

International Day of Oceans (June 08)

Theme for 2021: The life and livelihoods

Introduction:

International day of Ocean is celebrated since 1992 on June 08th. The theme for 2021 is *The Life and Livelihoods*. This day is an occasion to build awareness among the people about the indispensability of the oceans for the survival of all forms of lives and to earn our livelihood. On this day, we marvel at the great gift of oceans by God.

“O Lord, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom have you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

Here is the sea, great and wide,
which teems with creatures innumerable,
living things both small and great” (Ps 104, 24-25).

On the other hand, we are struck by two recent events which declare the cry of the sea. A cargo ship, named *X-Press Pearl*, laden with chemical, has sunk in Sri Lankan ocean on 02.06.2021. The chemical and the oil from the ship are contaminating the ocean. Already oil and chemical pollutions are seen in the coastal stretch of Nigombao.



(X-Press Pearl sinking. BBC News:

https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/976/cpsprodpb/D289/production/_118779835_067794246.jpg)

These days it is a great sorrow to witness people dying, due to the non-availability of bottled oxygen. The ocean is the great producer of oxygen. The sea which is dying, is not able to support the people. We never before thought of bottled oxygen scarcity.

Video: Please watch this video on the Ocean Day.

English: [Announcing UN World Oceans Day 2021](#) (1:51 minutes)

Spanish: [Océanos saludables, planeta saludable](#) (1:03 minutes, English with Spanish subtitle)

French: [Des océans en bonne santé, une planète en bonne santé](#) (1:03 minutes, English with French subtitle)

The life:

The surface of planet earth is composed of 71% water and 29% land. In the total water of the earth, 96.5% is in the oceans and only 3.5% water is on the land. Hence, it is proper to name as *planet ocean than planet earth*. 80 % of life of earth live by ocean. Oceans produces 50% of the world's oxygen. They absorb 40% of carbon from atmosphere. The sea grasses serve as carbon sink. The Paris Climate agreement aims, not to allow the global temperature rise beyond 2 degree Celsius. This is possible only when the oceans are healthy. The report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) titled *The Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate* says, "The ocean is essential for all aspects of human well-being and livelihood. It provides important services like climate regulation, carbon cycle and nutrient cycle. The ocean is the home of biodiversity, ranging from microbes to marine mammals, that form a wide variety of ecosystems in open pelagic and coastal ocean (Number 450)." Hence, the life on the planet cannot be sustained without earth.

The livelihood:

In 2018, around the world, approximately 39.0 million people made their living by fishing in the sea. They used 4.6 million fishing vessels. Again, the boat fabrication and servicing of engines and boats have produced livelihood opportunities. The sea also provides cancer-curing medicines. The feed for chicken and pigs, and the fertilisers for plants are made from marine animals. Coastal tourism, wild life watch are revenue earners. The limes made from sea animals and coral reeves serve as raw material for building constructions. Coastal zone also serves as place for relaxation, imagination and spirituality. Thus, blue economy is indispensable for human survival.

The word of God:

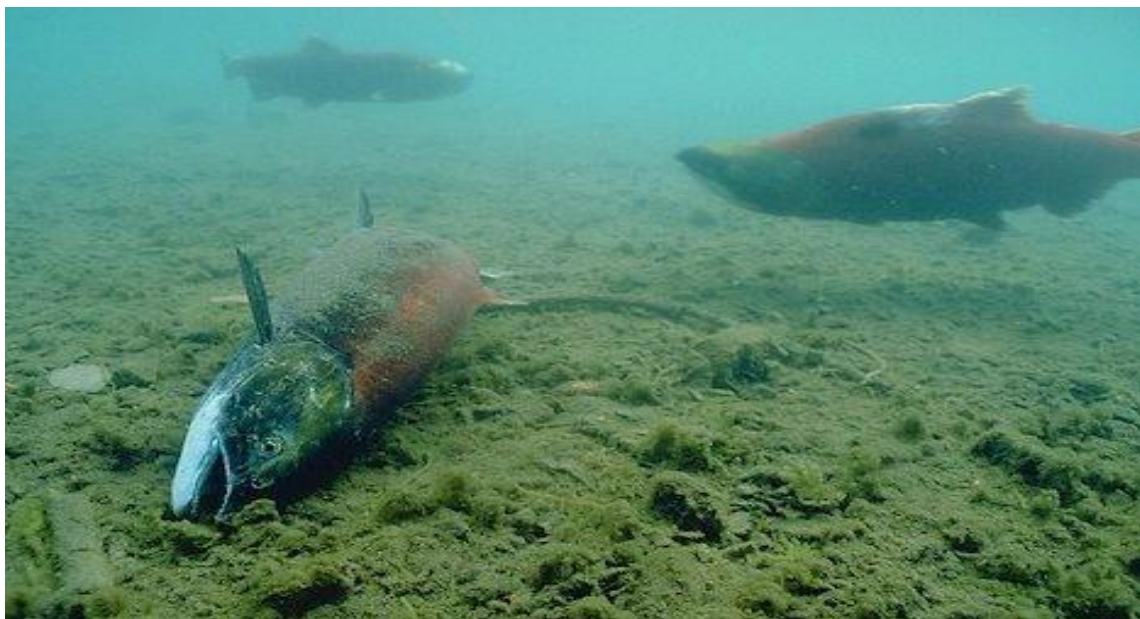
Genesis 1, 20-23

And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." So, God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

Reflection:

On the fifth day God creates all the creatures of the seas, as well as the birds above the sea. The fish become feed for the birds and the droppings of the birds become feed for the fish. It might be the reason for God to create them together. According to the creation narrative, God created on day one light, day two sea and sky, day three dry land and on day four sun, moon and stars. After having created the environment, he created on the fifth day marine animals and birds. For the survival of the life the environment is very important. Accordingly, it can be said that the life was created first in the sea and above the sea. According to theory of evolution too, the life began first in the sea and then invaded to the land. Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme in their book *The Universe Story* say that the first living cell named Prokaryote appeared in the sea. From the sea the life invaded to the land 1230 million years after that.

God commanded that the seas might teem with marine animals. But now the sea is dying. Over 90% of the sea animals and 50% of the corals have depleted. In 1995 the fish capture was 86.4 million tons. In 2018 the fish catch increased to 96.4 million tons. But unfortunately, 20.3 per cent of the catch was from biologically unsustainable species. The state of the world's marine fish stocks has become more unsustainable.



Now there are 400 dead zones (areas, where there is no dissolved oxygen) in the sea. Such zones do not support life. The extinction of life in the sea is an alarm for the extinction of life on the land.

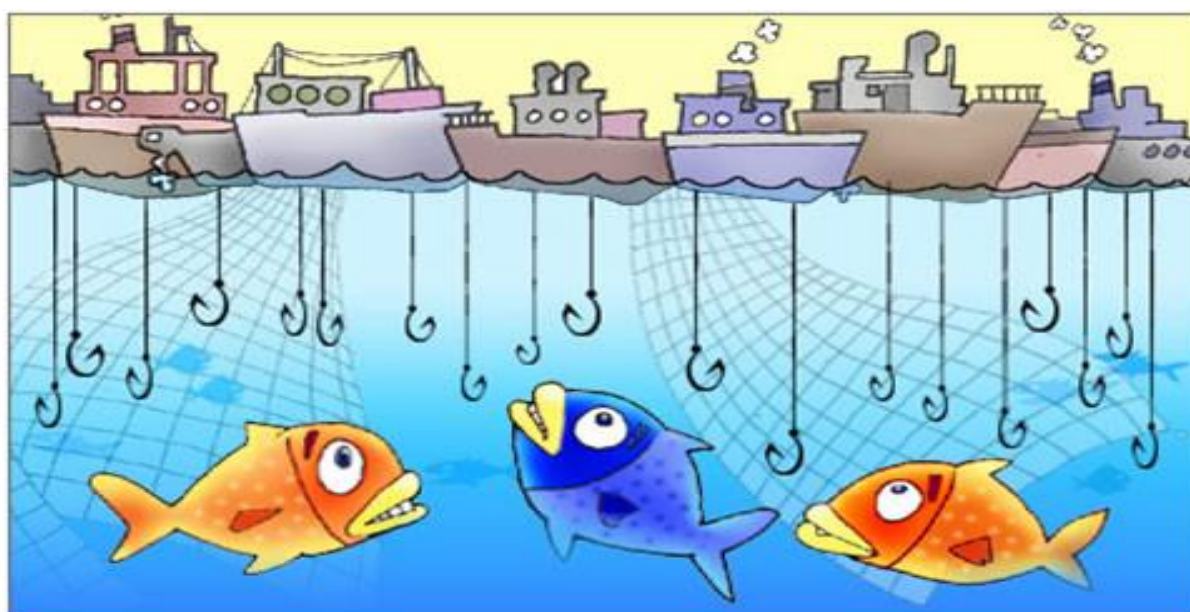
Claret and Oceans:

For Claret, sea was energising, healing and source of spiritual inspiration. Whenever he felt tired or sick, he used to walk in the beach in Barcelona and also sipped a little of sea water. In 1826, when he was walking on the shore, suddenly he was taken into sea by a strong wave. He did not know swimming. He was praying to Mother Mary. After sometime he was washed back to the shore. He says that he did not drink in even drop of sea water. This drowning became a profound spiritual experience for him. Claret says that God saved him so that as a Missionary he would save others (Aut .71). He travelled five days by ship from Marseilles (France) to Civitavecchia (Italy), to present himself to the Holy See for overseas missions. In the ship he looked for the humblest and poorest place so as to suffer more (Aut 130). When there was a big storm, Claret was meditating on how Jesus was sleeping, when the boat was facing storm (Aut 131). He received the money offered by the passengers and distributed to the needy people on the ship (134). After becoming Archbishop, he travelled 50 days (December 28 - February 16, 1851) from Barcelona to Cuba by a ship called *La Nueva Teresa Cubana* (Aut. 501-509). Again when he was called back to Madrid to serve as Confessor to the queen, he travelled 37 days (April 12 to May 18, 1857), from Havana to Cadiz in Spain, by a ship called *Frigate Pizarro* (Aut 590). During these both travels, despite the situations of storm and shipwreck, he lived his life in the ship as a Missionary, conducting mission and spiritual exercises.

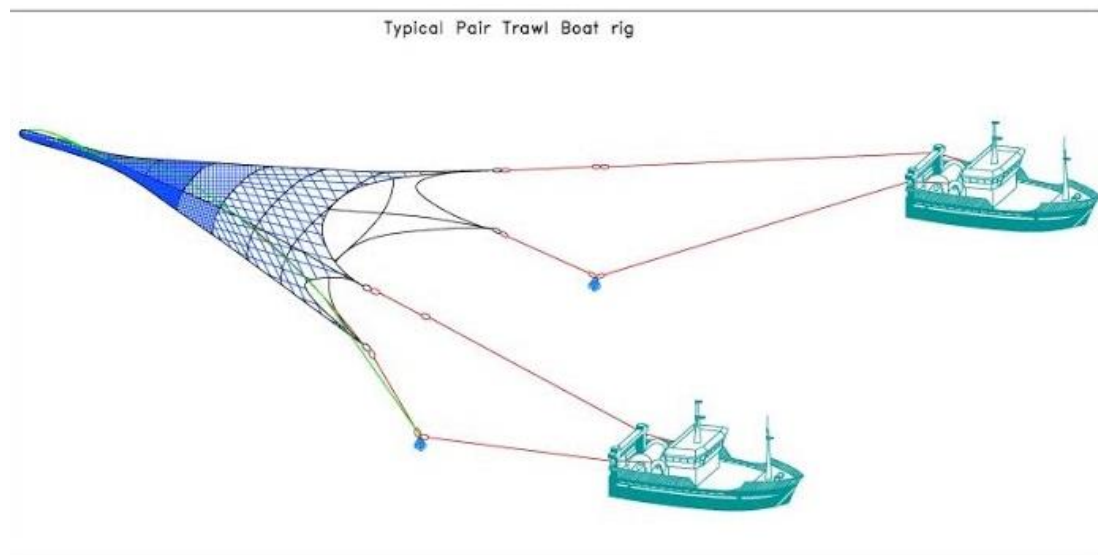
Challenges the Oceans are facing:

Prudent householder uses only the interest and not the capital. In ocean, apart from the maximum sustainable yield (the interest), the marine-resource-capital is also consumed. Therefore, the sea faces bankruptcy in the following ways.

Overfishing: Overfishing means harvesting the fish, faster than their production. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) says that over 70% of the world's fish species have been entirely depleted. Because of this not only human, but also the marine animals that depend on fish for survival, are starving.



Destructive fishing: It means using destructive methods to catch fish. Catching fish using *bottom trawl nets*, *dynamites*, *nets with small mesh size*, *nets made of monofilament fibbers* destroy the fish, seagrasses and the corals. The plastic nets that are lost in the sea, continue to fish and kill the fish. This is called ghost fishing.



Brackish water aquaculture: This refers to the culture of fish in the ponds near the sea. To make these ponds, mangroves, natural estuaries and lagoons are destroyed. The fertilisers, medicine, feed and faecal wastes from the fish farms harm the marine ecosystem.



Garbage: The untreated sewage from home and industries are discharged into sea. There is oil spilling from the ships and from the drilling for oil in the sea. They pollute the sea.



Plastic pollution: According to National Ocean service the top five plastic products rotting the ocean are: food wrappers, beverage bottles, grocery bags, straws and food containers. Nobody knows exactly how much plastic ends up in ocean. But it is roughly estimated that 8 million metric tons reach annually to the sea.



Acidification of the ocean and Mercury pollution: The ocean is becoming more acidic gradually. The acidification increases the temperature of the sea water. This is the main cause for climate change. The ocean's mercury level has risen more than 30% during the last 20 years. This is mainly because of the emissions mercury from coal power plants. The mercury is absorbed by fish and sea vegetation. When we consume marine products, we consume mercury too.



What can we do to save the Oceans?

- Do not consume the endangered marine animals like Turtles, Dugong, sea horse, sea corals.
- Do not purchase products made from marine animals and crustaceans that are in extinction.
- Avoid single use plastics.
- Do not leave sewage into the sea.
- Organise a sea clean-up.
- Support an organisation in the locality that protects ocean habitats.
- Do advocacy against oil/gas drilling gas in the sea,
- Advocate for banning the destructive nets.

Concluding Prayer:

Creator God,
We thank you

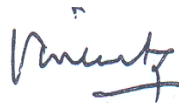
For you created all kinds of creatures that live in and above the water.
You found it good and entrusted them to human to use them sustainably.

Forgiver God,
Be merciful to us
For we have harmed the ocean.
We have exploited its wealth.

Provider God,
We implore you
To attend to the needs of the ocean dependent people.
Heal the people who suffer illness and
Heal the oceans.

Liberator God,
Make us to advocate against
the destructive nets,
the irresponsible fish farms,
the single use plastics,
the off-shore oil/gas exploration
and the coast based thermal plants.

Spirit God,
Move over the waters of oceans again.
Revive the marine habitats, animals and vegetation.
May they all reflect your glory. Amen.



05.06.2021

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CLARETIAN
MISSIONARIES

SONS OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION