

April 22 _____
INTERNATIONAL EARTH DAY



INVEST IN OUR PLANET



Our prayer will be a symbolic encounter with Mother Earth, similar to the indigenous rite of thanksgiving to Pacha-Mama. This rite presupposes that we give to Mother Earth what we want our Claretian family to never lack during the whole year.



We will need the following materials for this prayer:

** Bible, * lighted candle * water, * earth, * mirror.*

During the meeting we can stop for a second to look at the different materials that we have previously prepared for this encounter with our mother earth.

Blessed mother Earth,
here we are to thank you for your protection
giving all that we need to live.
From you we learn every day to take care of ourselves
and reciprocally to take care of you, appreciating you more and more.

The strength and energy with which you renew everything
is the same one resurrected in Christ.
Today we recognise you as our mother
who always offers us the best of you,
in spite of so much mistreatment.

Often unconsciously.
At other times, consciously orchestrated
by companies with mega-projects that like a cancer
damage the whole ecosystem that you give us.

We ask you, mother Earth, to forgive us.
May we as Claretian Family continue
our process of ecological conversion,
being effective in the organisation of your defence.

Amen

Historical Review

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/earth-day/background>

1. The General Assembly designated April 22 as the International Mother Earth day through a resolution adopted in 2009.
2. Its origin dates back to 1970, a period when environmental protection was not a priority on the political agenda.
3. The 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm laid the foundations for the global awareness of the interdependent relationship between human beings, other living beings and our planet. Likewise, June 5 was established as World Environment day and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) was created, the UN agency in charge of setting the global environmental agenda, promoting the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development in the United Nations system and act as an authoritative advocate of the environment.
4. In 1992, more than 178 countries signed Agenda 21, the Declaration on Environment and Development and the Declaration of Principles for Sustainable Forest Management at the "Earth Summit", held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil).
5. By 2022, the UN proposes to unite us in the development of the Green Economy, which is to promote the transition to low-carbon, resource-efficient and socially inclusive economies.

Context

BIG CURRENT ISSUES: The mother Earth's suffering

What is damaging to Mother Earth? Water and soil pollution, deforestation and/or burning of forests, extinction of plant and animal species, loss of biodiversity, air pollution... All factors induced by human activity.

1. **Increased pollution from plastic use.** Today societies need support to reduce the use of plastic, creating a collective awareness of alternatives to replace this material. Already our indigenous communities are applying it.
2. **Increased consumption of fossil fuels.** Countries that are world powers in fuel extraction may be seeing the management and alteration of prices to finance arms campaigns as an advantage.
Russia has the world's largest natural gas reserves, which are managed by the Russian monopoly Gazprom, which owns 94% of production. In the global context, Gazprom owns 25% of the world's gas reserves and 16% of world production.
For its part, the US has increased its total fossil fuel production in 2022: dry natural gas accounted for the largest share, 46%; crude oil, 30%; coal, 15%; and natural gas plant liquids (NGLP), 9%.
3. **Impact on population health.** Air pollution causes 7 million deaths each year and is a driver of climate change.

Time to Reflection

Laudato Si and its Proposal for a Green Economy

We reflect on this excerpt from the article "[The Ecological Economics. 3rd Goal of Laudato Si](#)", published on the website www.jpic-jp.org on 24.03.2021



*** When reading this text, hold a glass of water in your hands.

The 3rdGoal, Ecological Economics, is a complex one since it involves sustainable production, fair-trade, ethical consumption, ethical investments, divestment from fossil fuels and any economic activity harmful to the planet and the people, investment in renewable energy, and similar issues.

Further, the expression *Ecological economics* is somehow heterogeneous. Pope Francis in his encyclical does not use it. There he talks on *Integral ecology* and on environmental, economic and social ecology, the one that clearly respects any human and social dimension, making it synonymous with *Ecological economics*. He calls to take into account the environmental impact of any economic concrete undertaking (n. 140 number of Laudato Si), because the Economic growth, tending to produce 'predictable reactions' should be an *economic ecology*. 'The protection of the environment should be *an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it*' (n. 141). Pope Francis doesn't make things any simpler introducing also the concept of *cultural ecology*, 'with the patrimony of nature, there is also an historic, artistic and cultural patrimony' (n. 143) and the *ecology of everyday life*, "Authentic development includes efforts to bring about an integral improvement in the quality of human life" (n. 147).

The article "New Economy-10 Innovative Approaches" describes several useful proposals to better understand what the green economy is:

1. **An Economy for the Common Good.** It calls for working towards the common good and cooperation as value above profit-orientation and competition, which leads to greed and uncontrolled growth.
2. **Social Solidarity Economy.** It is an alternative to capitalism and other authoritarian, state-dominated economic systems. In it, ordinary people play an active role in shaping all of the dimensions of human life: economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental.
3. **Ecological Economics.** By treating the economy as a subsystem of Earth's larger ecosystem, and by emphasizing the preservation of natural capital, the field of ecological economics is differentiated from environmental economics, which is the mainstream economic analysis of the environment.
4. **A New Economics for Planetary Health.** A healthy relationship with creation is one dimension of overall personal conversion, which entails the recognition of our errors, sins, faults and failures, and leads to heartfelt repentance and desire to change (LS, 218).

5. **Integrative Economic Ethics** shows how to integrate economic action into a general ethical conception of human action.
6. **New Economic Thinking (NET)**. The Institute for New Economic Thinking - founded in the wake of the financial crisis in 2009 – is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization devoted to developing and sharing the ideas that can repair our broken economy and create a more equal, prosperous, and just society. Its vision is an economy serving the society.
7. **Small is Beautiful - Rethinking Economics**. This book brought critiques of mainstream economics to a wider audience during the 1973 energy crisis. It ranks among the 100 most influential books published since World War II.
8. **Towards a new Eco-Social World Economy**. A green and inclusive global economy is the key for a sustainable future.
9. **To Have or to Be? - A new blueprint for mankind**. The actual economic system is determined by the question: What is good for the growth of the system? The question should be, What is good for people?
10. **The Economics of Good and Devil - The Mephisto Problem**. If Mephisto, the well-known figure from Goethe's 'Faust,' could make our economic laws, his goal would be to damage the human race as much as possible, as he says at one point, "You know how we, in deeply wicked hours, destroy the human race".

The Claretian Gaze

Claret and his relationship with mother Earth

On the farm that P. Claret bought in Port-au-Prince (Cuba), he developed a project to help and house poor children. He showed his interest in planting fruit trees and plants; once again acting, bearing fruit in everything he did. He sowed with his "own hands" showing his sensitivity and appreciation for the land he touched, served and worked to offer it as a common good. He offered it for the benefit of the most in need and preferred by our Father God in a planned, considerate and careful way. He ensured that this work could reach future generations by writing down the details on how to care for and cultivate the bountiful land.

567. I walled and fenced the entire extension of the farm, and then I divided the land into different squares, and both around and along the lines of the squares I planted trees which were found on the island and from abroad, so they could be acclimatized and used as a botanical garden, listing all the trees, and by numbers put in a book, explaining the nature of each tree, where it came from, its usefulness, how to propagate and improve itself, etc., etc. To the effect; I had planted more than four hundred orange trees by my own hands and they were growing admirably. There also had to be a part of the farm for the animals on the Island and from other places so that they could use and improve the breeds.

Prayer



**** As we read, we clench a handful of earth in our hands.*

PRAYER FROM THE HEART TO YOU, MOTHER EARTH. AS CLARETIAN FAMILY TODAY WE ACKNOWLEDGE YOU

Moderator: In Inca mythology, Mama Pacha or Pachamama is a fertility goddess who presides over planting and harvesting. Pachamama is usually translated as "Mother Earth", but a more literal translation would be "Mother Universe". Pachamama and her husband Inti are the most benevolent deities. They are worshipped in parts of the Andean mountain ranges, which stretch from present-day Ecuador to Chile and Argentina. Algonquian legend has it that beneath the clouds lives Mother Earth, from whom is derived the Water of Life, which nourishes plants, animals and humans. She is also known as Nokomis, "the grandmother".

Choir 1: For indigenous, Afro-descendant and peasant communities, earth is "mother" and as such gives life. Without it there is no identity or family. In this sense, the land is not private property but communal, it belongs to the collective and it is inconceivable that it should have a single owner. It is not an inert object, it is a source of life and is sacred, so it is necessary to live in harmony with it and find a balance so that it serves current and future generations.

ALL TOGETHER: **We thank God that the indigenous communities,
through their cosmovision and their harmonious relationship with nature,
make us aware of the need
to eliminate the irrational exploitation of NATURAL PROPERTIES
and to abandon practices that endanger nature.**

Moderator: In the 1980s, laws were put in place in Colombia to allow communities to have collective land titles and to own the places they have ancestrally inhabited. However, the struggle of black communities to move their territories forward continues, and they are still working to see their communities reborn. And there are many other countries where indigenous people still do not own their land.

Choir 2: The territories of black communities are, along with indigenous and peasant communities, those most affected by forced displacement. In many cases, their areas coincide with spaces planned for the development of infrastructure megaprojects such as road networks, port and hydroelectric zones and poly-pipelines.

ALL TOGETHER: We thank God for the historic struggle of ethnic communities, even exposing their lives - as in the case of Berta Cáceres and her unpunished murder - to protect the livelihoods and dignity of resurgent peoples. and to guarantee the survival of all humankind.

Moderator: The indigenous cosmovision is a differentiated, collective framework, with alternative knowledge and wisdom, meanings that had an origin and that, against the current, continue to have a purpose, a raison d'être. Our original ancestors conceived the earth -nature-, as a living being with sensitivity. When they came into contact with it for their subsistence, they made it part of themselves, not to take it over as absolute owners, but to form a union of equal beings, with equal responsibility for mutual care and preservation.

Choir 1: Today, the denunciations and declarations of human rights organisations, environmental NGOs, Afro and indigenous communities, and academic authorities are not enough... A different, sustainable, alternative development model to neoliberalism must be built right now.

ALL TOGETHER: We ask forgiveness for our arrogance, our anthropocentrism, for believing ourselves to be masters of nature and life, for invisibilising and excluding groups and communities that have different ways of life that are more dignified and more solidary than others.

Moderator: The strength of human rights as a theoretical foundation is indispensable for affirming the human being as an end in itself, and in this context, a refutation to the contrary does not hold water. Our current challenge is the urgent need to protect nature in the face of human devastation, whose anthropocentrism has endangered indigenous territories and the territories of ethnic groups.

Choir 2: Human beings and nature are two beings that need each other as a complement that forms an identity of their own. The indigenous peoples know what this is all about. They have always known it. Their relationship with nature is not only economic, but also cultural and spiritual. Their identity is linked to it. They know that if their territories are destroyed or depleted, it is their very survival that is at risk. The care for the environment that environmentalists have been warning about for decades has been known to them since the beginning of history.

ALL TOGETHER: We ask the God of Life to give us the necessary strength. the ancestral wisdom, the coherence of life to guarantee dignified conditions dignified conditions for all the excluded, the impoverished, the "nobodies".

Gospel Reading. Recall the Creation Story (**Gen 1: 1-31**)



**** As we listen to the Word of the Lord, we look at ourselves in the mirror*

Meditation.

1. What is my cosmovision?
2. Can we reverse the course of destruction our planet is on?.

Commitment



**** We light the candle as a sign of hope*

- **At a personal and community level:** To reduce the damage from fossil fuels and promote a green economy, you can:
 - Replace the use of plastics with alternative materials, cloth or paper bags...
 - Use the car rationally and strategically to reduce fuel consumption.
 - Do not wear or buy any ornaments, bracelets, crosses, etc. that are made of metal, so as not to promote metal mining.
 - Plant a tree or shrub and take care of it, with the common good in mind.
 - Promote care for the environment in your surroundings: rivers, seas, plants, animals, etc...
- **As a Claretian Family:** We invite you to join the global campaign #BreatheLife organised by the UN to reduce air pollution, improve people's health and preserve our climate. Find out how you can help and register at <https://breathelife2030.org/>

Final Prayer

Father, you who showed us your infinite love
through that first gesture of love of Creation
give us a merciful and generous heart towards our poorest brothers and sisters,
abandoned by our selfishness and indifference.

Grant them to be valued and respected there in their place, in their land.
Make us aware of our lifestyles
and in our daily lives direct our Spirit and actions
to care for and be kind to our sister Earth.

We ask this through Jesus Christ your son, who admired your creation
and communicated to us that more is the love you have for all your children,
through the intercession of the Virgin Mary who is our mother. **Amen.**