanish sub-titles.
- Learn about the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #6, “ensure availability and sustainable management of

water and sanitation for all.” English ([3.16 minute video](#))

- [Read about gender equality](#) in the human right to water and sanitation from the United Nations’ human rights office.
- Learn more from [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on the Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation

### **How are Mercys responding?**

Mercy Sister Virgencita Alegado, who lives and ministers in Mindanao in the Philippines, shares how her school and convent use rain barrels to collect water for the use of sisters and students. They need to carefully conserve water, especially during any especially dry seasons. You may watch [here](#) a 2-minute video of their water collection system.