



International Solidarity Reflection

School Sisters of Notre Dame

Shalom

Cry of the Earth

January 2022

Introduction

"The earth mourns and dries up. The world is exhausted and decayed. Heaven and earth are weakened. The earth has been defiled by the feet of its inhabitants, who overlooked the laws, violated the commandments and did not keep the eternal contract." (Isaiah 24: 4-5) *Pachamama* as the Andean Indians call mother earth is the main victim of our current society's effects on the environment. Extreme events related to climate change are accumulating: pollution in the cities, in our water sources, the destruction of ecosystems and the loss of biodiversity. It is no longer only Mother Nature, but also the poor who are crying out. Floods and fires do not distinguish between people and trees. One fear could be that climate change will enter our living rooms in the same way Covid-19 did, sparing no one. We need to start anew and stop self-destruction. That is why Pope Francis through *Laudato Si'* challenges us to seek a new beginning, a new paradigm of relationship, production and consumption.

Call to prayer

Lord of the entire Universe, we express my love for our Mother Earth. It is your great love, which envelops us all, desiring our happiness and fraternity on Earth. Today We bless her and all that is created on her. We also ask forgiveness for the pain we have inflicted on her. We have looted her bowels and stained her skin with the blood of her children. Teach us, Father and Mother, to respect and love her with the same love that you love us. Give us a just conscience to achieve reverence for all that you have created and thus bring us closer to a new dawn full of justice and peace. Amen! (*Prayer for the Earth, Salvador Perez, Associate P.R.*)

Experience

Nature is a vital force without which we could not exist. However, we have made a garbage dump of a paradise. We have caused the disappearance of five hundred species of animals. We have plundered the planet in search of fuel and coal. The numbers show: some 46,000 to 58,000 square miles (120,000 to 150,000 km²) of forest are lost each year; 1.4 billion pounds (635 million kg) of garbage enter the ocean annually. Waterborne diseases are a leading cause of death for children under the age of five, killing nearly 1,000 infants every day. The Amazon serves the economic interests of transnational corporations. Pan-Amazonian society is multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious. In it, the dispute for the occupation of the territory is intensifying more and more. (*Aparecida No. 8*) Aboriginal communities are under pressure to abandon their lands to free them for extractive and agricultural projects that do not pay attention to the degradation of nature and culture. Environmental pollution causes the death of 12.6 million people a year, according to the report of (UNEA-2), and rainforests could disappear

completely within a hundred years if the current rate of deforestation continues. Disasters cause damage of great dimensions with serious consequences.

Questions:

1. What are the cries of suffering of our Mother Earth in the country/locality where you live?
2. What personal and communal actions are you taking to reverse the climate crisis in defense of the earth and the environment?
3. How does the sense of urgency of the climate crisis challenge you in light of the future it will leave for the next generations?

Reflection

We need to become aware of the situation and act to mitigate our footprint on the planet. Global political bodies must lead solutions. However, in our role as active citizens, we can contribute to mitigate the harmful effects of aggression on the environment by modifying our consumption habits because of the common good. We can evaluate the source of the energy and products we consume. As Pope Francis points out, we must slow down our hectic pace of life in order to recover the ability to perceive, contemplate and value what surrounds us. We must free ourselves from the consumer indifference that prevents us from seeing those who do not have, from the individualism that isolates and numbs us, the superficiality that prevents us from dreaming and working for a better world, the aggressiveness that paralyzes dialogue, and from irresponsibility of our actions on the natural environment and towards our brothers and sisters. We must return to tenderness, compassion and concern for others in order to love the world and all its creatures generously and to restore just relationships with others.

Action

Since the earth and its resources are God's gift to all humanity, consider contemplate the Creator at work, be more reverent, just and economical in your use of created things. As educators in what we are and do, take all opportunities to educate for an integral ecology and to restore the right relationship with creation. What more specific action can you take to be more aware and make choices that preserve and help to protect the planet?

Prayer

Today, we stand in solidarity with the collective responsibility of all human beings and raise our prayer asking forgiveness from you, our Creator. Forgive us, for we have polluted the atmosphere that surrounds and protects us. We have polluted the water because of our negligence and selfishness. Because of us, fish are dying and rivers are dirty and uninhabitable. Forgive us, for the desertification of our land, which we have made sterile for future generations in the name of progress. Forgive us, for we have not heeded the cries of our sister and mother earth. Have mercy on us and open our hearts to behold in all your creation your face as you live among us. We ask your forgiveness and your blessing. Amen

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for the International Shalom Network.*

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