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#### INTRODUCTION and EXPLANATION

# 20 Salesian of the POSTER 23 Day

"Care of creation, our mission", missions and integral ecology: this is the theme of 2023 Salesian Mission Day, fruit of the collaboration between the Sector for the Missions and the Sector for Youth Ministry, in particular in Marco Fulgaro and Emanuela Chiang, in a spirit of collaboration, mutual enrichment and, indeed, integral ecology.

In the booklet you will find many interesting insights that will consider the vast theme of integral ecology from different points of view, starting precisely from the Salesian reflection that illustrates the entire path. Each of the contributions, which are a clear example of the richness of the Church, is preceded by a quotation from Pope Francis' *Laudato si'*.

The prayer accompanies and seals the work done and the process of converting hearts and minds.

At the centre of the poster is the tree, symbol of Creation, nourishment of life and expression of God's love, which gives us eternal life in the wood of the cross. In the shade of the tree, the Christian community, diverse in origin and service, is gathered around Jesus Christ and his Word. On the right, the native peoples, custodians of Creation, reap the fruits of the earth while respecting its natural processes.

On the left, the alliance between generations who, with different sensitivities and concerns, unite to care for the environment through water, symbol of life and the Holy Spirit. In the background, those displaced from their land for reasons due to the climate arrive in a new place and wait to be welcomed, while a farming community works the land in common and leads a simple life, respectful of the Earth and committed to renewable energy.



We live in an interconnected world and the events of every day, the most beautiful as well as the most tragic, remind us of this. Before our eyes, we see the theory of the butterfly effect put into practice, whereby the slightest action always has effects on the other side of the planet, effects that sometimes take on a far-reaching impact, for good or for evil.

Driven by the dynamic freshness of Laudato Si', we want to continue the journey of the Church along the beautiful path of integral ecology, which is nothing other than the total and unconditional application of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our lives, a systemic approach that spills over into every sphere of our existence. The Salesian Family too can have its say in this broad panorama and the many experiences around the world prove this. Environmental sensitivity for the care of Creation, of the environment understood as the place and relationships of the human family, is spreading more and more and is becoming a flourishing ground for planting new seeds of the Kingdom of God.

Youth Ministry has been entrusted with the animation and coordination of this process of conversion of minds and hearts, and we must all feel involved and participate. Elaborating a missionary reading and then living in our daily lives a proclamation of the Gospel, from the perspective of integral ecology and care for Creation, is necessary and exciting for every Christian.

"Care of creation: our mission" means caring for our common home, the beautiful gift of our God, proclaiming the Gospel to young people, especially those most in need, and showing them the beauty of this way: this is also our mission!

D. Angel Fernandez Artime, SDB

Rector Major



## SALESIAN INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

Emanuela Chiang Sector for Youth Ministry – Integral Ecology

"Since everything is closely interrelated, and today's problems call for a vision capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis, I suggest that we now consider some elements of an integral ecology, one which clearly respects its human and social dimensions"

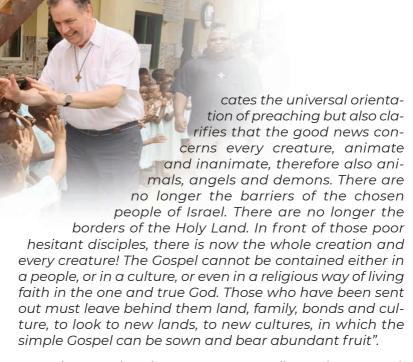
(L.S. 137)

At the end of Mark's Gospel, before ascending to heaven, Jesus left a last important message with his apostles, which in its literal translation from the Greek sounds like this: [Πορευθεντεσ εις τον κόσμον άπαντα κηρυξατε το ευαγγέλιον πάση τη κτίσει] "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation (Mk 16:15)".

While I was still wondering about the true meaning of the proclamation to "the whole creation", I asked Fr Enzo Bianchi for help, who in 2018 commented on this Gospel passage as follows:

"The situation of future witnesses, assailed by unbelief, is therefore desperate! How will they be able to announce the good news if they do not even believe? [...] Despite the persistence of this little faith, he sends them on a mission without boundaries, truly universal. A cosmic mission [...]. Wherever they may go, in all lands and cultures, Jesus' disciples must proclaim the good news, proclaiming the Gospel to the whole creation. In this way, Jesus certainly indi-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> https://www.monasterodibose.it/preghiera/vangelo/12274-annuncio-vangelo



Even the apostles, the envoys par excellence (οι απόστολοι), those who received the missionary mandate from Jesus himself, find it difficult to understand... I try to imagine their perplexed looks as they receive this assignment without fully understanding it...

There is, therefore, no need to be discouraged if we too sometimes find it difficult to enter our role as 'missionaries'. In fact, every Christian is a missionary. Mission is not an option but is an integral part of being followers of Christ and, to be truly so, we must assume its cosmic dimension: a dimension in which there are no boundaries, barriers nor distinctions, in which a leap towards an integral vision which embraces "the whole creation" is required.

In order to arrive to this, or at least to aim at this, I have understood that it is necessary to rid ourselves of, as did St Francis, of all the unnecessary things which no longer serve us, not only of superfluous material things, but also of our certainties, our intellectual and cultural scaffoldings, of our empty practices, of structures designed only to give us security, which become barriers, trenches enclosing and from which it is hard to escape.

#### Fr Enzo Bianchi says

"The emptier it is, the more space for the Gospel to be announced with frankness and, like a naked seed falling into the earth, it sprouts immediately and all the more easily."

And so, I ask myself again: how can we **today** bring the missionary mandate of every Christian into play? What does Jesus ask us to proclaim today **to the whole creation**?

- I think that first of all we must recover the sense of Creation in all its unity. We are a single body. 'The whole Creation' is a singular expression, sometimes translated as 'all creatures' but there is a big difference. If Jesus speaks of a Creation, it is from there that we must start. Our conversion starts here!
- We then become aware that we are immersed in a suffering Creation, and this suffering must also be seen in a unified sense. If a part of the body is ill, the whole body suffers. Treatments which do not take into account a situation in its entirety, and which aim only at aspects and short-term solutions, are not effective.
- Bringing good news to a suffering Creation in its totality therefore becomes a difficult task. In my opinion, the good news which we can bring is hope, the confidence that there is still a possibility of saving the world from the socioenvironmental crisis in which we are all immersed, in which each of us has a co-responsibility and a specific task. This is a hope based on facts



and concrete commitments. It is a living testimony that things can change starting with us.

- The best news is the facts. St Francis inspires us when he says that the Gospel must be proclaimed with life, and then, if necessary, also with words. - The news must be brought to the poor first. They are in fact the privileged target of Jesus, and, therefore, our being missionaries becomes close to suffering creatures, to the marginalised, to those who are excluded, to the least, to those on the outskirts, to those who are

- To be close to them, to really help them, we will not be able to avoid facing the environmental crisis. It is the poor, in fact, who are the first victims of the climate and environmental crisis. It is an obligatory step. There is no choice. This is not another option that we can choose or not. There will be no effective solutions to reducing poverty which do not jointly and adequately address the environmental crisis.
- Facing up to the climate crisis means looking in the mirror, looking at ourselves in depth, honestly examining our behaviour and understanding the consequences.
- If we do not yet feel able to state this news despite all its adversities and contrary currents, despite the mass which pushes in the opposite direction... it is because we are still held back by unnecessary frills. Let us shake off everything that is not needed and let us be filled and enveloped by the Breath of Life, which, like a wind, will inflate our sails and take us in the right direction.

With this spirit, the Salesian Congregation has taken its first steps in an Integral Ecology<sup>2</sup>, following the path shown by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*. We wish to invite you to reflect on these thematic points and, on all the contributions which follow, so as to reflect on an approach to mission in this particular historical period. Happy reading and may you accomplish an integral mission!

forgotten.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> In this regard, we invite you to read the Salesian Congregation's Position Paper on Integral Ecology, published in September 2022.

# CARE OF CREATION

#### Our mission

Salesian Mission Day (SMD) was launched in 1988 as an opportunity for the whole Salesian Congregation to strengthen its missionary spirit.

The first recipients are the Salesian community and the Educative-Pastoral Community (EPC), then the youth and all who belong to the Salesian Family.

The SMD is not necessarily a one-day event; it is important to offer an educational-pastoral itinerary, of which SMD is the culminating point, as an expression of the missionary spirit of the whole EPC.

Each Province chooses the date or period that best suits

its own rhythm and calendar in order to live this strong moment of missionary animation. This booklet is addressed to Salesians and educators who want to receive some hints for their own formation the animation of the SMD: it contains much material that each Province and ECP may decide to use in different ways, or by taking only parts of it. The SMD poster helps visualize the theme and makes it manifest to all, so it is important that it be given a place of prominence in every Salesian house. The videos are available on the Missions Sector social channels.





Settore per le Missioni Salesiane



@missionisalesiane





Settore per le Missioni Salesiane



The work for the realisation of the SMD materials, under the guidance of the Sector for the Missions, involved many people from different Provinces all over the world. We thank Emanuela Chiang, in charge of Integral Ecology in the Sector for Youth Ministry, for her great help and supervision.

#### **Let's Pray**

Missionary activity springs from, and is sustained by, the encounter with God.

All members of the EPC contribute through prayer accompanied by sacrifices made for Salesian missionaries and missionary vocations. Every 11th of the month is an occasion to pray in the light of the monthly Salesian Missionary Intention or through the specific SMD prayer.



### Let's support a Project

For the SMD,
a project is proposed to all
the communities,
not just to raise money,
but as an educative
experience of concrete
solidarity for young
people.

#### **Let's Evaluate**

The evaluation after the SMD is as important as the preparation and celebration. Consideration should be given to how SMD was able to foster and promote a missionary culture in the local or provincial community through the year's proposed theme, considering suggestions for improvement in the future.



1988

Guinea: The dream continues 1989

Zambia: Project Lufubu 1990

Timor Leste: Young Evangelisers 1991

Paraguay: Street children

1992

Peru: Christ lives on the Inca trails

1993

Togo: Don Bosco and Africa - a Dream Come True 1994

Cambodia: Missionaries, Builders of Peace 1995

India: In dialogue to Share the Faith

1996

Russia: Lights of Hope in Siberia 1997

Madagascar: Young Man, I say to You, Arise 1998

Brazil: Yanomami New life in Christ 1999

Japan: The Difficult Proclamation of Christ

2000

Angola: Gospel, Seed of Reconciliation 2001

Papua New Guinea: Walking with Young People 2002

Missionaries Among Young Refugees 2003

Commitment for Human Promotion in the Mission

2004

India: Arunachal Pradesh The Awakening of a People 2005

Mongolia: A New Missionary Frontier 2006 - 2007

Sudan: The Salesian Mission in Sudan 2008

HIV/AIDS: The Salesians' Answer - Educating for Life

2009

Missionary animation - Keep Your Missionary Flame Alive 2010

Europe: The Salesians of Don Bosco walk with the Roma-Sinti 2011

America: Volunteers to Proclaim the Gospel 2012

Asia: Telling the Story of Jesus

2013

Africa: Journey of Faith 2014

Europe: We are the others -Salesian attention to Migrants 2015

Lord send me! -Salesian Missionary Vocation 2016

Come to our aid! Initial Proclamation and the New Frontiers in Oceania

2017

... And they stayed with us: Initial Proclamation and the Indigenous peoples of America 2018

Whispering the Good News. Initial Proclamation and Vocational Training in Asia 2019

"Without knowing it, they hosted angels." Initial Proclamation among Refugees and IDPs in Africa 2020

Europe: Initial Proclamation through Oratories and Youth Centres. "Rejoice..."

2021

One Father, One Family

– Missionary Solidarity
as Initial Proclamation

2022

Communicating Christ Today. #MissionariesOnline 2023

Care of Creation: our Mission





## ENVIRONMENTAL ECOLOGY

**Luca Fiorani**Sophia University Institute
Professor of Foundations of Civil
and Sustainable Economy

"When we speak of the "environment", what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it."

(L.S. 139)

The planet is sick. And we are the virus. But, unlike the virus, we can change our behaviour and act in favour of the planet and its inhabitants, today and tomorrow. What are the most important diseases? Let us start with the most worrying one, that of global warming. In fact, the Earth's temperature has always changed. What is special about the climate change which began with the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century? The reason this time is that it is mankind who is causing these changes by emitting greenhouse gases, among which the most important is carbon dioxide. To understand what is happening, let's try to answer some questions. What is climate? What temperature are we talking about? Why is it so important?

Climate is an average concept. It makes sense to say that in a tropical forest the climate is hot and humid. It makes no sense to say that the climate in the Sahara Desert is cold because snow rarely falls. In a word, climate matches the average weather conditions of an area.



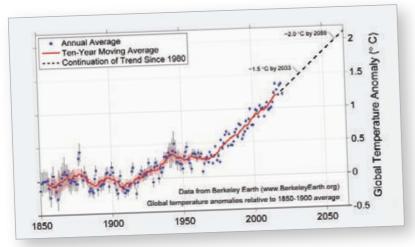
The best climate information is provided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The IPCC was founded in 1988 by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 (along with the former US Vice President Al Gore), it has published six Evaluation Reports (1990, 1995, 2001. 2007, 2014, and 2021). In the last Report, it stated that:

- from 1850–1900 to 2011–2020 the temperature of the planet increased by 1.09° C (of which 1.07° C was caused by humanity);
- since the second half of the last century, terrestrial glaciers and Arctic ice have shrunk:
- from 1901 to 2018 the sea level rose by 0.2m;
- in recent decades, extreme weather events have increased.

The most important meteorological and climatic piece of data is temperature. Often climatologists, in order to prove global warming, show the graph of the anomaly of the annual global average of surface temperature or, briefly, anomaly of global temperature. Are you lost? Don't worry. Let's take this definition apart piece by piece. It only appears complicated. Obviously, we are interested in the surface temperature, that of the air in which we move and breathe, not the coldest of the high atmospheric layers in which jets fly. Then, in order to have summary idea as to how things have gone in a year in the planet, we take the average of all the temperatures found in that year for all the planet. This is the global annual average. Finally, the global temperature anomaly is simply the difference between the global temperature and an average of the global temperatures over a fixed period.

Global temperature anomalies relative to the average for 1850-1900. Blue dots: annual averages Red line: ten-year sliding average Dotted line: continuation of the trend since 1980 Continuing like this, the anomaly will be 1.5° C in 2033 and 2° C in 2059, respectively.

What makes this temperature increase so important? First



Global temperature anomalies relative to the average for 1850-1900. **Blue dots:** annual averages. **Red line:** ten-year sliding. **Dotted line:** continuation of the trend since 1980.

Continuing like this, the anomaly will be 1.5°C in 2033 and 2°C in 2059, respectively.

and foremost, remember that we are talking about an average increase. On the continents, it is almost 2°C. On the oceans, it is less than 1°C, due to the property of water being able to absorb a lot of heat with the same temperature increase. The problem is that in some regions of the globe, it is more pronounced. In Germany, for example, the temperature increase was 2.3°C in 2020 and, according to a reliable model, it will be between 3°C and 7°C at the end of this century.

Global temperature anomalies in Germany relative to the

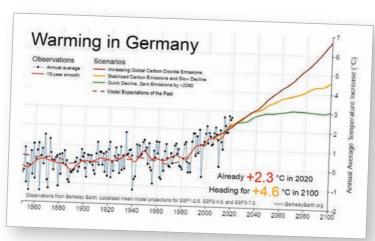
Global temperature anomalies in Germany relative to the average for 1850-1900.

Points: annual averages.

Red line: ten-year sliding average.

The brown, yellow and green lines correspond to scenarios in which carbon dioxide emissions increase, are stable and decrease, respectively.

Dotted line: Results of the model in the past.



average for 1850-1900. Points: annual averages Red line: tenyear sliding average The brown, yellow and green lines correspond to scenarios in which carbon dioxide emissions increase, are stable and decrease, respectively. Dotted line: Results of the model in the past.

Secondly, it is necessary to remember all the direct and indirect negative effects of the temperature increase. Among the direct effects, we remember desertification, floods, sinking of inhabited areas. Among the indirect effects are wars, migrations, social tensions...Global warming is not the only disease on the planet. We can mention three more:

- air pollution by fine particles. It is estimated that it causes 9 million deaths per year, exceeding the mortality of Covid;
- water pollution due to plastics. We produce half a billion tons of plastic a year. At this rate by 2050, there will be more plastic in the seas and oceans than fish;
- biodiversity loss. After the disappearance of the dinosaurs, we are causing the sixth mass extinction. We have already lost almost half of marine and terrestrial species.

What can be done? Do we become depressed? No. Humanity is moving in the right direction, starting with the 1987 Montreal Protocol which banned chlorofluorocarbons. As you may recall, in the 80s of the last century, scientists had discovered that those gases caused a hole in the ozone layer. Today, that hole is closing. In 2015, the Paris Agreement was adopted, which provides for a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, so as not to increase the planet's temperature by more than 2°C. On 2 March 2022, the UN Environment Assembly established an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to draw up a plastic reduction treaty by 2024. What about you? You can do a lot with lifestyle, consumer options, the choice of governments and opinion campaigns. To convince you that your actions are important, I tell you a (true) scientific story.



2.5 billion years ago, oxygen was not present in the atmosphere and human life would not have been possible. Then, thanks to the small contribution of countless and (apparently) insignificant single-celled organisms – the cyanobacteria – air was enriched with oxygen until it assumed its current composition. Between one and ten millionths of a metre in size, they are so simple that they do not have organelles and reproduce by mere splitting but... they contain chlorophyll and produce oxygen thanks to photosynthesis.

In order to make the ecological transition of our socio-economic system, we need the contribution of all. As Pope Francis wrote at the 2020 EcoOne international conference: "The attainment of an integral ecology requires a profound interior conversion, both at a personal and community level. As you examine the great challenges which we face right now, including climate change, the need for sustainable development, and the contribution which religion can make to the environmental crisis, it is essential to break with the logic of exploitation and selfishness and to promote the practice of a sober, simple and humble lifestyle."



#### The "GOSPEL" of **CREATION**

Fr. Joshtrom Isaac Kureethadam SDB Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development of the Holy See Sector of "Ecology and Creation" - Coordinator

"Faith convictions can offer Christians, and some other believers as well, ample motivation to care for nature and for the most vulnerable of their brothers and sisters. If the simple fact of being human moves people to care for the environment of which they are a part, Christians in their turn realize that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith. It is good for humanity and the world at large when we believers better recognize the ecological commitments which stem from our convictions"

(L.S. 64)

The second chapter of Pope Francis' landmark encyclical letter Laudato Si': on the Care of our Common Home significantly carries the subtitle: "The Gospel of Creation". The encyclical affirms that creation is truly gospel, evangelion, i.e., "good news".1 In the wake of modernity, we have been accustomed to look at the natural world as inert matter - the Cartesian res extensa, as in modern science, or as merely a storehouse of resources, as in the neo-liberal economy. The encyclical instead offers a profoundly positive vision of the natural world and reminds us that it is above all creation, and as such is "good news".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The etymological root of the Greek word "evangelion" is the verb ἀγγέλλω (angello) which means "to announce" or "to bring news of" plus the prefix εὐ (eu) which simply means "good" or "well". Thus, evangelion means good news.



Creation is gospel/good news on account of three fundamental truths.

First of all, creation has a basic goodness about it as we read in the Book of Genesis. In the Priestly account of creation, we find this repeated expression after each day of God's creative labour of bringing things and living beings into existence: "and God found it good" (Gen 1:4,10,12,18,21,25). On the sixth day, it is expressed even more emphatically by the Creator after the creation of everything: "God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good" (Gen 1:31). Some of the early Fathers of the Church like Justin, Theophilus of Antioch and Tatian, in opposition to the prevailing Gnostic dualism which depicted the created world as radically evil, emphatically affirmed the goodness of creation.

For a believer, it is the basic goodness of creation in God's own eyes that constitutes the intrinsic worth of every created reality. If God created the world, then the world and everything in it, including all forms of animate and inanimate matter, must have value. We are invited therefore to recognise that other living beings have a value of their own in God's eyes: "by their mere existence they bless him and give him glory", and indeed, "the Lord rejoices in all his works" (*Ps* 104:31). Each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God's infinite wisdom and goodness. Man must therefore respect the particular goodness of every creature, to avoid any disordered use of things. (*Laudato Si*', 69)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 339.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2416.

Secondly, we need to remember the fundamental truth about creation as an act of God's love. Our physical universe is not an accident, or a fluke event, as it is sometimes presumed in secular thought and culture. Pope Francis notes that within the Judaeo-Christian tradition, "the word 'creation' has a broader meaning than 'nature', for it has to do with God's loving plan in which every creature has its own value and significance". (Laudato Si', 76) Every creature is brought into existence out of love and with a definite purpose. "Every creature is thus the object of the Father's tenderness, who gives it its place in the world." (Laudato Si', 77) We are not here by chance, that each of us has been willed and loved by God.

How wonderful is the certainty that each human life is not adrift in the midst of hopeless chaos, in a world ruled by pure chance or endlessly recurring cycles! The Creator can say to each one of us: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you" (*Jer* 1:5). We were conceived in the heart of God, and for this reason "each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary". (*Laudato Si*, 65)

Creation is indeed a tangible expression of the triune God's outpouring of love. Our common planetary home is central to God's own purposes. We cite the Indian theologian Samuel Rayan in this regard: "Think of the infinite care with which God watched over the evolution of the earth and accompanied the endless process of its unfolding into myriad forms of life and movement and colour and shape and scent. The earth is central to God's purposes. It is significantly placed at the heart of the

<sup>4</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, Homily for the Solemn Inauguration of the Petrine Ministry (24 April 2005): AAS 97 (2005), 711.





prayer Jesus bequeathed to his disciples<sup>5</sup>."

Thirdly, creation is "good news" as it is God's first and primordial revelation. According to Pope Francis, "God has written a precious book, 'whose letters

are the multitude of created things present in the universe'.6" (85) Creation is, indeed, the very first epiphany of God. Some of the early Fathers of the Church, like John Chrysostom, spoke of the two Books of God: the Book of Works and the Book of Words; the book of the creatures and the book of the scriptures. The book of Works is precisely the creation, the entire physical universe. We may recall in this regard the observation of the medieval mystic, Meister Eckhart, that "every creature is a book about God," and "so full of God is every creature". Referring to the problem of species extinction earlier in the encyclical, Pope Francis notes with sadness: "Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right. (33)

In all religious traditions, there have been innumerable sages and holy men and women who were able to see God in the mirror of His creation. The example of St Francis of Assisi is one of the most illuminating in this regard. For the "poverello" (poor man) of Assisi, every flower, every bird spoke to him of the Creator, of God. "Saint Francis, faithful to Scripture, invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness." (Laudato Si', 12)

In the context of the contemporary ecological crisis, as humanity faces the spectre of the very collapse of civilization, <sup>10</sup> we need to remember Jesus' parting commission to all his disciples to "go and preach the good news to *the whole of creation*" (*Mk* 16:15).

- <sup>5</sup> Samuel Rayan, "The Earth is the Lord's" in *Ecotheology: Voices* from South and North, ed. David G. Hallman (New York: Orbis Books, 1994), 130-31.
- <sup>6</sup> Meister Eckhart, Sermons.
- <sup>7</sup> See in this regard the recent UN report: https://www.undrr.org/gar2022-our-world-risk.



# ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY: a Mysticism that animates us

**Fr. Federico Tartaglia**Parish priest, Nativity of Mary Most Holy, Rome - Animator Laudato Si'

"LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore – Praise be to you, my Lord. In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs."

(L.S. 1)

Pope Francis often speaks of mysticism, and he does so when he means to speak of a spirituality capable of radically transforming the life of the believer. In Evangelii Gaudium we find a surprising formulation: "Today we feel the challenge of discovering and transmitting the 'mystique' of living together, of mingling, of meeting, of taking each other in our arms, of leaning on each other, of participating in this somewhat chaotic tide that can be transformed into a true experience





of fraternity, into a caravan of solidarity, into a holy pilgrimage." (n. 87) The mysticism that the Pope has in mind is not something detached and rarefied, the verbs he uses are 'road' verbs and

outline the image of the chaotic journey of a caravan. Mysticism does not push us away from walking with other people, but rather to mingle with them, leaning and supporting ourselves, taking on the burdens of others. It is a mysticism of contact that urges shepherds to have the smell of sheep and that is played out in the tight fold of relationships: "It is the way of relating with others that really heals us instead of making us sick, it is a mystical, contemplative fraternity that knows how to look at the sacred greatness of its neighbor, that knows how to discover God in every human being, that knows how to endure the harassments of living together by clinging to God's love". (n. 92) Mysticism does not run away from the tribulations and harassments of everyday life, and for this very reason it does not make us sick, rather it heals us.

It is this mystique that the Pope has in mind when he speaks of ecological spirituality. A mystique that encourages us to mingle and lean on the common home that we have exploited and humiliated for too long. Many Christians believe that ecological spirituality is a post-modern residual spirituality that winks at *New Age* and environmentalist currents. It is not uncommon to hear objections from those who believe that the Church should be concerned with more important things that concern the 'salvation of souls'. To the faithful and pastors who reason according to this narrow view, it is now more necessary than ever to show how many of the disasters that afflict Creation come not only from irresponsible greed and consumption, but from a spirituality that has contributed to the perception of divine creation as a merely material and profane reality. This perception, in addition to contributing to

a culture of consumption and waste, ends up weakening spirituality itself, which deprived of its central element, the reality of Creation, risks generating a mysticism of flight and detachment.

The Gospel has consequences in our way of thinking, feeling and living, and mysticism is only such that it transforms our ways. We Christians are responsible for having misunderstood and thus not defended the sacredness of Creation that leads us to recognise in every creature our brothers and sisters. It is no coincidence that at the heart of ecological spirituality is St. Francis and his Canticle of the Creatures. When the Saint of Assisi sings praise to God, he does so through Brother Sun and Sister Moon. He leans on them, mingles with them and through them he feels the praise for God. He lives in Creation and feels the fraternal embrace of every single created being - from brother hawk to the little wormy brothers he moved from the street and who he felt were brothers because of their humility – because in them he feels the love of his High and Almighty Good Lord. His is an interrupted mystical pilgrimage in which he experiences the universal brotherhood of people and creatures, in which he recognises "how God is above, within and on the side of all created things" (St Bonaventure).

Today, it is more necessary than ever to orient every spiritual journey towards this same horizon where maximum communion with God coincides with maximum communion with Creation. This allows us to be united uninterruptedly with God and shows how our intimate happiness coincides with that of Creation. The ongoing devastation of the common home is in fact caused by the lust for possession that is truly responsible for our unhappiness and that of the whole of Creation. This is the vicious circle into which men have ended up plunging Creation. Every sin is not only an offence against God, but also an offence and serious harm to creatures. Ecological spirituality

is born out of the contemplation of beauty that frees us from the lust for possession and acquisition, driving us to enjoy the divine presence through every single creature. Only this contemplation is able to quench our craving and naturally push us towards a sober and serene lifestyle.

Pope Francis is aware that such a spiritual horizon has often been regarded "as an irrational romanticism", and he knows well that this is the dilemma that every Christian community must face: to consider it as romantic nostalgia for pleasant places and bucolic times, or to begin to recognise in ecological spirituality the culmination of all spirituality? If we only try to add a few chapters to our catechisms, we will continue to think of ecological conversion according to romantic schemes; if, on the other hand, we open ourselves up to an integral conversion, a new world will open up and we will perceive everything that exists as a place of the revelation of the fatherly mercy, of the glorious presence of the Risen One, and of the subtle breath of the Spirit. We will realise that everything is connected! Our faith will lead us into an astonishing uninterrupted contemplation of the divine mystery, and this will provoke in us an unexpected inner joy, freeing us from false needs and polluting addictions, just as the Jester of Assisi did: "through the footsteps impressed in nature, he follows the Beloved everywhere and makes himself the ladder of all things to reach his throne" (St Bonaventure). Those who do not accept this theological evidence continue to have the gaze "of the dominator, the consumer or the mere exploiter of natural resources". Those, on the other hand, who open themselves to the salvific nature of Creation, come to contemplate it and feel united to all that exists and "sobriety and care will spring forth spontaneously" (L.S., 11).





#### CLIMATE induced DISPLACEMENT

Amaya Valcárcel Holy See Migrants and Refugees Section - Researcher

"Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. They are not recognized by international conventions as refugees; they bear the loss of the lives they have left behind, without enjoying any legal protection whatsoever."

- (L.S. 25)

In recent years, the international community has acknowledged the magnitude of the climate crisis and has made significant efforts to address its impact through various agreements, including efforts to build legal frameworks, to collect data and to conduct rigorous analyses on the consequences of the climate crisis, as well as the engagement of many civil society actors - in particular young people - in responding to this challenge.

As Pope Francis declares, "we are in the midst of an emergency". The continuing climate crisis threatens people's fundamental rights, and displacement caused by climate change is increasing.

The climate crisis has a very human face. It is already a reality for multitudes of vulnerable people worldwide. The Catholic Church shows a warm pastoral care for those who have been displaced from their homes by its effects.

The climate crisis can lead to displacement when homes become uninhabitable, or livelihoods are lost. Displacement

can take place either due to rapid-onset triggers, mainly extreme weather phenomena like floods, storms, droughts and wildfires; or slow-onset processes, like desertification, depletion of natural resources, water scarcity, rising temperatures, and sea-level rise.

The climate crisis is already driving and exacerbating movements of people due to short-term and long-term natural disasters. In the course of 2020 alone almost 31 million people were displaced due to natural disasters, the highest number ever recorded. It is estimated that over 253.7 million people were displaced by natural disasters from 2008 to 2018, with such disasters displacing three to 10 times more people than armed conflict worldwide, depending on the region in question. By 2050, an estimated 250 million people will be affected by forced displacement, and the most vulnerable groups in society will continue to suffer the most. (IDMC, 2020)

Climate crisis is also a cause of conflict around the world, which can be vet another

> driver for displacement. The nexus is real even though not always direct. In some situations, climate crisis leads to the depletion of natural resources which in turn can spark conflicts between communities and nations for the possession of scarce resources. Climate change can be seen as a threat multiplier, intensifying existing conflicts where resources are scarce. As Pope Francis warns in Laudato Si', "it is foreseeable that, once certain resources have been depleted, the scene will be set for new wars, albeit under the quise of noble claims".



Sadly, lop-sided forms of development can also contribute to increases in poverty and displacement. As Saint Paul VI warned nearly half a century ago, "man is suddenly becoming aware that by an ill-considered exploitation of nature he risks destroying it and becoming in his turn the victim of this degradation." Our distorted economic models themselves contribute in this regard. "Some economic rules have proved effective for growth, but not for integral human development. Wealth has increased, but together with inequality, with the result that "new forms of poverty are emerging."

In the case of natural hazards like extreme weather events, it might be possible for displaced victims to return. Displacement, however, will be permanent for most in the case of severe natural disasters and in the face of long-term processes like sea-level rise.

The sea level will continue to rise as our climate warms, threatening cities and agricultural and grazing land around the world. Globally about 145 million people live within a meter above the current sea level, and almost two-thirds of the world's cities with populations of over five million are located in areas at risk of sea-level rise. Almost 40 per cent of the world's population live within 100 km of a coast.



In the midst of these complex realities, the most vulnerable might not be even able to relocate no matter what the circumstances are, due to poverty or other reasons. It is crucial to respond to immobile populations or those unable to move far distances.

In fact, international protection for climate-induced displacement is limited, piecemeal, and not always legally binding. In particular, climate displaced people are not always defined as a category requiring protection and are not explicitly recognised by the 1951 Refugee Convention. Therefore, a protection gap often exists for them both when they are displaced within national borders and across international borders. However, no matter their legal status, all States are obligated to protect their fundamental human rights. In addition, all climate displaced people deserve proper care and assistance, in agreement with existing international law and humanitarian standards.

The Catholic Church is concerned by these challenges and the impact of the climate crisis on the dignity of human beings. Together with governments, other Christian denominations, other faith traditions and people of good-will, the Church aims to respond to these challenges.

The magisterium of the Catholic Church has already considered the plight of internally displaced people, together with other categories of migrants, and has produced reflections and instructions concerning their pastoral care, reflected particularly in the Encyclical Letter "Laudato Si".

The Pastoral Orientations on Climate Displaced People (POCDP)<sup>1</sup>, developed in 2019 through a listening exercise of Bishops' Conferences and Catholic organisations worldwide, explains the new challenges posed by the present global scenario and suggesting adequate pastoral responses. The main purpose of these orientations is to provide, in turn, a series of key considerations that may be useful to Bishops' Conferences, local churches, religious congregations, Catholic organisations, Catholic pastoral agents and all Catholic faithful in pastoral planning and programme development for the effective assistance of climate displaced people.

The POCDP are deeply grounded in the Church's reflection and teaching and in its practical experience responding to the needs of displaced people, both displaced within the borders of their countries of origin or outside.

As Pope Benedict XVI asked in 2010: "Can we disregard the growing phenomenon of "environmental refugees", people who are forced by the degradation of their natural habitat to forsake it – and often their possessions as well – in order to face the dangers and uncertainties of forced displacement?".

In the preface of the POCDP, Pope Francis points the way forward: "To create a new future for their children, they need to be allowed to do so, and to be helped. Welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating are all verbs of helpful action. Let us remove, one by one, those boulders that block the way of the displaced, what represses and side lines them, prevents them from working and going to school, whatever renders them invisible and denies their dignity".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The POCDP can be found in different languages: https://migrants-refugees.va/climate-displaced-people/



# **ECOLOGY** of **DAILY** LIFE

Antonio Caschetto Laudato Si' Movement

"Authentic development includes efforts to bring about an integral improvement in the quality of human life, and this entails considering the setting in which people live their lives. These settings influence the way we think, feel and act. In our rooms, our homes, our workplaces and neighbourhoods, we use our environment as a way of expressing our identity."

(L.S. 147)

An integral improvement. With these words, in Laudato Si', we speak of the dream of the human being, who for centuries on Earth has been seeking optimal living conditions in which to live. We think of migrations, wars, scientific research, social media, Roman baths. The whole of history seems to be characterised, in man, by this search, be it with its good and bad characteristics. Who among us does not dream of a better world?

Sometimes, however, by chasing a dream, there is a risk of absolutising, relativising, of giving up following a common path, and personalising our well-being. It is thought, and this is the great deception which has characterised history, that my well-being is possible only at the expense of others. We know that resources are limited and so if I have to feel good, I have to go to someone to get these resources.

With a very strong simplification, we can say, at its very root, that almost all wars have been fought about this. Limited resources, and many contenders. This aspect, yesterday as today, must always make us reflect on a very current theme,

which has social dimensions of great impact for entire populations in the world, which in numerical terms is much more serious than the pandemic and wars in the world: the theme of climate injustice. Industrialised countries – Europe, the United States of America, China – have an im-



pact on the planet with percentages of  ${\rm CO_2}$  and other greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere, which are disproportionate to other countries. Those who pay for the worst effects of the climatic crisis are the countries around the Equator, with crises made all the more violent from the continuous increase of the average temperature of our planet, and consequently from the greater energy gathered by wind and water.

This general picture, although synthetic, serves us to put the meaning of our mission on Earth into a better context. Why bring ecology into our daily lives? If we reduce our consumption, will we be able to see the living conditions of our brothers and sisters on the other side of the world improve? Probably, if our goal is to see this continuous increase in average temperature stop thanks to our sacrifices, we risk being disappointed.

Laudato Si', a beautiful letter written seven years ago and addressed to all the people who inhabit the planet, goes far deeper. It's not just about lowering the thermostat or riding more bikes, but we have to learn more and more to have an 'integral' look. It is not just about an 'ecology' (after all, for many years, there have been numerous ecological movements in the world, which fight with great passion), but precisely about an 'integral ecology'.

To better understand what integral ecology is, it is enough to look at St Francis of Assisi. "He shows us just how insepar-



able the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace." (LS 10). In this brief picture which Pope Francis offers us in this encyclical, when he describes the Poverello of Assisi, we can find the meaning of our mission on Earth. Adam was created "in the image and likeness" of God who "put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it" (Gen 2:15). Guarding is therefore one of the very first actions which are required of man, but not only with regard to the planet and nature. St Francis does not speak of 'nature', but of 'creation', in which every element therefore can be 'brother' and 'sister', be it, water, be it fire, and corporeal death as well. And they are inseparable to protect creation, to pay attention to the planet, to search for justice and, in particular, to listen to the cry of the poor, the concrete commitment to high standards in politics and a public commitment which has a prophetic voice, and finally - but not least - the care of one's soul and the authentic relationship with God who created us.

This is integral ecology! If we look in all directions, in the 'horizontal' towards our brothers and sisters and towards other creatures, in the 'vertical' towards God who created everything, and in the 'inner' glance towards our soul, then we realise better how all our daily life has need of an ecological look. It is not only the thermostat at home! We support therefore with great force the ecological conversion in its three levels: the inner level of spiritual conversion, because when the heart is

educated, we are sure that the change will be long-lasting; the second level of daily life and style of life. and, finally, the third global level, trying to change the technocratic model, above all in relation to the fossil fuels' industry. We are very committed, in this regard, to involve the worldwide Catholic community, starting with dioceses, religious orders, to divest from fossil fuels.

"... A union of skills and a unity of achievement ... can only grow from guite a different attitude. The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion." (LS 219). Let us walk together, with a synodal step. This is the style of the Laudato Si' Movement, in the awareness that ecological conversion can never be a privilege of a few but must be lived and shared together with a community. We consider therefore very important the contribution which the Laudato Si' Movement and its clubs can bring about every day, through its ethos of prayer, approach to life and prophetic actions. Thanks to its members and various groups we can promote initiatives of ecological conversion, in particular certain times of the year, such as Lent. This year, for example, the initiative of 'fasting from gas' (relaunched by Vatican News, Avvenire, the Diocese of Assisi, and the Christian Family) was a great success, through which, in addition to praying for peace, we were also invited to carry out a 'fast' from fossil fuels, which in many areas of the planet carry links to the arms industry.

Every commitment requires sacrifice. This commitment can spread over time, to each of the 52 weeks of the year. But the most important thing is to always maintain an 'integral' look, which allows us to make the whole planet which we inhabit more beautiful, from its ecosystems to glaciers, from its major cities to rural villages, from our neighbourhood to our home, from our room to our heart.





## EVANGELICAL POVERTY

**Fr. Damian Taiwo Akintemi** SDB Novice Master, West Africa-South Province (AOS) Ghana

"Such sobriety, when lived freely and consciously, is liberating. It is not a lesser life or one lived with less intensity. On the contrary, it is a way of living life to the full. In reality, those who enjoy more and live better each moment are those who have given up dipping here and there, always on the look-out for what they do not have. [...] Happiness means knowing how to limit some needs, which only diminish us, and being open to the many different possibilities which life can offer."

(L.S. 223)

Poverty is often referred to as lack of money, food, shelter or other basic needs. However, talking about evangelical poverty we refer to the gratuitous self-giving: to give of oneself and share, overcoming the continuous temptation of profit, of selfish calculation, of exploitation and manipulation of others, of oneself or things. Rather, finding one's happiness, joy and peace in communicating the self, in giving a hand, in loving. Such virtue we often find precisely among financially weak people: they share gladly, spontaneously what they have, among themselves and with guests; moreover, they are happy and honored to be able to share. In the world, the first place to think that poverty emanated from is Africa. It is not true that we are poor by birth. One can be a poet by birth; one can gifted with this talent, but not poor by birth. We can only become poor, just as we can become lawyers, technicians or priests after a long and demanding curriculum of studies, tiring years of fatigue, heavy-duty exercises and training. Poverty, we can say that, is a career on its own and, to tell the truth, is one of

the most complicated. It demands hard practical training, so hard and demanding that the Lord Jesus decided to keep directly for himself the teaching of this discipline.

The evangelical significance of Salesian poverty is seeing in Jesus of Nazareth who though was rich but made himself poor. Embracing voluntary poverty becomes a value for those called by God to be religious. Why do we choose a life of poverty? We look up to the simplicity of Christ's life, because Jesus willed to be poor, because he chose poverty as the constant companion of his life and because he used simple style of life to carry out the mission trusted to him. For this reason, poverty for the kingdom is possible and can be loved, because Jesus practiced it and made of it the instrument for revealing the love of God for men. The Salesian chooses this way of life in order to make real the Gospel of Christ. One of the articles of the Constitutions of the society of St Francis de Sales says: "... We choose to follow 'the Saviour who was born in poverty, lived deprived of everything and died stripped on the cross'" (C72). This simple style of life is visible among the Africans who live by the sweat of their brow; they express joy and contentment





in the little they have to live on. The Salesians testify to the Gospel value of our poverty with simple style of life inherited from Don Bosco. One of the most interesting things is the sensitivity to the environment they are living in and the people who surround them.

The witness of the Salesian poverty is marked by sharing of the temporal goods at their disposal. Following the example of Don Bosco, who lived life detached from the worldly possession, the Salesian emulates his simplicity of life, full of service to the young and the entirety of humanity. We learn to rely on God's providence and the generosity of benefactors. Therefore, the Salesians commit themselves to the life of work and temperance in order to contribute their quota to Mother Earth.

In response to the urgent appeal of the Holy Father in his Encyclical *Laudato Si*, Salesians engage themselves to care for the environment where they are situated. On entering into any Salesian environment, one can see immediately the positive response to the call of the Holy Father to care for our common home. Work, work, work is one of the hallmarks of the sons of

Don Bosco. It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the many things coming from the benefactors and benefactresses, to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us, particularly, being in solidarity with the poor young people. In order to contribute to the societal growth, Salesians in Ghana, particularly, the novitiate community committed itself to Agro projects to help in the sustainability and the formation of the young novices who are aiming to be Salesians. The project includes an animal farm with varieties of livestock, crop farming, vegetable farming, bee farming, fish farming and many others. This is with the intention of not becoming only consumers but also 'Prosumers'.

In solidarity with the poor, the Salesians in this part of the globe do not spare their energy going around the world, soliciting or fund to help the poor young people to become good Christians and honest citizens according to the mind of Don Bosco. The spirit of sharing helps us to be spiritually detached from what we possess, and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack. This implies avoiding the dynamic of dominion and the mere accumulation of pleasures. It calls for acquiring only what is necessary. In order to show the novices such simplicity of life and solidarity with those around us, the novitiate community embarked on time-to-time road construction, which is an expression of our poverty and care for the mother earth. Temperance, as recommended by Don Bosco, helps the Salesians to avoid wastage. It helps to eat only according to one's capacity, to drink moderately, to dress simply, to avoid using flashy cars or expensive and unnecessary gadgets except those necessary for the mission. In this way, we show our solidarity with the poor around us.

In conclusion, our evangelical poverty becomes something positive when it is the fruit and manifestation of people's love for each other and for all of creation: it appears as a charism of humility, simplicity, detachment, solidarity and fraternity with all, beginning with the most needy, hospitality, "the option for the poor" and the "promotion of justice" and overcoming every form of exploitation, of becoming bourgeois (capitalistic) and consumeristic. Let us therefore, welcome the invitation of the Holy Father to care for our common home in order to live in iov. peace and harmony.



#### RADICAL HOPE and INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Education in a time of Climate and Theological Emergency

**Peter Blaze Corcoran** - Professor Emeritus Environmental Studies and Environmental Education -Gulf Coast University, Florida

"The notion of the common good also extends to future generations. [...] We can no longer speak of sustainable development apart from intergenerational solidarity. Once we start to think about the kind of world we are leaving to future generations, we look at things differently; we realize that the world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others. [...] Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us."

- (L.S. 159)

We live in a climate-changed world. It is very difficult to face the prospect of the coming disruption of life on Earth as we have known it. Clearly, we as a human society have not made the economic and social changes necessary to avoid the predicted consequences of our actions. Now we face something even more difficult – the predicted consequences are already with us: we are living in the greatest existential crisis humankind has ever faced. With a massive effort by governments, business, and individuals, we can make changes – but it is now or never. Half of all the emissions in history have been in the last 25 years. The industry knew the consequences of their profit-making business model.

Consider for a moment this tragic thought - all the con-

ditions that produced God's creation as we have known it no longer exist. All the conditions that produced human civilisation are no longer with us. Indeed, we face a civilisational crisis. This anthropogenic climate change has created a climate emergency.

The continuity of God's creation is in jeopardy, and this creates an emergency for faith study and faith practice. I think that we also need a practical theology to help us discern how to live in a climate emergency, we are at a turning point in religious thought as we seek to find a worldview

that guides us toward the loving of the world in crisis and the healing of the world in crisis. We need a theology that provides meaning and purpose for youth, a theology that can show the way toward the spiritual transformation needed to generate radical hope and intergenerational solidarity.

Pope Francis has widely called for a "pact on education for and with future generations." The key ethical principle for such a pact and for a sustainable future is that of "intergenerational equity." As we think about what kind of education we need, surely, we need that which values the participation of younger generations and authenticates their absolute right to a future undiminished by the present generations in power.

As educators and education policy-makers, we face a dual crisis with regard to climate. The education can be based on the ethic of intergenerational equity: the future is now! Youth



are the present, not the future! We must stand in solidarity across generations to rethink education.

And what reasons do we have for hope? How do we construct hope in times of emergency?

As American environmental studies leader David Orr says, we must do our best to equip young people to do heroic things. For, surely, we know that hope is not a given and that is remains to be constructed. But hope on a distant horizon is still hope. We need to go to where the pain is, we need to go to where the wounds are. There, we can find healing and reconciliation and we can find a wider consciousness with all of the elements. We must find ways to fire our prophetic, poetic imagination.

For me, informed radical hope arises from an unconditional love for the world and is grounded in the prophetic and poetic spiritual imagination.



generational equity, and a preference for the poor. It provides a dramatic, holistic, and new dimension to traditional Catholic social teaching. It provides a foundation for ecology education. Pope Francis offers an inspiring way forward – allowing spirituality to "motivate a more passionate concern for the protection of our world." This concern arises from a love relationship to God's creation and from an ongoing commitment inspired by spirituality in keeping with integral ecology.

This passionate concern leads directly to action based on spirituality. What has come to be called spiritual activism is one of the most promising sources of hope that I see. In my work with indigenous peoples – theirs being the oldest human heritage of spirituality – and with grassroots activists, and with faith communities, I see the power of spiritual activism. There is an awakening, perhaps a reawakening, of the wisdom that faith requires action. In my experience over 50 years of teaching, I see that taking action based on our ethics and spiritual beliefs is the antidote to despair.

As educators we can study this tradition - but we must not stop there. Learning how to take action is a perfect opportunity for intergenerational solidarity. Action, then, is a source of hope.

> Together with the power of imagination and with the profound wisdom of integral ecol-

> > ogy, we can construct the radical hope needed to reimagine education.

> > In this overwhelmingly challenging time of climate and theological emergency, we are called to respond. My point is that a way forward is through intergenerational equity, collaboration, and what I call intergenerational solidarity. And that together we can construct radical hope through imagination, integral ecology, and spiritual activism. Thus, we can find a way through the current emergency and, with God's help create a just, peaceful, humane, and sustainable future.



# indigenous people as CUSTODIANS of CREATION

**Fr. Gaudencio Campos** SDB Manaus Province, Brazil (BMA) – Dessano Indigenous Tribe

"Its essential to show special care for indigenous communities and their cultural traditions. They are not merely one minority among others, but should be the principal dialogue partners, especially when large projects affecting their land are proposed. For them, land is not a commodity but rather a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values. When they remain on their land, they themselves care for it best. Nevertheless, in various parts of the world, pressure is being put on them to abandon their homelands to make room for agricultural or mining projects which are undertaken without regard for the degradation of nature and culture."

- (L.S. 146)

First, as an indigenous Salesian, I propose to the readers to depart from the usual perspectives and try to see the reflection from the point of view of the indigenous people of Brazil in the Rio Negro region. Mainly because the writer is guided by the method of auto-ethnographic research or self-portrait, that is, not something told by outsiders, but by someone who lives and has his own identity base, the indigenous culture.

In our region, when educating and instructing men and women, elders begin with a very particular expression: 'This is what your grandparents, my grandchildren or my nieces and nephews used to say'. It is a means of locating one's place in one's culture, in terms of understanding creation. These are

ways for adults to remind children and young people of the cosmovision, the truth that guides the lives of indigenous peoples, particularly those of the ethnic groups of the Alto Rio Negro.

In the indigenous experience, nature is composed of animals, forests, rivers, birds, human beings, etc., and contains physical and spiritual elements, since everything stems from the creator spirit, considered by the indigenous peoples as the grandfather of the universe. According to the indigenous people of the Dessano people of Rio Negro, the grandfather of the universe created the world in harmony and needs to be maintained that way by us, his grandchildren. Therefore, daily effort is made to keep the balance in order, whether through blessings or other fundamental care for the well-being of nature and humanity.

Shamans have the mission to remind people of their responsibility to take care of nature, because it is the home of humanity. Considering this, houses are first of all, blessed so that, through this ritual, they are on the same level as pure spirit or gourds with purified earth, to maintain the place where humanity lives. Taking this reality into account, the members of the community work together not to break this spell, through attitudes that promote overall well-being.





Caring for creation is essential to maintain the well-being and the future of people, as nature provides everything. It is inconceivable to understand human beings without nature or extraneous to creation. There is, in the indigenous understanding, a sacred or spiritual relationship, a true symbiosis, because everything that concerns nature also concerns humanity.

I remember that in the past and even today, when working in the fields, men and women bless the place or the land because they believe that the place has a history, and therefore has life. And my mother, entering the newly burned field for the first time, said "I invoke you in favour of my children, their grandchildren, that you grant that they bear good fruit and the presumed aggression to nature be for the sustenance of their descendants." And this plea to the ancestor was a manifestation of respect for nature, which generates life.

Therefore, everyday life is guided by this spirit in relation to nature, and this applies to hunting, fishing, minerals, etc. However, the salvation of each individual also passes through the salvation of nature or creation, and the guardianship of the common home as the good of all, not only of indigenous peoples, but of all humanity. Let us be true guardians of the common home!



### RUDOLPH LUNKENBEIN and SIMÃO BORORO

Fr João Bosco Maciel Monteiro SDB Campo Grande Province, Brazil (BCG) Collaborator for the Cause of Beatification of martyrs Rudolph Lunkenbein and Simão Bororo

"Let us celebrate the glorious death of Christ, the glorious death of Rudolph and Simão, the blood of Tereza, Lawrence, Zezinho and Gabriel, the anguish and solidarity of Ochoa, the Bororo, and the Salesian missionaries of Meruri! 15 July is a historic date in the history of the new Missionary Church. Rudolph and Simão are two more martyrs, broken in love, according to the Word of Christ. The native gave his life for the missionary. The missionary gave his life for the indigenous man. For all of us, indigenous and missionary, this blood of Meruri is a commitment and a hope. The indigenous will have land, the indigenous will be free! The Church will be indigenous!"

(Mgr Pedro Casaldáliga)

In the mid-20th century, large projects began to emerge to explore the resources of the interior of Brazil, and to realise this objective, everything else had to be removed. Thus, the most fragile of indigenous groups and nature were threatened by

agri-business and began to cry out for help. The Bororo people of Mato Grosso were losing their lands, were seeing their territory shrink and the beautiful landscapes of central Brazil were being replaced by vast fields of soya monoculture... It was in this context that the young Fr. Rudolph Lunkenbein began his missionary journey in Meruri, an in-



digenous Bororo village in Mato Grosso. However, he found a group that was already reduced in numbers and was tired of fighting, with no prospects for the future, and completely discouraged.

Assuming the new orientations of the post-conciliar Church, Rudolph fought for the realisation of the programme wanted by the CIMI (Conselho Indigenista Missionário): Church renewed in its missionary work, with its option for the most disadvantaged, the indigenous, and the struggle for land. Together with his community brothers, he took on these renewed ideals and committed himself to the rebirth of the Bororo people. His evangelising path was the conquest of land, the recovery of health, the revival of culture and the inner strength of the indigenous people who no longer wanted to live. He went in search of the

necessary means for that dream to become a reality. He fought with the Bororo for the recovery of their land and the demarcation of the indigenous reserve; he sought the means necessary to improve their health; he revitalised cultural events: music, songs, dance, handicrafts, bringing competent people to Meruri to help them; he sought

help at home through relatives and friends; he wrote to them:

"First of all, I would like to express a heartfelt thanks and 'May God reward you' for the many offerings I always receive from all of you. I know very well that there is no value in offering the poor a fish. But that you must give them the hook and explain how to catch a fish with it.... They simply want to expel the natives from this region. But over time it has come to this, that the natives know that these lands belong to them...This is only possible with God's help... And this often gives us firm strength and courage, with the ability to decide, to go with trust in God in the direction of the future".

Until the last moment of his life, he worked with the Bororo, preparing the land for plantations. He died with his clothes stained with soil, sweat and blood of the

land he tried to recover so that the Bororo could live in peace and harmony. At the supreme moment, his friend Simão was not afraid to risk his life by going to defend

him. However, he died hours later, forgiving his murderers. Simão was an indigenous missionary among his people, a mason and house builder. He knew the secrets of the herbs of the countryside and knew how to treat and soothe ailments and illnesses with them. Simão was a friend of children and dreamed of fertile lands full of birds, animals, fruits and clean rivers... Simão was chosen by God for his supreme moment of togetherness with Fr. Rudolph: martyrdom.

They gave their lives, so that the Bororo people could have a full life: sufficient land on which to live; security to plant and harvest; joy to see their children and grandchildren born and grow up in a free land; to celebrate their rituals and live without fear and feel themselves to be worthy children of God.

Today, the situation has not changed for the better; other indigenous peoples are still fighting to see their land demarcated. Several indigenous leaders, religious and lay people committed to this cause are being assassinated. Large agricultural projects continue to invade the interior of Brazil and trample on indigenous communities; their world continues to call for help... Faced with this reality, the words of Pope Francis remain a warning to all.

Rudolph and Simão also continue to inspire us today in the cause for the Kingdom of God; in the fight for life, for a clean world; in respecting cultural differences, in living in peace, loving others not for what they have, but for what they are: a human being, a brother, a fellow traveller, custodians of a free land, without violence. Their memory lives on and encourages us to be custodians of creation by living in harmony with nature and in peace with all.





# ECOLOGICAL HOLINESS: HILDEGARD of BINGEN

Carmine Taddeo - Green VIS

"The rich heritage of Christian spirituality, the fruit of twenty centuries of personal and communal experience, has a precious contribution to make to the renewal of humanity. I would like to offer Christians a few suggestions for an ecological spirituality grounded in the convictions of our faith, since the teachings of the Gospel have direct consequences for our way of thinking, feeling and living. More than in ideas or concepts as such, I am interested in how such a spirituality can motivate us to a more passionate concern for the protection of our world. A commitment this lofty cannot be sustained by doctrine alone, without a spirituality capable of inspiring us, without an "interior impulse which encourages, motivates, nourishes and gives meaning to our individual and communal activity".

(L.S. 216)

"Every creature is God's shining, sparkling mirror."

Benedictine nun, prophetess, healer, herbalist, naturalist, philosopher, poet, mystic, but above all a woman, Hildegard of Bingen who lived between the 11th and 12th centuries AD, is described as a rough diamond with a thousand facets, transparent and precious, small but not invisible and, as such, brilliant.

The chronicles of her life tell us that she was born in 1098, in late summer, in Bermershein in the Rhine Hesse region of Germany, the last of ten children, and that she entered the convent when she was only eight years old. It is still Hildegard's chronicles that tell us of her mystical gift. From the tender age

of three, in fact, without vet knowing the words to describe to others what she was feeling, she began to experience visions, describing them as follows: God. alreadv in forming me. when mv mother's in womb breathed life. imprinted in my soul this vision. Already at the age of three I saw a light so great



that my soul was appalled, but because of my tender age I was unable to express how I felt.

Hildegard formed herself by studying the medieval texts of Dionysius the Areopagite and Augustine and her fame began to spread more and more, coming into contact with important thinkers such as Bernard of Clairvaux and even leaving the convent to confer with bishops, abbots, nobles and princes, a truly extraordinary gesture for a nun and woman of the Middle Ages. She studied theology, music and medicine for a long time, demonstrating an uncommon erudition, but preserving intact a profound humility, thus recalling her origins; in a letter, in fact, she wrote: I am a being without education, and I know nothing of the things of the external world, but it is inwardly in my soul that I am educated.

The scholarly interests that so profoundly characterise Hildegard's life led her to question man, nature, what constitutes the universe and how each part of creation contributes to showing God's wise work in the world. Why is the figure of this woman important in the context of nature reflection? The answer can be found in the writings she herself composed. In her two encyclopedic works dedicated to the natural sciences, she skillfully collects and updates all the medical and botanical knowledge of her time. Her intention is to create an inventory of Creation in which she synthesizes everything related to cosmology, cosmography, man and his activities.

"God has placed man as the most beautiful of gems on earth, in whose splendor the whole of creation is reflected".

Man as microcosm and Creation as macrocosm intertwine in Hildegard's reflections in a close and tight manner. The one cannot be separated from the other but are mirrored and interconnected. Every man is subject, according to Hildegard, to rules that transcend and immensely exceed him; this has an effect on us, since it places us before the forces of nature, the only one capable of nourishing us, but also of destroying us.

In man, then, is summed up a great moral responsibility: that of caring for the cosmos. This responsibility, in fact, consists in caring for nature and for oneself, because the awareness that man too is part of nature and comes from it cannot fail.

"Behold, you have both heaven and earth in you!".

If we were to try, then, to sum up Hildegard's idea of nature in one word, it would have to be unity. The reason for this is the knowledge that everything is interconnected and interwoven: man as microcosm is the perfect synthesis of soul and body, with nerves, blood, passions and movement. However, similarly in the macrocosm, the world, trees, grasses, life are in turn marked by sap, leaf and branch parts, movement and change, just as, again, rivers are the veins of the world and its nourishment.

This ultimately led her to concern herself with health and medicine, realising that the nourishment that comes from nature positively or negatively influences the soul and body. Diseases, therefore, are caused by the lack of balance between the Cosmos, Man and the Forces that regulate actions between them. Her garden, nature and her pen will be a cure for those who write to her seeking light and advice in times of difficulty. In the final analysis, then, man is the one who encloses heaven and earth or, as she called it, the enclosure of wonders of God. This is not because he has a particular primacy over everything else; but only because of the fact that in man, the guardian of creation, God's plan for the garden and all the creatures that populate it is realised. How then could Hildegard's invitation to return to being custodians of nature not be timely, precisely in these years of environmental and social crisis? Let us return to looking around us, to protecting and communing with what surrounds us, to rediscover the balance to which Hildegard aspired.

# LIVED

"We are always capable of going out of ourselves towards the other. Unless we do this, other creatures will not be recognized for their true worth; we are unconcerned about caring for things for the sake of others; we fail to set limits on ourselves in order to avoid the suffering of others or the deterioration of our surroundings. Disinterested concern for others, and the rejection of every form of self-centeredness and self-absorption, are essential if we truly wish to care for our brothers and sisters and for the natural environment. These attitudes also attune us to the moral imperative of assessing the impact of our every action and personal decision on the world around us. If we can overcome individualism, we will truly be able to develop a different lifestyle and bring about significant changes in society".

(L.S. 208)



## From ITALY to the whole WORLD:

# "LAND and MISSION"

**Anna Moccia**Terra e Missione ("Land and Mission") association – President

Going out of oneself to meet the other. It is the missionary urgency that drives so many lay and consecrated men and women to daily choices of sobriety and experiences of service that inhabit the limit and lead them to carry their tents "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8), to the margins of the peripheries of the world. A testimony of ecumenical life, which opens up new ways of living the gift of faith together.

And at the same time, it weaves newer paths for a winning ecology, which does not limit itself to the study of our common home but sets itself to the science of "relationships" (F. Capra, La rete della vita, 1997). "Everything is re-



lated", "everything is linked", "everything is connected": this is the refrain that runs through Laudato sì, echoed several times in the songs of the indigenous peoples at the Synod for the Amazon. In other words, we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. (L.S. 49)

As men and women of the frontier, missionaries can, first, redeem the sacred value of this network of relationships. Networking means caring, sharing resources, time and thoughts to give rise to possibilities, links, productive exchanges, especially on the human level. The prerequisite is to start from the Christian experience that dwells in every missionary vocation and that begins with a trepidation, a 'conversion of the heart', to then grow in communion between the different charisms and be together a prophetic sign. "There are several charisms, but only one Spirit" (1 Cor 12:4).

These are the motifs which led to the birth of Terra e Missione (Earth & Missions - terraemissione.org), an association for missionary cooperation and integral ecology in 2022. It is committed to supporting the mission and to the creation of a network for the dissemination and exchange of news, projects, opportunities, and experiences. The birth of the association is the natural continuation of the route-map which initiated in 2020 with a digital magazine *terraemissione.it* which, during the months of lockdown in Italy, had collected the testimonies of commitment of missionaries working with the poorest, the marginalised, sharing their risks, needs and hopes. From this experience, in 2021 a publication 'Women Authors of Another Story'

# DECOLOGY

(Tau Publications) was realised as the first publication of Terra e Missione. The proceeds from the publication were donated entirely to support the 'Chaire Gynai' project ('Welcome woman' in Greek,), an initiative coordinated by the Scalabrini Missionary Sisters for women in vulnerable situations.

To continue the support the missionary commitment, especially in the light of the synodal path, which has at its centre the Church's 'walking together', the *Terra e Missione* is networking with the various institutes to continue to develop training, awareness and advocacy initiatives, to share lived experiences and to build bridges of fraternity. There are 12 institute members, 8 women and 4 men, who have accepted the challenge, have formed the magazine's "Spirituality" group.

Initiatives launched, together with the Tucum project (tucum.it) and in collaboration with the Festival of the Mission are: "To the ends of the earth", a live virtual journey every month on the YouTube channel @TerraeMissione, to discover the charisms and projects of the various missionary institutes in the peripheries of the world; the "Itinerant Via Lucis", a pilgrimage journey for young people aged 18 to 35 years, that takes place every year in August and is inspired by the path born in 1988 in the Salesian Family Movement Witnesses of the Risen Lord. The route is about 4,000 kilometres long and winds through 14 Italian cities (as many as the stations of the Via Lucis), which are reached by train and on foot, day after day. These initiatives aim to be a sign of a Church that not only "reaches out" but also knows how to "return", with the strength of its witness, and that takes care of the people it meets, so that the spark of the encounter with Him sets them aflame.

"Yes, I too was born with a cowardly temperament - a true slave to the clan of the fearful! But I then made the exhilarating discovery that no one has as much opportunity to develop their faith as those who have, to continually struggle to turn their 'fear' into faith. Of two things there is one: either one succumbs to one's own nature and becomes a 'Fearful Coward' for the rest of one's life, or one surrenders oneself completely to the Lord and turns every temptation of fear into an opportunity for faith, so as to eventually become an 'Intrepid Witness' of His Love. There is no middle way". (H. Hurnard, Le montagne delle spezie [The Spice Mountains], 1984).



Andrés Felipe Gómez Márquez

# CARE for the COMMON HOME in the SYM of COLOMBIA

"San Juan Bosco" Salesian school Dosquebradas - teachers



Daniel Alejandro Martínez

The genetic variability project in *Oryctolagus cuniculus* rabbits and in *Gallus gallus domesticus* Creole hens started approximately 4 years ago, from the need to encourage and strengthen the research spirit in students.

From the subject of Biology, in the development of the conceptual axes, various themes are worked on, including the classification of living beings and their vital functions. The project begins with the reproduction, in which the students carry out a study of the art of the vital functions of rabbits and the genetic variability that can occur in this group of mammals, as well as an emphasis on Creole hens and, in particular, the chicks hatched from the blue-green eggs.

This is how research hypotheses emerge and how the project motivates and innovates students in classes and in the



# LIVED

youth group GIESEB (Salesian Ecological Research Group in Biology). The main objective is to strengthen knowledge, finding particular phenotypic characteristics in rabbits; last year we worked with three one-month-old little rabbits, distributed in the fifth grades where we continued for the third period with the reproduction of birds and their offspring born from the aforementioned type of egg.

The experiences and testimonies of each family have been significant and have had a great impact on the family nucleus, among them have been able to demonstrate leadership in the children, autonomy and responsibility for their duties, awakening amazement for the development of life and in general for God's creation.

Finally, we have been working with the students in the implementation of supplements in the diet of animals, deepening the analysis of laboratory samples and in the construction of vegetable gardens.

The research project on the extraction of essential oils starts in the subject of organic chemistry in the year 2021, where the aim is to find and strengthen the research skills of students in the eleventh grade. In this way, it will generate different strategies from scientific thinking to devise methods that lead to the development of an approach from the biological, chemical and physical point of view. They will learn how to carry out the extraction of essential oils from some plants such as Citronella, lavender and calendula, among others, from a large list of aromatic plants, as well as their components, properties and main uses.





This covers the power and importance of plants in everyday applications, ancestral botany, starting from our traditions and beliefs of our coffee region and highlighting the creative power of God and his care for nature, according to Laudato Sí.

To this end, the eleventh grade students mention in their research projects the applications, uses, properties and history of aromatic plants, as well as their chemical composition, structure and taxonomy, as appropriate.

The technique selected for the extraction of the essential oil is steam distillation, using a homemade distiller from the subject of physics. This procedure was selected because it is the most appropriate from a technical and economic point of view, easy to implement and does not require sophisticated technology.

Then, a methodology was established which is expressed as follows:

Selection of the method to be developed, search for materials, analysis of material costs, energy consumption, distillation assembly, application of the process, treatment and preparation of the sample obtained; finally, the purpose of the product obtained.

With the research project and deepening from the subject of organic chemistry, a transversal process is carried out in the different areas of knowledge such as physics, mathematics, language, ethics, English, entrepreneurship, among others, which are coupled in terms of the extraction of essential oils.

Finally, the research project must be conditioned to the social and environmental impact on the entire Educative Community, defining the appropriate use of each product obtained and its possible implications for the quality of life in an educational, psychological and social environment.

#### A STORY of **ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION** in the PHILIPPINES

LIVED

COLOCY

Fr. Antonio Molavin SDB Convener of Don Bosco Green Alliance

The process started four years ago when our parish came up with a slogan: "Taga San Ildefonso: Santo, Misyonero, Tagapangalaga ng Kalikasan. Meaning: "Parishioners of the Parish of San Ildefonso strive to be Saints, Missionaries and Caretakers of Nature". Yet in the beginning I really did not know how to put it into reality.

Early last year, our parish was chosen by the Ecological Ministry of our diocese to be the first parish in the whole of the Philippines to partner with Plastic Bank. It was an answered prayer. Together we were able to recover all sorts of plastic for recycling. We involved the Basic Ecclesial Communities who made plastic re-

cycling their main project especially during the Covid 19 Pandemic. We encouraged everybody to gather all sorts of plastics from plastic bags, containers and even sachets and of course plastic bottles. We instructed them to wash the plastics with the soap-water they use to wash their clothes and





then rinse them with the water which was used to rinse their clothes. We have also integrated this programme into our Community Pantry where we ask our beneficiaries to bring clean plastic in exchange for the goods they receive. In this way we are able to instruct all the families since we want everybody to have a share in this community pantry. We are also able to work with the local government units who help in collect-

ing the plastics from each household. We also ask our youth who frequent our daily and festive oratories to bring whatever plastics they have at home, instead of throwing them anywhere even in the trash can.

Through all these, one goes through an ecological conversion which I personally experienced. Collecting the plastics in our kitchen has become a habit. I have learned to be creative in so many ways: to save electricity and water; not using the microwave, toaster, the air conditioner or even the elevator, unless necessary. Even in eating out or in meetings, I would ask my friends to collect the plastics which they use and wash them and give them to me so I can bring them home for recycling. In this way "Saving Mother Earth" has become a frequent topic of conversation among friends, acquaintances or wherever I go. In this way I spread the message of Pope Francis in his letter "Laudato Si".

The proper management of plastic can be a source of ecological conversion for everybody: from grandparents to grandchildren, from the richest to the poorest, from the educated to the out-of-school youth. Starting with the simple act of saving Mother Earth, one can understand the urgent plea of Pope Francis which is a call to the personal conversion. Nature is God's gift to us. How we care for it, is our gift to God.

# **SOLIDARITY** and the COMMON GOOD

nts

(L.S. 58)

This year, we decided to propose two simple gestures to the communities that would like to participate in this process of ecological conversion 'Care for Creation: Our Mission', emphasising small but important ecological attentions to be put into practice. In addition to these suggestions, each community will be able to adopt the initiatives it considers appropriate and contribute to the project chosen for this year.

- Initiate **afforestation/reforestation projects** in areas without greenery, either in the Salesian house or on lands outside the Salesian Presences.
  - In several countries around the world, this is already happening: through afforestation/re-forestation projects, Salesians employ vulnerable people (e.g. single women who head families, or young people in difficulty), who are tasked with planting seeds or small seedlings, watering the soil, taking care of the young plants and making sure that they grow. This occupation is good for people, the community and also for the planet. The funds needed to cover the expenses for fees and materials can be obtained from projects, long distance support, benefactors, etc.
  - Launch a campaign to strongly **reduce the use of plastic** within your Salesian presence. It is a very difficult battle, but the important thing is to start by raising awareness of the damage that the excessive production of plastic is doing to the planet and to human beings. Take concrete actions to try to become a "plastic free" campus. For example, reduce the use of disposable materials, and where this is not possible, adopt compostable materials, promote the use of water bottles, avoid/reduce the consumption of drinks in plastic bottles, avoid buying goods/foods with excessive and unnecessary packaging, encourage the recycling of plastic, collect plastic waste in special containers etc.

We ask you to share with us the initiatives and activities carried out by writing to <a href="mailto:cagliero11@sdb.org">cagliero11@sdb.org</a> or tagging us on our Instagram channels @missionisalesiane or Facebook "Settore per le Missioni Salesiane"

#### **LET'S WORK TOGETHER for the CARE of CREATION**

**Don Bosco Aurangabad Society** works in the drought prone area of Aurangabad district of central Maharashtra State in India. Rainfall here is barely 400 to 600 mm. Most of the agriculture is dependent on rain. When it does rain, as the land is very dry, hard and without vegetation, the water quickly drains off immediately and do not soak into the earth.

The project aims to revitalise 200 hectares of land, making it fit for cultivation for a second crop. The works required are: check dams work, di-silting of existing drains, gabion structure, farm banding, drain banding and tree plantation. These techniques make water sink into the soil, raise the water table and fill the wells. The land will be green again and fertile. Distress migration to cities to become coolie-labour will stop.

Drip irrigation will further optimise water consumption. Uncontrolled grazing by goats and other cattle will stop. Farmers will be able to do multiple cropping, have fodder for cattle reared in sheds, organic manure will replace chemical fertilizers.

Salesian brother, Alex Gonzalvez has thirty years of experience in this work. Success is assured: within 2 two 3 years even wildlife will make their appearance – deer, rabbit and birds.

If you want to contribute to this project, here you have all the details

#### Care of creation: our mission!





		Units	Rate per unit	Amount (INR)	Amount (Euro)
1	Check dam	2	600.000	1.200.000	€ 15.000
2	De-silting	10	55.000	550.000	€ 6.875
3	Gabion structure	2	100.000	200.000	€ 2.500
4	Farm banding	5	60.000	300.000	€ 3.750
5	Nala banding	5	40.000	200.000	€ 2.500
6	Tree plantation	4.000	80	250.000	€ 3.125
7	Various training pro on ecology	gram 75	4.950	371.280	€ 4.641
	Sub Total A			3.071.280	€ 38.391
	Administration Cost				
1	Coordinator	18 months		392.000	€ 4.900
2	Field staff	18 months		280.000	€ 3.500
3	Field visit, documentation, monitoring			256.000	€ 3.200
	Sub Total B			928.000	€ 11.600
	Grand total of A	\+B		3.999.280	€ 49.991





**New Salesian Miss** 

**Expedition n°153** 







ENEZUELA



CAPE VERDE

[POR]

[ZMB, Zambia]



Robertião Manuel Contro [ANG, Angola]

ARGENTINA

[ARS]



[AFC, D. R. Congo]



NIGER

**NNA** 

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André Nobel Kar

**GREAT BRITAIN** 

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SLOVENI [SLO]





[ICC, Italy]



Plavilayi [INK, India]



[AFC, D. R. Congo]



## ionaries 2022

[THA, Thailand]





[PER, Peru]

[VEN, Venezuela]



## 2023 SMD

Father, Creator of all that is,
We thank you for reflecting your glory in creation,
and for entrusting us the responsibility
of being stewards of our created world.

Fill us with the fire of your Holy Spirit, that we may feel profoundly connected with all creatures and respect and care for your creation, especially the weak and the endangered.

Inspire us, as faithful stewards, to actively undo the damage we have done, and to invite all peoples to collaborate in the great mission of passionately caring for our common home.

Amen.

