



**Homily, September 20, 2020**  
**Reverend Salvatore Sapienza**

“Well last year at this time, our church's amazing Creation Justice Team led us on a cleanup of Douglas Beach and Oval Beach here in Saugatuck. And on that day, we collected more than 100 pounds of trash from the beach.

“And last year, we here at the church received these buttons from the United Church of Christ, which read ‘Water is Life, Protect the Sacred.’ And that is the truth. Water is life. Plants and animals and humans -- all living things -- are dependent upon water for life. We can go for a few weeks without food, but without water, we will die in just a few days.

“Maybe that's why water is considered so sacred throughout the centuries by people of different faith traditions and different cultures. We know that water is used in religious rituals and sacred rites like baptism, for water symbolizes the Giver and Sustainer of Life. Our Native American ancestors understood this. They believed that water has a spirit, that water has a soul, water is alive, and it connects us with the source of all life.

“Maybe that's why Jesus referred to it as ‘living water.’ This living water has healing power. In our Words of Integration and Guidance this morning, we heard how wounded animals go to the water in order to heal. And I know that when I feel wounded, when I feel depleted, I simply go and walk along Lake Michigan, and I feel re-energized, renewed, and refreshed. Sometimes even just a

shower, or a long hot bath has that same healing effect upon us.

“But water isn't just the healer, water can also be a teacher for all of us. We can learn a lot about life by looking at the water. Water flows gently downstream. It doesn't struggle to flow upstream like so many of us do in life. And water gently and smoothly just goes around any obstacles that are in its path. If we follow the example of water, our lives can be much more peaceful and affluent (which is what the word affluent means -- it means "in the flow.")

“Many of you know that the word Saugatuck comes from a Native American word that means ‘the mouth of the river.’ And certainly we are so blessed to be surrounded by such beauty here in Saugatuck and Douglas. But did you know that the Kalamazoo River here is one of the most polluted rivers in all of the United States? And we all have to take responsibility for that. It is our carelessness, our selfishness, our greed, which has led to the destruction of the waters.

“In his most recent book, *Faith*, former President Jimmy Carter says that the United States is by far the world's greatest polluter, that we make up just 2% of the world's population, yet we're number one when it comes to pollution. Decades ago, most European countries fully embraced recycling programs and worked to reduce the emissions of carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases. Back in 2005. At the Kyoto Summit, 125 countries got together to sign an agreement to reduce these emissions and to impose fines upon countries who emit excessive gases. One country, however, did not sign the agreement. And that was the United States. The reason given was that it would impact our businesses here in the US and their bottom line and profitability, which would greatly impact our nation's economy. 125 countries

agreed to support the planet. But the US said no, due to profitability and the economy.

“As a Creation Justice Church we are called to speak out against actions of environmental injustice. We are called to be people of action. But we're also called to be people of prayer.

“Here at Douglas UCC, we often speak of how our thoughts have great healing power -- the power of prayer. You know, Moses used this power in order to part the seas. And Jesus used this power in order to calm the seas, and to turn water into wine. The thoughts they held in mind produced after their kind.

“Science is beginning to discover this healing power. Some of you may be familiar with the work of Dr. Masaru Emoto, the Japanese researcher who looked into the healing power of thoughts on water, Dr. Emoto, and his researchers took jars of water, and they froze them. On some of those jars, they wrote positive words, things like ‘I love you,’ and ‘Thank you.’ And they played classical music to the jars and sent positive thoughts to the jars. Other jars, however, had negative words written upon them, things like ‘I hate you.’ And in those rooms, heavy metal music was played to those jars. And researchers sent negative thoughts to those jars. And what they discovered was that the ice crystals that formed on those jars were very different. On the positive jars, the ice crystals were beautiful, snowflake-like structures. But on the negative jars, those crystals were misshapen, and deformed, and ugly. You can learn more about Dr. Emoto's work online, or in his book, *The Healing Power of Water*. This is not New Age mumbo jumbo. This is science.

“Of course the world's water problems won't be solved simply by prayer and positive thinking. But being mindful of the sacredness of water is the first step, then we need to speak out and to take action. And so on this Creation Sunday, my friends, let us recommit ourselves to doing all we can to be good stewards of this beautiful planet, which God has entrusted to our care. We can reverse the effects of climate change. It is not too late. Future generations are depending upon us. God is depending upon us. And we are the ones that we've been waiting for.

“Namaste.”

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>

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