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## Living Water

University of Dayton

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# NEWS

*Thursday July 21, 2016*

## Living Water

Sharing his perspective on Catholic social teaching, human rights and clean water has earned mechanical engineering student Tanner Rolfe a top prize in a national essay contest.

In his essay, which the American Association for the Advancement of Science science and human rights coalition named the best undergraduate essay, Rolfe focused on compounds commonly found in Teflon and fire-fighting materials that have polluted drinking water for years.

"We all have a moral duty to ensure everyone has equal and fair access to safe water," Rolfe said. "Only by working cooperatively within a society that values humanity's dignity can the logistics of such a task be achieved.

"It therefore stands to reason any action impeding or undermining this duty, such as the use of these compounds, impinges upon the inherent right of everyone to healthful and unpolluted drinking water."

These compounds, Rolfe wrote, have been found in blood samples nationwide and even as far away as the remote Arctic in polar bear livers. While the exact impact on human health is poorly understood, studies suggest increased risks of kidney cancer, testicular cancer, hormone disruption, elevated cholesterol levels and pregnancy complications.

Rolfe, from West Carrollton, Ohio, will receive his award at the association's science and human rights coalition meeting July 25 in Washington, D.C. The association will publish Rolfe's essay in its quarterly *Professional Ethics Report* later this year.

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