

BIBLE REFLECTION FOR WORLD OCEANS DAY 2023

Monday 05 June 2023

St Luke's Anglican Church, SUVA. 07.00AM

THEME: PLANET OCEAN: THE TIDES ARE CHANGING

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1. BIBLE READINGS:

Reading 1: Genesis Chapter 1: vs 1-2, 26-28

The Beginning

1 *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2* *Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*

3 *And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4* *God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. 5* *God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.*

26 *Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,^[a] and over all the creatures that move along the ground."*

27 *So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

28 *God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*

Reading 2: Psalm 24

1. *The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;*
2 *for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.*

2. INTRODUCTION

Ni sa Bula Vinaka! Malo e lelei! Talofa lava! Namaste! Noa'ia! Greetings to you all!

It is indeed a privilege for the Church to be a part of this special week's celebrations as we celebrate one of the gifts of GOD's Creation, GOD's gift of The Ocean/Moana to us humankind, to be good stewards of.

3. IMPORTANCE OF THE OCEANS.....

I believe each one of us are here this morning because of our love for this gift of GOD's Creation – the Oceans.

For us in this part of the world, in particular, we celebrate more uniquely because while the oceans cover up to 70% of the Earth's surface, the Pacific Ocean covers up to 30% of this.

- Oceans are home to thousands of species.
- Around 50% of the planet's oxygen is produced by the oceans.
- The livelihood of a significant number of people in the world is dependent on the oceans.
- The Oceans play an integral role in sustaining life on this planet.
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4. REFLECT ON THE SCRIPTURES Gen 1 and Psalm 24

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

**1. The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;
2 for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.**

The chosen Scriptures for this morning serves as a reminder, an encouragement and a challenge to us all.

The Reminder -

The Psalmist reaffirms that everything on the earth, the world and all who live in it – belongs to the Lord – because HE created and founded it on the seas and establishes it on the waters.

The Encouragement –

In the famous Creation story in Genesis Chapter 1, we are reminded of this significance of the waters, because when the earth was formless and empty, where there was still darkness, the Spirit of GOD hovered over the waters.....

The Encouragement in the Scriptures is that the Spirit of GOD was, is and will always be hovering over the waters, and that is sacred.

The Challenge –

The Challenge for you and I today is to re-assess and re-look at our role and responsibility as stewards of this Gift from GOD.

Today, our Oceans face a lot of threats – due to our lack of responsibility as being good stewards. And it is special days like this, World Ocean Day, that is significant because it raises awareness about the roles of the Oceans in helping us humans survive. It also raises awareness of the threats that our oceans face.

Around 50% of the total coral reefs in the oceans are already destroyed.

The population of big fishes is also decreasing rapidly.

We continue to be called to encourage one another to act and reduce the amount of damage that human activities have caused to the oceans.

World Oceans Day 2023 theme is “Planet Ocean: Tides are Changing”. This is a theme about “Action!” This is very appropriate as a lot of change is happening around the world for ocean preservation. And we continue to pray that as the Spirit of GOD continues to hover over the oceans, we continue to influence our friends, families and local communities as well as our younger generation on the importance and role of the ocean in helping sustain life on Earth.

5. CONCLUSION

We all enjoy receiving gifts. And it is always even more meaningful knowing who gives us this gift because this relationship is a symbol of Love. And in return, our love is reciprocated and evident in how we tend and care for the gifts given.

As we move on in celebration of being recipients of GOD’s gift of the Oceans to us humankind, it is our prayer that we continue to make an impact throughout the world, creating more and more awareness of the importance and gift of the Oceans to us to be good stewards of -

Later in the programme and throughout the week, the goal of the Oceans Week is to appreciate and value GOD’s Gift of the Oceans.

I wish to conclude with one last encouragement for you and I.

There is a famous Tongan hymn – “Eiki Koe Ofa A’au Ko’e Moana loloto.....” which translates to “GOD – Your Love is as deep as the ocean....”

For us as Pasefika people, people of the Moana, people of the largest Ocean in the world,

Our greatest value is knowing that over the breadth and surface of the Oceans, is the sacred presence of the Spirit of GOD.....and over the great depths of the Oceans, is the presence of GOD’s Love.....regardless of how many millions of organisms existing in these great depths, in depths where the Sun’s rays stop shining, where there is the existence of organisms in the midst of the darkness, in spaces where humankind have yet to discover deep down in the ocean, GOD’s LOVE continues to exist there.....

Amen.

