



International Solidarity Reflection

Environment

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Introduction

God asked us to take care of Creation; we all are responsible for it. Creation is a gift from God to people, given to us to meet God. It has its own goal, its own purpose ordered by God. Therefore, care for the environment is much more than guaranteeing good conditions for present and future generations. We are deeply united with God, with all other persons, with everything in Creation.

Call to Prayer

Let us be more conscious of the present suffering of all people and Earth. Let us be touched by and recognize it as our own suffering. Let us remember that we are co-workers with God in God's work. We are invited to care for Creation. St Francis of Assisi felt deep respect, amazement, and delight in Creation as expressed in his poem *Canticle of the Sun*. The hymn is the fruit of his spiritual maturity and praises God as almighty, magnificent, and wonderful Creator who is praised for Creation and by creatures. Let us join these praises with voice, with actions, and with prayer!

Experience

The destruction of our natural surroundings is faster; global climate change is now a reality. People experience these changes in their bodies, in fact. We experience terrible heat and drought, storms and heavy rains, extraordinary earthquakes, melting glaciers, floods, wanting harvest, and extended illnesses.

Since 1750, the carbon dioxide concentration has grown by a third, from 280 ppm (parts per million) to 380 ppm. Until now, the poorest countries have emitted far less greenhouse gases harmful to nature than industrial countries. At the same time, industrial countries can more easily adapt to new situations. Therefore, climate change is a matter of global justice.

(Memorandum about the Care of Creation by the Hungarian Catholic Bishop Conference, 3)

Extinction of species, today, is a thousand times faster than what has been normal due to natural causes. In the future it may be even faster! Creatures as presenters of God's will and design have their own value. Biodiversity is important for the stable functioning of living systems, and through these it is indispensable for humanity who depends on these systems. In Hungary there are about 1,100 different species and habitats near extinction; for example, the lily of the valley oaks and forest-steppe habitats.

Pollution and other physical interventions are dangerous for our water base. Millions of people are losing their livelihoods connected with rivers, lakes, and seas. The condition of the world's oceans is alarming and distressing. Oil, chemical pollutants, rising sea temperatures have catastrophic effects: dead areas, dying coral reefs, smaller amounts of fish.

Reflection

“Loving God, we acknowledge your greatness: all your actions show your wisdom and love. You formed us in your own likeness and set us in the world to serve you, our creator, and care for all creation.” (Eucharistic Prayer IV)

“Each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection. For each one of the works of the ‘six days it is said: ‘And God saw that it was good.’ By the very nature of creation, material being is endowed with its own stability, truth and excellence, its own order and laws. Each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God’s infinite wisdom and goodness.” (New Catholic Catechism, 339)

“The dominion granted by the Creator over the mineral, vegetable, and animal resources of the universe cannot be separated from respect for moral obligations, including those toward generations to come.” (New Catholic Catechism, 2456)

Action

Climate change is a kind of “test” for humanity. We just need to give the right answers; all of us work together, everyone take part. The challenge is significant, but if we live by gospel values then situations can change for the good of all.

- Let us make an effort to work together with all well-intentioned people!

“The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast... Let us help each other to deepen our awareness ... to lead people out of the desert, towards the place of life, towards friendship with the Son of God, towards the One who gives us life, and life in abundance.” (Benedict XVI, Sunday, 24 April 2005).

- Let us invite someone for tea, for a walk in nature, just to share and to be together!

Life is uncertain and fragile; we all experience that now in new ways. We can use this common experience as a new language, understandable by all people. Therefore, climate problems provide an opportunity to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and to share Christian values and a vision of humanity.

- Let us use with deeper awareness this new language in our teaching and education!

Prayer and Eucharist deepen our gospel living. Prayer lifts up our spirits, strengthens us, and leads us to action, becomes the source of action. In the Old Testament, particularly in the Psalms, we find praise of God by the very being and beauty of creation!

- Let us be more attentive during common prayer and write our own alleluia psalms!

Closing Prayer

May you be praised, O Lord, in all your creatures,
especially brother sun, by whom you give us light for the day;
he is beautiful, radiating great splendor, and offering us a symbol of you, the Most High ...

May you be praised, my Lord, for sister water,
who is very useful and humble, precious and chaste ...

May you be praised, my Lord, for sister earth, our mother,
who bears and feeds us, and produces the variety of fruits and dappled flowers and grasses ...

Praise and bless my Lord, give thanks and serve him in all humility. (St. Francis of Assisi)