

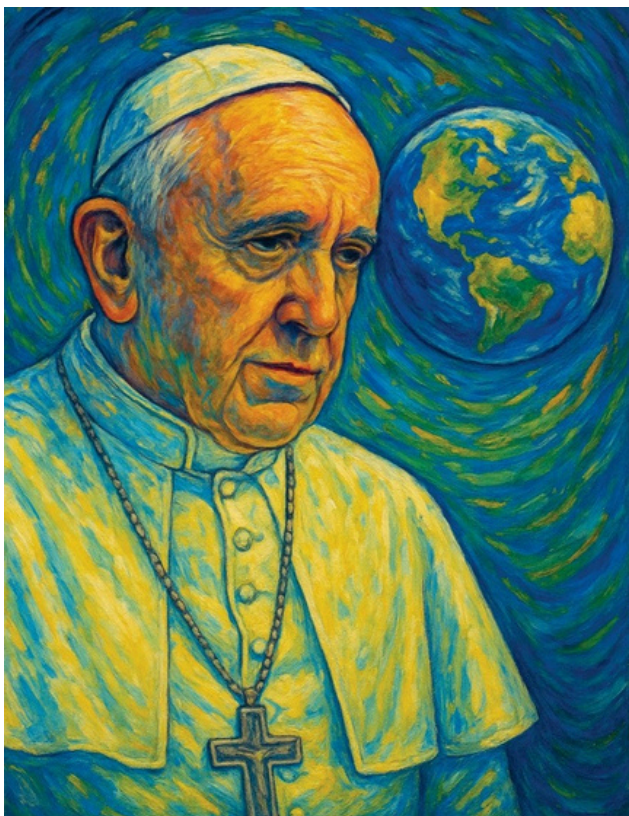
WORLD MOTHER EARTH DAY: INTEGRAL ECOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT



Since 2009, every April 22 we celebrate International Mother Earth Day, a date established by the United Nations General Assembly as a call to the collective conscience of humanity in the face of the environmental crisis that affects our planet.

It is not simply an environmental reminder, but a profound questioning of our way of life, our economic structures, our development models, and above all, our human and spiritual relationships. Today more than ever, the cry of the Earth is also the cry of the poor, of displaced indigenous peoples, of future generations threatened by ecological irresponsibility, and of all forms of life that have been devastated by the logic of unlimited profit.

LAUDATO SI': A COMPREHENSIVE ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION



In 2015, Pope Francis offered us *Laudato Si'*, a prophetic encyclical that has marked a before and after in the understanding of Christian commitment to ecology. Inspired by Saint Francis of Assisi from the beginning of his pontificate, the Pope invites us to look at the Earth not as another resource, but as a sister and mother who sustains and accompanies us.

“The Earth, our home, seems to become more and more an immense repository of filth” (LS 21).

With clear and at the same time deeply theological language, *Laudato Si'* presents us with the concept of integral ecology, in which everything is interconnected: the human being, nature, the economy, politics, spirituality. The ecological crisis is not only a technical or scientific crisis, but a moral and spiritual crisis.

The document strongly denounces the evils of extractivism, unlimited consumerism and the throwaway culture. It states that the planet can no longer withstand the pressure of an economic system that treats nature as an inexhaustible source of resources and people as disposable consumers.

“The technocratic paradigm tends to exercise its dominance over economics and politics” (LS 109). The Pope does not limit himself to criticism but offers an alternative: an ecological conversion that starts from the human heart and translates into personal, community, economic and structural changes. It calls us to listen to the cry of the Earth and the poor, to live soberly, to rethink our way of producing, consuming and relating.

EXTRACTIVIST CAPITALISM: THE LOGIC OF THE PREDATOR

The environmental devastation we face today is neither an accident nor an inevitable natural phenomenon. It is the direct result of a global economic system —extractivist capitalism— that has turned the Earth into loot, a territory of conquest for faceless and rootless financial interests.

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This model is based on the intensive exploitation of natural assets (minerals, oil, water, forests), often in territories inhabited by indigenous peoples or rural communities, who are displaced or violated by megaprojects that promise development, but generate poverty, pollution and cultural destruction.

Progress, in this context, has become a euphemism to justify the accumulation of wealth in a few hands, at the cost of ecological and social destruction. The promise of “development” has left a trail of divided communities, broken mountains, polluted rivers and uprooted cultures.

Laudato Si’ denounces this logic of death, where economic growth does not take into account the limits of the planet or human suffering: “It is very noble to assume the duty of caring for creation with small daily actions” (LS 211), but it is also urgent to review the large economic mechanisms that encourage predatory extractivism.

Faced with this, we need to rethink what it means to live well, recover the community meaning of life, recognize ancestral knowledge and move towards economies that put life and not profit at the center.

SAINT ANTHONY MARY CLARET: COMMITTED SPIRITUALITY

Although he lived in the 19th century, Saint Anthony Mary Claret anticipated many of the concerns that challenge us today regarding social justice and the care of creation. A tireless missionary, Claret understood that evangelization must go hand in hand with human promotion, the defense of the poor and social transformation. In his time, he bravely denounced slavery, political corruption, abuse of power and economic inequality. Through his life and writings, he made it clear that authentic Christianity cannot live indifferent to human suffering or the cry of the most vulnerable.



Although he obviously did not use the language of ecology as we understand it today, Claret lived a deeply embodied spirituality. His defense of the poor, his love for peasant life, his closeness to the people and his sensitivity to the exploitation of the humble reveal an attitude that today we could call “ecological”, in the broadest sense of the term.

For us as a Claretian Family, the legacy of Saint Anthony Mary Claret is a source of inspiration to assume the commitment to Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC), as a concrete expression of following Jesus in today's world.



THE WORD OF GOD AND THE COMMON HOME

Holy Scripture is full of images and texts that reveal to us the deep connection between God, human beings and creation. From the beginning, in the Genesis story, God puts human beings in the garden to “cultivate and care for them” (Gen 2:15).

Not to dominate him with violence, but to be his faithful servant.

The prophets denounced the injustices that also affected the earth: “The earth is in mourning, it withers... because they have broken the laws, they have violated the precepts, they have broken the eternal covenant” (Is 24:4-5).



Jesus himself used the language of nature to announce the Kingdom: he spoke of seeds, figs, fields, birds of the air. His life was rooted in the Earth and its rhythms.

And the Apocalypse reminds us that history does not end with destruction, but with a new creation: “I saw a new heaven and a new earth” (Rev 21:1). Our hope is not an escape from the world, but rather its transformation through love and justice.

Beyond the moments in our history in which as humanity and as a believing community we have wanted to validate the irrational exploitation of the environment based on biased interpretations of the biblical text, it is evident from the spirit of the word that human beings, although they have the right to obtain their livelihood from the earth, it also has the responsibility of putting all its capabilities into protection and at this point restoring it.

BUILD HOPE FROM BELOW

Celebrating Mother Earth Day is much more than planting trees or turning off the lights for an hour. It is an opportunity to review the way we live, consume, relate and believe. It is also a time to articulate ourselves as social movements, Christian communities, environmental groups indigenous peoples, workers, students, scientists, artists and citizens committed to another way of inhabiting the world.

It is urgent to promote a new narrative where the center is not economic growth, but the care of life. Where success is not measured by accumulated capital, but by the quality of our relationships with others and with the environment. Where there is no development without social justice or justice without ecological justice.

As the Pope says in *Laudato Si'*:

“Everything is connected. Therefore, a concern for the environment is required together with sincere love for human beings” (LS 91).

And as the Claretian legacy reminds us, we cannot remain neutral or indifferent. Faith that does not become righteousness is barren. Love that does not translate into commitment is empty sentimentality.



PROPOSALS TO WALK TOGETHER

From our communities, institutions, parishes and everyday spaces, we can:

- Promote ecological and popular education, which awakens critical awareness and solidarity sensitivity. At this time when information has become so trivialized, the training of future generations to defend the planet constitutes an important action of social transformation.
- Promote an embodied spirituality, which links prayer with ecological and social commitment, making our faith and convictions transformed into discourse, march, text, organization.
- Reject consumerism, bet on local, supportive and sustainable economies. Although the common citizen has an apparently limited influence, the modification of mass consumption habits can generate important changes.

- Defend territories threatened by extractive megaprojects, accompanying indigenous and rural peoples. The acting sensitivity that we may have in the face of the reality and difficulties of our brothers in vulnerable situations, in addition to being a tool for social change, is also to humanize ourselves again, to understand our nature as an interdependent species fully.
- Promote public policies that guarantee environmental justice and a fair energy transition. Participation should be based on informed opinions, democratic bodies in electoral decisions, and processes that allow us informed election mechanisms and popular oversight.
- Creatively celebrate Mother Earth Day, connecting it with liturgy, culture, art and prophetic denunciation.

MOTHER EARTH, OUR COMMON HOME

The Earth is not a thing. She is a mother, she is a sister, she is home. It's sacred. We cannot continue treating it as spoils of war. Today, the ecological urgency calls us to a radical transformation: of the heart, of the structures, of our priorities.

World Mother Earth Day is an opportunity to remember that our Christian faith, if authentic, must commit to life in all its forms. Laudato Si' provides us with a spiritual and ethical framework for this task. Saint Anthony Mary Claret reminds us that the Gospel is liberating action. And the people, from below, show us that another world is possible... and necessary.

Casaldàliga reminds us that the Earth is the mother of all:



The earth is the mother of all,
it belongs to no one.
Nobody without land,
nobody without a roof,
nobody without work.
She is a wounded mother,
outraged, sold.
The earth groans,
with its mountains cut down,
its poisoned rivers,
their children expelled.
And we
his children and brothers,
we hug her,
we defend it,
we sow it with justice.
Let the scream and the spike sprout!
May hope flourish
of the poor of the Earth!
Because another world is urgent.
Because this land,
common mother,
it's sacred.

