

MAKE THE OCEAN GREAT AGAIN!

Finding Nemo, a much loved family film based on fictional characters and events. We swim through the ocean with Marlin as he embarks on his journey to find his only son. Picture the vivid colours of the sea and the reef and all of the interesting creatures he meets along the way. Now, ladies and gentlemen, what you hear next is very true. In less than 100 years we could have a new chart topping movie, "Finding the ocean," and if we don't go to battle with the war of pollution it could have a sequel, "Finding the people" certainly less colourful than any Pixar animated movie. Sound appealing? I didn't think so.

For as long as I can remember I have been fascinated by the "big ol' blue" and have spent countless hours scrolling through pictures of all it has to offer, even sacrificing hours of Fortnite for it! My addiction for everything aquatic grew until I can proudly say after 15 deepwater dives I received my advanced open water certification. Many people congratulated me saying, "it must be lovely down there," but only I could see the truth, the horrible truth, which was far from any Pixar movie produced. The reality was animals being confined in their own pit of misery and suffering amongst the rubbish.

If we keep going on as we are now, our oceans, the crucial part of our oceans, could give up on us in less than 100 years and the animals, our beloved fish could simply disappear, but that's only one of the thousands of life changing events that could happen. Job loss, food sources depleting and millions of people could die as fishing villages depend on seafood to survive. The ocean also supplies 50% of our oxygen so if it disappears it would be like living on top of Mount Everest. To me that is a bit extreme but that is the daunting reality we could be faced with if we don't change our actions soon.

Currently there are 800 million tonnes of pollution in our oceans and that is steadily increasing. 80% of this is from land-based sources. How many young people carry plastic bottles on a daily basis and it wouldn't cost them a thought to throw it into any bin, to leave it behind them in a classroom or to throw it on to the pitch. But every plastic bottle not recycled is slowly killing the ocean. Oceans are for fish, they are not our personal rubbish bin.

As John F Kennedy said, "we are tied to our oceans, and when we go back to the sea we are going back to where we came from." The ocean created us so let's show it some respect.

Pope Francis suggests in *Laudato Si'* that the change in climate has been caused by human society. Reports suggests that these changes could not have possibly been natural causes as it has been a rapid change that has occurred in a span of 100 years compared to the usual thousands of years. 80% of waste in our ocean is from land and 20% from fishing and sailing. This 20% may not seem like a lot but it is actually over 40 million tonnes. Why would we put so much waste into our oceans? Let me tell you how, farm runoffs, waste disposal firms and the burning of fossil fuels as the oceans absorb 25% of all emissions. How can we be so childish and mistreat our oceans at this level? It must stop.

Plastics and pollution affect our oceans dramatically choking sea life like turtles to death. Remember the beady eyed, bright, cute turtle squirt from finding Nemo? He was adorable,

right? Would you like any harm to come to him? I didn't think so, so why do we let others suffer this level of injustice and be killed every day? It doesn't just affect fish, sharks, dolphins and whales rely on fish as a food source also. The more fish that die, the harder it is to find food, killing even more important creatures in the ocean. Remember what the sharks taught us? "Fish are friends, not food!" well soon it may be " Fish are food, not friends!"

Pope Francis suggests that it the job of the humans on this planet to take care of it and bring about a transformation in their lifestyles that is currently driven by man-made objects affecting the environment. Companies are reducing their pollution to save the oceans. Brands like G Star and Timberland have started using recycled plastic in their clothing. Sports brands such as Nike and Adidas do it as well. Every soccer jersey used at the 2010 world cup was made out of 100% recycled bottles from landfills using up over 13 million bottles that would have been carelessly dumped in the ocean killing hundreds of thousands of fish.

Pope Francis also proposes that people are so overwhelmed and amazed by technology that they embrace it without thinking how it will affect our world. Pope Francis believes that there is still scope for improvement from us if we move towards an, 'ecological conversion'. There is even recycled plastic in your home. Try this now, if you have a water bottle look at the back of it for that recycled sign. Most bottles are now made of recycled plastic to reduce pollution. Coke bottles are made out of 7% recycled plastic. Dell uses 25% recycled plastic to make their computers, which uses 16,000 pounds of waste, plastic and by 2025 it will be 200,000 pounds. This is great, but we`re not over the finish line yet.

We can help reduce pollution dramatically by doing a few simple things. We can watch our carbon footprint to reduce emissions, we can make sustainable seafood choices as most fish is imported from other countries, use reusable food containers and water bottles, recycle bottles and plastics and influence change in our community to name a few. It could be your neighbour or your whole street, but as Tesco reminds us, 'Every little helps!'

So just to recap, our oceans keep us alive by providing us with oxygen, giving us food, supporting communities, supplying jobs and giving us one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world, and we still mistreat it. It has gone too far. It has gone on long enough. Now is the time to stop. Now is the time to change.

I'm not asking you to single handily clean-up the entire ocean, but do something to help. I hope this speech will be the stone, to start the ripple that ends ocean pollution once and for all.

Thank you.