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Introduction

Standing together as Christian Life Community (CLC) let us open our ears and our hearts, let us offer up our hands and our time, so that we can attend to the care of our shared home.

“...if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs.”

Enciclica Laudato Si. No. 11

Humankind is suffering the throes of a birth pain. This is not just a possibility or an intuition; it is a concrete, undeniable fact that marks a watershed moment in the history of human reality. This reality is of our own making. Although there are many who would like to talk of cyclical processes in nature, or to propose other blame-free explanations, they only seek to avoid taking their share of our responsibility in the present and future state of our planet. We are experiencing the consequences of a style of living, and a so-called “progress”, that has no future. Pope Francis has expressed this clearly:

This is a system that is not working; the countryside cannot tolerate it, workers cannot tolerate it, communities cannot tolerate it, townships cannot tolerate it... and the Earth - our sister Mother Earth as Saint Francis used to say - cannot tolerate it ... Let us say NO to an economy of exclusion and inequality, where money rules in place of service. This is an economy that kills. This is an economy that excludes. This is an economy that destroys Mother Earth.”¹

This Disposable Culture, the same culture that has been openly denounced by Pope Francisco as a sign of modern structural decay, has developed as a result of a lifestyle that centres purely on acquisition and accumulation. In this culture, where a large part of humanity has lost all ability to relate meaningfully to our earth and nature, we have grown both alienated from ourselves and from our internal world (including our spiritual world); and furthermore, as a con-

¹ Pope Francis “Il Encuentro con Movimientos Populares” in Bolivia. (Santa Cruz, Bolivia. July 2015)
sequence, we have become completely removed from, and completely uninterested in, the reality of others (unless the interaction is somehow mediated by money or self-interest). Pope Francis refers to this practice of disposability, or the principle of “use and throw out,” as something that hurts our relationships and absolutely contradicts the main tenet of Christ’s teachings: that we all experience “life and life in abundance” (Jn. 10, 10) and that we experience the grace of God through this life and through our fellowship with each other in this world of justice and dignity.

Today, all our discussion as CLC on the theme of ecology aligns itself with the directive of the Church Social Doctrine - as laid down by Council Vatican II, and as ratified by all following popes - in urging a firm and concerted response from our people of faith to the environmental challenge of our time; and, today, above all, we align ourselves with the brave and clear call of “Laudato Si, On the Care of our Shared Home,” that responds to, and seeks to ameliorate, the ravaged state of our sister earth and our shared home. This call is affirmed in article 2 of the Encyclical which states that “amongst the most abandoned and wretched in our care is our Mother Earth, who shudders and suffers with the pains of labour. We forget that we too are made of this same earth. (cf. Gn. 2, 7)”

As members of the Christian Life Community (CLC) we rally wholeheartedly behind the Pope’s call. We recognise it as consistent with our General Principles (GP) which, since the outset, have called for our community, united in the Holy Trinity, to respond to the cries of humanity, to make flesh of His word and to shine light where there is darkness. Our identity, taking into account its diversity, is united in its embrace of the path that Christ took. We choose a community-centred lifestyle that stays open to the rejuvenating call of the Spirit.

Today the cry for action is loud and clear. The care and protection of our shared home is one of our mandates as a church and we of the CLC follow this mandate under the dictates of article 4 of our GP, which urges us to work fervently against injustice, especially where it affects the poor, and to adopt and embrace a modest style of living ourselves. Our mission for the environment is founded on this principle which has long distinguished us; a principle which has persisted and been adhered to despite the changing face of our people, our place and our times.

With a desire to set a clear course of action for CLC in response to this urgent agenda, we find in the final document passed in the Lebanon Assembly (2013)
the much-needed guidelines to direct our energy forward. Having defined the Environment as one of the top priorities for our community, we must therefore:

- **Develop, through all our attitudes and actions, a sensitivity towards Creation**
- **Establish and develop networks that share experiences and inform us of good practices (eg. the Amazon Project).**

Because CLC is serious about the responsibility to campaign visibly, bravely and decisively for the care of our environment and for the revision of our lifestyle, we offer this “environmental” Progressio Supplement as a resource for all members of our global community, asking God that we respond wisely and appropriately to the signs of the time.

For the writing of this material we have received support from the recently-formed international Ecology Commission made up of CLC members from all corners of our global community who have special environmental interests, and also from the international EXCO committee which has a focus on this topic. We would like to gratefully acknowledge the important input made by each and every contributor and we recognise the richness of a work carried out by many hands and many hearts. We ask each member of CLC to use this information as a reference for their personal and communal consideration, and for their prayers. Above all, we offer this material as a departure point for more determined apostolic action in the care of our shared home, keeping foremost in our mind those whose voices are excluded and those who will follow in the generations to come.

The content of this supplement will allow us to have a much clearer understanding of ecological issues and of the Laudato Si Encyclical. It offers us a range of community meeting guidelines which will enable us to align ourselves with the Pope’s vision, and it provides concrete examples which can be used as both reference and inspiration for a new concerted action as CLC.

In answer to the Popes urgent call for action, I invite us all to take this ecological step on our spiritual and apostolic journey, even if this step takes us out of our comfort zone and leads us on an new or challenging path. “I ask you, in the name of God, to defend Mother Earth.” (Pope Francis in his address to the los Movimientos Populares in Bolivia. July, 2015)

*Original in Spanish - Translated by Sarah Walker*
REFLECTIONS

Reflections on Laudato Si

Luke Rodrigues SJ
World CLC Vice Ecclesiastical Assistant

The Challenge of the Anthropocene age

Luiz Fernando Krieger
CLC Brazil

Integral Ecology - A Case Study and a Spiritual Reflection

Lois and Kuruvila Zachariah
CLC Canada
Every now and then, there comes a defining event which marks a watershed in the history of a movement. It appears that ‘Laudato Si’, the Encyclical by Pope Francis on Ecology is one such historic event in the worldwide ecological movement. No other papal document in recent times has aroused as much interest, excitement - and anxiety - as this encyclical. Months before its actual release on 18 June 2015, it already was the focus of speculation and debate in the press and electronic media. Rarely has there been a buzz like this around a papal document, and it is significant that this buzz is coming not just from Catholics but from people of all faiths.

An encyclical is a statement of fundamental principles which guide Catholic life and teaching on a subject. It is normally addressed to bishops who make its teachings their own and then transmit it. This encyclical however is addressed to all. It seeks to raise awareness about the environmental crisis and the urgent need to act. It combines deep Christian reflections with insights from the latest scientific findings. Although there have been several references to ecology in previous papal documents and speeches, this is the first encyclical devoted entirely to this topic. It puts Care for Creation back into mainstream Catholic teaching.

Important themes in the Encyclical

The social teachings of the Church have always called upon Catholics to care for God’s creation and to work for the common good. More recently, St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI have made several references to environmental degradation and its impacts on humanity. They reminded Catholics of the moral duty to respond to this crisis, ever mindful of the needs of the poor and of future generations. Pope Francis affirms all of the above. Laudato Si reminds us of the perennial value of themes such as ‘working for the common good’, ‘the social consequences of individual decisions’ and ‘our responsibility towards future generations’. Of course, there is also an element of newness seen both in the emphasis and in the breaking of new ground. Some of the themes that strike me are mentioned below.
1. **Praise to the Creator**: The title ‘Laudato Si’ is in itself exciting and inspiring. These words form a refrain in the beautiful ‘Canticle of the Sun’ (page 63). They lift our hearts and minds to an altogether different plane and immediately place the whole topic of ecology within a larger horizon. This title invites us to join with all of creation in praising the Creator. This tone of praise which opens the encyclical is taken up once more at its conclusion ‘Beyond the Sun’. Here, we are reminded of the common destiny we share with all of creation when we behold the face of God in an unending experience of awe (LS. #243).

2. **The earth is our home**: We are aware that the word ‘ecology’ comes from the Greek work ‘oikos’ meaning home. The subtitle of the encyclical, “On care for our common home”, recalls our interconnectedness. This image of ‘home’ evokes feelings of gratitude, care and responsibility. The world is not something abstract ‘out there’ but is rather a generous and nurturing sister and mother who provides for our needs. All of creation is linked by visible and invisible bonds into one universal family (LS. #89). This relationship is described in the context of a Covenant (LS. #65 - 71) with all its rich Biblical connotations. St. Francis of Assisi is the model who exemplifies this harmony. He is that mystic and pilgrim who shows us how inseparable is the bond between love for God, justice for the poor and communion with creation. (LS. #10 – 12).

3. **Justice**: Concern for the poor is a theme that runs right through the document. The Pope points out that environmental degradation has a disproportionately high impact on marginalized communities. The poor reap few benefits from the current model of development. However, they are the ones who suffer the most when nature protests (LS. #48-50). This inequity affects not only individuals but nations as a whole. Imbalances in trade and technology continue to promote a lopsided pattern of development, increasing the gap between rich and poor nations (LS. #51-52). The fragility of the earth is intrinsically linked to the fragility of the poor. Working for the environment is a work of justice whereby we listen to both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

**Laudato Si reminds us of the perennial value of themes such as ‘working for the common good’, ‘the social consequences of individual decisions’ and ‘our responsibility towards future generations’**.
4. **Now is the time to act!** Pope Francis is not one to sit on the fence. Guided by Christian principles and scientific data, the Pope weighs in with his moral authority in favour of one side in the climate debate – the side of the weak and voiceless. He asserts that the climate crisis has been accelerated by unbridled human activity and there is a moral imperative to act. Our responses thus far have been weak due to a lack of leadership and the absence of a balanced legal framework (LS. #53-59). The ‘throw away culture’ and the excessive anthropocentrism of today come in for strong censure. He calls for political responsibility in combating pollution, reducing carbon emissions and moving towards renewable energy (LS. #26, 180).

5. **The intrinsic value of creation.** The inalienable dignity of the human person has been always been upheld by the Church. The encyclical affirms this in no uncertain terms. It also invites us to recognize the intrinsic value of each creature, a value that goes beyond any potential utility to the human race (LS. #76 - 77). As Jesus beautifully taught us, every creature is sustained by the breath of the Spirit and surrounded by the tender love of the Father. In an unexpected but welcome move, the encyclical devotes several paragraphs to the loss of Biodiversity (LS. #32 - 42). This is a serious issue not because of the economic or medicinal benefits of plants/animals but because every species has the right to exist and thereby give glory to God.

6. **Partnership.** Due recognition is given to ecological movements which have taken the initiative to put ecology on the public agenda. There are modern day heroes who undertake risks in caring for nature and those affected by disasters. Mention is also made of important Environmental Summits that have established milestones in our journey ahead (LS. #166-169). We may still have a long journey ahead, but it is good to acknowledge the progress already made. Openness to others is exemplified in the passages quoting the Ecumenical Pa-
triarch Bartholomew (LS. #7 - 9) and the Sufi mystic Ali al-Khawas (LS. #233). In keeping with his emphasis on collegiality and subsidiarity, the Pope quotes frequently from the statements of various Episcopal Conferences. This recognition of the role of local Churches will surely encourage bishops and laity alike to take forward the good work that has already begun in several dioceses.

7. A call for Dialogue. In the midst of debates and conflicting opinions surrounding this issue, the Pope calls for Dialogue as the way forward. A full chapter of the encyclical (LS. #163-201) is devoted to spelling out line of approach. This is a dialogue between nations and between different groups within a nation. It is also a dialogue between politics and economics, between religion and science. This has to be an inclusive dialogue, open to all stakeholders, resulting in a fair distribution of benefits.

8. The role of Spirituality. Ecological Spirituality and Integral Ecology are two phrases that will now become part of our thinking, reflection and action. Laudato Si presents ecology as a spiritual, cultural and educational challenge that requires an integrated response. An ecological spirituality is one that is grounded in the teachings of the Gospel and motivates us to a more passionate care for creation. It summons us to a personal and communitarian conversion (LS. #216-217). Creation is not a host of problems to be solved but a joyful mystery to contemplate. With grateful hearts we contemplate this gift which is constantly revealing the Creator. The Most Holy Trinity has created the universe patterned on its own divine model of communion. By recognizing this interwoven web of relationships and our own role in it, we are drawn deeper into the mystery of the Triune God (LS. #238-240).

Implications for the church and the world

Committed Catholics already involved in ecological work feel greatly supported by this encyclical. There are a handful of individuals and institutions in the Church already committed to the ministry of caring for creation. Laudato Si is a source of great encouragement and support to them. Given the huge popularity of Pope Francis, this document will be read by a larger than usual proportion of Catholics. This will hopefully make people more receptive to participate in ecological projects initiated by Church institutions. Seminaries, Catholic Universities and Spirituality centres have already integrated he message of the encyclical into their courses and retreats.
Pope Francis has made it clear that the message of the encyclical is intended for all. Many other faith leaders have already commented favourably on the principles and teachings of LS, while environmentalists of all beliefs have appreciated its strong call for action. In keeping with this intention to influence a wider audience, the Holy Father visited New York in September, addressing the US Congress and the General Assembly of the United Nations. He spoke on the moral and religious imperative to promote sustainable development and urged lawmakers to take courageous actions aimed at implementing a ‘culture of care’.

Laudato Si was released in June 2015 with an eye on influencing the Conference of Parties (COP21) held in Paris in December 2015. This conference of 196 states meets every year to discuss how to combat climate change. The meeting in Paris will be the 21st of its kind, and hence the name COP21. Despite failures of past meetings, there is a feeling that Paris could produce clear, eco-friendly results. It could well mark the moment when the world decides to end the fossil fuel era.

Pope Francis has a sense for the ‘big moment’. He is now lending his moral authority to the climate change debate and wants the encyclical to influence world decisions - a bold ambition that affirms the growing influence of the Pope as a prophetic figure for our times. The Church seems to be stepping out of the shadows and staking claim once more to its mantle of moral leadership on the world stage.

Our Response as CLC

World CLC has already identified Ecology as an apostolic frontier and this encyclical invites us to intensify this commitment. You could explore and implement some of the suggestions offered below, while remaining on the lookout for any other forms of reflection-action within this vast field.

♦ Opt for a simple lifestyle. Our Lord Jesus repeatedly asks his disciples to follow him in simplicity and poverty. This call to adopt a simple way of
living finds an echo in the lives of saints and in our charism (cf. GP 12 b).
Each of us can take small steps towards leading a simpler life. The environ-
mental mantra of the 3Rs - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle – is something that we are already familiar with …. at least in theory. It is now time to start putting it into practice.

♦ Pray with and for Creation. Praying through nature and praying with nature is a beautiful way of enriching our inner life. A wealth of material is already available on the internet indicating ways to integrate ecology into our personal and communitarian prayer.

♦ Read and Update. There is so much happening in this field and a lot of ma-
terial is readily available. Our actions on behalf of creation will take on a sharper focus if we are keep ourselves abreast of the developments.

♦ Eco-friendly celebrations. Some national communities have already adopted eco-friendly practices for their local and national gatherings. Such practices include car-pooling to arrive at the venue, using local produce, serving vegetarian meals and using energy smart devices. We encourage these communities to share their experiences widely and encourage others to follow this example.

♦ Advocacy. Articles, letters to the editor and electronic blogs/tweets are powerful ways of challenging bad practices and/or giving publicity to good initiatives. Where possible, we should put pressure on our government, holding our leaders to accountability on environmental issues.

♦ Network for action. A number of groups are already actively involved in areas of poverty alleviation, nature conservation and sustainable develop-
ment. Rather than trying to replicate their efforts, we could pool in our en-
ergies and resources in their projects. “Less things, more links” is a powerful way of expressing our collaborative mission in this frontier.

Our General Principles ask us to “bear witness to those human and Gospel val-
ues within the Church and society, which affect the dignity of the person, the welfare of the family and the integrity of creation”. (GP 4). In union with the Church, we joyfully proclaim the good news that God is present and can be encountered at the heart of all creation. As part of our mission, we seek to en-
counter this presence, make it known and honour it in word and deed. This is what it means to be Eco-Evangelists today.
The Challenge of the Anthropocene age

Luiz Fernando Krieger - CLC Brazil

Hum uty is currently facing the biggest challenge of its entire history: our economic activities have exhausted the resources of the biosphere and, in several cases, we are pushing beyond these limits. What does this fact mean for our generation and for the next ones?

The ecosystems that are part of the biosphere provide us with environmental services that are absolutely essential for our survival. These include the availability of clean air, sources of fresh water, the recycling of elements, the absorption of residuals and the production of food. Going beyond the limits of the biosphere means that we are disrupting the balance and the appropriate functioning of the ecosystems inside the biosphere in such a way that they cannot provide the flow of environmental services and benefits anymore. At least, not in the same way we have seen until now in our history. It means also that we are going to have a very different society in the coming decades.

As we, indeed, cannot change the general rules of universe, and we cannot live without the services and goods from nature, there is only one option: work collectively and intensively to function within the limits of the global ecosystems and cooperate with its principles and universal rules. The good news is that this reorientation of our society could create more than enough jobs and revenues capable of creating a new cycle of wealth and happiness for our generation as well as future generations.

As Christians living in these challenging times, our first step would be to become aware of this reality. We must open up to see that we belong to a wide social-ecological system in which interdependence is a key concept. The very evolution of the planet depends upon humans respecting the laws of the biosphere. We are co-evolving with the planet and our behavior can collaborate with the process of evolution, or can degenerate the entire system making it unsustainable. We have to make this choice, personally and collectively. Co-evolution leads to the modern concept of “Anthropocene”. Anthropocene is defined as the geological period we are living in, where humankind is the main driver of planetary changes. Human influence is so deep and wide that it
can define a new geological period. The pressure caused by human influence is causing a destabilization of the biophysical systems that sustain life – irreversible and damaging consequences are arising due to this degradation. It is not hard to note these consequences happening all around us.

In the spiritual exercises of Saint Ignatius we are challenged to overcome disordered affections as a way to discover and cooperate with God’s plans for our lives. We can understand the degradation of nature as a geographical and spatial consequence of our disordered affections. Our personal and social lack of compassion, lack of ethical behavior, selfishness, excessive consumerism and so on, can have spatial and environmental consequences. Such consequences include loss of biodiversity, deforestation, pollution, climate changes, soil erosion... In the majority of cases, it is the poor who are affected the most.

In the book of Genesis there is a symbolic image about sustainability that can help us to understand the needs of the 21st century. After warning Adam and Eve about their behavior, God put some angels with flaming swords to guard the way to the Tree of Life – the one that is responsible to produce fruits for generations, generations and generations... After knowing the difference between good and the evil, the mission of humankind is to keep the Tree of Life alive. How could we translate this message for our times?

We live in the Anthropocene and have the responsibility to make humanity function within the limits of biosphere. Our mission consists of some of the following … to build new public policies towards sustainability, to organize processes of sustainable production and consumption, to find new ways of organizing cities, to develop clean sources of energies, to produce healthy food, to respect different cultures and promote environmental justice. You yourself can add some more examples… What will be your contribution?

Wherever we are, our personal and collective contribution must be coherent with the Anthropocene and allow a co-evolution, not to destroy Creation, but to cooperate with the maintenance of the Tree of Life.
Integral Ecology: A Case Study and a Spiritual Reflection

Lois and Kuruvila Zachariah - CLC Canada

Laudato Si, Pope Francis’ encyclical on the environment underlines the concept of Integral Ecology because “everything is closely related” and “today’s problems call for a vision capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis.” So, I direct my attention, now, to a role of art in our contemplation of our planet.

I can live my life as Social Sculpture, in CLC

Joseph Beuys, 1921-1986, was a pioneer of conceptual and ecological art. His famous assertion Everyone is an artist meant that any persons could embody creative action and be a vehicle of energy for creativity to change the world. He called this social sculpture. Accordingly some of his most powerful art works were actions, the most famous being, I Like America and America Likes Me, in May 1974, when he spent seven days and nights in a room in an art gallery with a wild coyote.

Beuys felt that ecological sustainability begins with our experience of the mystery of relationship and interdependency. He wrote, “The spirit of the coyote is so mighty that the human being cannot understand what it is, or what it can do for humankind in the future.”

Beuys advised us to think “more than 500 years ahead”. His 7000 Oaks illustrates this thinking. It was the planting of seven thousand oak saplings, each paired with a four foot high basalt column. The planting continued over the next five years in spaces negotiated with residents, councils, schools.

Cities which have furthered the project include Oslo, Sydney and especially New York. Joseph Beuys saw into the mystery of trees and believed that they offered a pathway to saving the human soul: ‘I am no gardener who plants trees because trees are beautiful. No, I say today the trees are indeed more intelligent than people. ....This means the trees have perceived this for a long time and that they also share the condition of suffering......I would like to give trees and animals legal rights.’
Beuys’ profound concept of Social Sculpture is a help when I try to follow the interior law of love in my life; this law is at the heart of the General Principles of CLC.

I conclude with a tribute to this prophetic figure:
"Joseph Beuys was the most significant artistic innovator of the twentieth century. His extended concept of art and his Social Sculpture Theory contain the seeds needed for addressing the root problems of our global society today." Otto Scharmer, Lecturer, MIT Sloan School of Management

The Great Bear Rainforest Agreement as Social Sculpture.
Great Bear Rainforest is one of the world’s largest, virgin temperate rainforests, roughly the area of . In this magnificent wilderness live grizzly bears, mountain lions, wolves, salmon ancient cedars and spruce over 250 feet tall. It is home to a unique type of black bear, white spirit bear.

It is located along the Pacific coast of British Columbia, the most western province of Canada. It is owned by the provincial government. Over 50% of the province’s exports depend on forestry, so this industry is a chief source of government income and of public employment. But a crisis was brewing; in the last 2 decades of the millennium, the mysterious, ancient rainforests of were being brutally clear cut, and public outrage was rising. In 1993. Logging in Clayoquot Sound, on Vancouver Island led ten thousand people to make a stand and 900 were arrested in ’s largest mass arrest. The press and people worldwide took notice. The government acted quickly intending to lead community representatives, First Nations, labour unions, forestry industry management, and environmental groups to reach consensus. But the
government’s intention was to retain full authority so as to mostly maintain the status quo and to not increase the protected fraction of the rainforest by more than 2-3%.

Clayoquot also had the effect of awakening the First Nations. The David Suzuki Foundation was a key catalyst; it focused on molding them into a potent political bloc. They rejected the authority of the CCLRMP over their lands and attended only as observers. For their part, Greenpeace, Sierra Club of Canada and the Rainforest Action Network heatedly rejected the 2-3% protected areas limit and refused to come to the CCLRMP table. Instead, the environmental groups, faced with several large forestry corporations as adversaries banded together as The Rainforest Solutions Project. First, they initiated a markets campaign at retailers overseas, so effectively, that in the late 1990’s several high profile outlets including Ikea, Home Depot and B & Q in, halted purchases of lumber.

Secondly, the region was re-imagined; it had been named the **mid-coast and north-coast timber supply areas**. An enlightened step was to rename it the **Great Bear Rainforest**. Thus, the mythic white spirit bear became a symbol of a transformed region: no longer just a source of a commodity but rather a remote and sacred ecosystem. This environmental campaign cost the forest industry over $200 million in lost profits, and led them to see the merit of calling a truce with the environmentalists, and opening negotiations again.

A rigid duality stood in the way of progress. Negotiations between the environmentalists and the industry at first, were hate-filled confrontations. Bitter accusations were hurled back and forth. Imagine the scene: a line of mostly men facing a line of mainly young women. Soon, both sides saw that new thinking was needed. Some negotiators took steps to learn skills to bypass confrontation. Then, amazingly, a spiritual shift occurred. At the famous Hollyhock Leadership Institute the environmentalists learned mindfulness techniques similar to St. Ignatius’ Third Method of Prayer. They devised and practised a ‘love strategy’ with ‘thought exercises’. For example: let me walk for a day in my opponent’s shoes. Consequently, during negotiations, when provoked they were able to remain balanced. Confrontation faded, replaced by reasoned verbal exchanges, and détente followed.

They agreed that the new plan needed a sound scientific calculation of how much of the total area had to be protected, to ensure that natural ecological net-
works were maintained sustainably. They created a handbook of **ecosystem based management**. EBM tried to balance conservation with the well-being of people, including corporations. Slowly they approached consensus. But still, people who thought 500 years ahead, knew the plan lacked a vital key.

They were right; the key was discovered by Merran Smith, an environmentalist, currently Director of Clean Energy Canada; God bless her! She insisted the only agreement attainable was one which gave First Nations solid assurance of a better life. To be credible, this promise would require creativity and economic development in sectors other than logging. Economic experts asserted that $120 million was required. As if by magic the money was pledged by governments and NGO’s. The government also promised to treat the First Nations as a peer governing body in future negotiations. Economic diversification has included creation of toilet products from oils extracted from branches of softwood trees; also high-value, native-designed wooden toys, shellfish culture and sale of carbon credits from conserving forests.

In 2006, the initial Great Bear Rainforest Agreements were drafted. In March 2009, Ecosystem Based Management was started; it has never before been used on this scale in . The area managed is 21 million acres (33.000 sq mi.). Half of the GBR is legally protected, but ecological experts assert that only when 70% of the old growth forest is protected, will the integrity of this ecosystem be safe. This is the goal for the future.

The term **integral ecology** refers to the relational reality of our planet; life and matter are in a complex network of relationships and the whole is bigger than the sum of its parts. Human activity has disrupted this delicate web in dramatic ways.

The term **integral ecology** refers to the relational reality of our planet; life and matter are in a complex network of relationships and the whole is bigger than the sum of its parts. Human activity has disrupted this delicate web in dramatic ways. The results are reflected in climate change, loss of biodiversity, habitat destruction, and the poverty and suffering which ensues for human, animal and plant life. In the introduction to his encyclical, *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis makes
it clear that the crises we face are of our own making, and their solutions are spiritual, moral and ethical matters. Knowing the facts is not enough; we need energy and motivation for right relationship with Earth. Like Saint Francis, we need to fall in love with all life. Pope Francis writes, “His response (Saint Francis’) to the world around him was so much more than intellectual appreciation or economic calculus, for to him each and every creature was a sister united to him by bonds of affection.” Saint Francis was, by nature and grace, a deep ecological soul. How do we acquire the same spirit so as to live in coherence with our beautiful Earth?

**We can cultivate an intelligent heart, one that leads to awareness.** We know with our brain-mind, we become aware with our heart-mind. Awareness shifts our perception of our world and ourselves. We see what is really real. We discern and act in spiritual freedom. We begin to pay attention to those times when our hearts are moved, or we are inspired or led to a compassionate response to life.

A simple meditation, done every day, even for a few minutes, encourages an intelligent heart. That is why Ignatius’ “Third Method of Prayer” is an important practice at this time of Earth’s multiple crises. The Jesus Prayer, the fundamental practice of the Eastern Orthodox tradition, is another meditation. “…I say the Jesus Prayer, asking to be set free from the illusions of this world, from the innumerable vanities and deceits with which I am surrounded. And I find in the name of Jesus the name which opens my heart and mind to reality.” (Father Bede Griffiths in *Parabola*, summer, 1999)

Research at the Heart Math Institute indicates that a daily meditation practice can put the heart’s rhythm in synchronization with our breathing and brain
wave activity. This harmony encourages emotional equanimity, clarity of thought and an increase in awareness and compassion. Heart math describes this as “high coherence”. Their studies also show that the beating heart generates an electromagnetic field outwards from us. Our heart field affects humans and animals around us. This field changes as our inner coherence changes or when we are exposed to turbulent weather.

An intelligent heart opens us to the work of integral, deep ecology through the “Great Work of Mutuality”. In his book, “The Great Work”, Father Thomas Berry writes, “The Great Work… is to carry out the transition from a period of human devastation of the Earth to a period when humans would be present to the planet in a mutually beneficial manner.” And “Intimacy with the planet in its wonder and beauty and the full depth of its meaning is what enables an integral human relationship with the planet to function.”

Our first action for this Great Work is to go outside! Get to know, deeply, trees, flowers, insects, fish, frogs, toads, snakes, birds, the little mammals we come across, even in our biggest cities. This is part of the “Ecology of daily life” which Pope Francis reflects on in “Chapter 4: Integral Ecology”. The indigenous peoples of the world have evolved this wisdom. It is urgent that we listen to them.

“Deep ecology” is a term used first in 1973 by Arne Naess, who became the founder of a deep ecology movement. He made a distinction between ecology as a science of facts and logical analysis and ecology as a deeply spiritual and ethical way of life. Deep ecology asserts that the well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth has inherent values that are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes. Deep ecology asks us to remember, value and seek out experiences of loving relationship with Earth’s life, because these move us towards ecological wisdom, and right action.

“Our first action for this Great Work is to go outside! Get to know, deeply, trees, flowers, insects, fish, frogs, toads, snakes, birds, the little mammals we come across, even in our biggest cities.
overlooking the fact that they have value in themselves. Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which we will never know, which our children will never see, because they have been lost for ever. The great majority become extinct for reasons related to human activity. 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.” (Laudato Si, “Introduction”, “III. Loss of Biodiversity”). Integral ecology asks, “Who tells us who we are? What is our place in creation?”

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.

The last common ancestor of humans and chimpanzees (with whom we share 99% of our genes) lived 5 million years ago. We belong to the placental mammals, whose common ancestor lived 60 million years ago, and to the chordates (animals with backbones), whose common ancestor lived 500 million years ago. There was a “universal” ancestor for all life which existed 1.6 - 2 billion years ago. We share 60% of our DNA with insects, 75% with reptiles, 90% with mammals and 35% with trees. We are related to everyone through time and space. The Communion of Life tells us who we are.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the Jesuit mystic, paleontologist, and geologist, asserted that evolution leads to consciousness which gives rise to interiority. These lead to union with God and life. For Teilhard, this unity is the primary category of existence. He said that evolution is the THIRD NATURE OF CHRIST. Evolution, in all its randomness, diversity, novelty, cycles of destruction and construction, is the work of CHRISTOGENESIS, the continual emergence of Christ, the Word. The by-products of unregulated human consumption and greed block Christogenesis through ecological destruction and species extinction. Is this who we are? What is necessary to love and promote Christogenesis? “Love is the affinity which links and draws together the elements of the world… Love in fact is the agent of universal synthesis.” (Pierre Teilhard de Chardin)

Franciscan sister, Ilia Delio, in an online interview, expresses this awareness of the agent of love. She says that “Franciscans …focused on Christ as God’s
Word incarnate. God expresses God’s self in every aspect of created reality. So every person, every tree, every leaf, everything is a little word of the Word of God. In that tradition we can talk of the whole cosmos, from the big bang on, as that Word of God being spoken in the vast spaces of the universe. … Nothing would come to be except as an expression of God’s love.”

Integral, deep ecology points to a future in which humans recognize that we are not the only sentient species on the planet. Cetaceans (dolphins and whales), elephants and the higher primates have sentience and higher consciousness. They are persons, not things. They are our brothers and sisters. Can we be agents of love for them, rather than agents of suffering and extinction? Who are we?

This summer a little robin, abandoned by his mother, adopted us. He sat on our arms, our heads and shoulders, looking at us intently, peeping constantly, for minutes on end. He followed us around the garden. We fed him. During the day, if we were in the house, he would sit in one of the flower containers on our patio and peep loudly until one of us came out to keep him company or feed him. Our son taught him, by example, to dig for worms and feed himself. At last, after 10 days or so, he was able to fly free. He was an agent of love and trust, a person in relationship with us; we will never forget him.
Amazon Project

A call for change

Carmen Amaya and Jairo Forero
CLC Spain

Pan-Amazon Ecclesiastic Network
- REPAM

Mauricio Lopez
World CLC President
and Executive Secretary of REPAM
A Call for Change

Carmen Amaya and Jairo Forero - CLC Spain

The presence of CLC in Amazonia and the collaborative project with Church networks in the Pan-Amazon. A call for change of heart towards ecology in CLC

Context of the Experience

This project was presented in the Assembly of Lebanon as a meaningful practical experience to be supported by both the world and Latin American CLC, and in this way responding to the call of the Lord on the frontier of Ecology.

During the Lebanon Assembly CLC, aware of the urgent need to be active on this frontier, proposed two important aims: one to encourage its members to undertake a self-reflection, an internal effort that has to do with the review of consumption patterns, in terms of the way in which we use resources and how this may affect nature and the environment, and highlighting the simple life we are called to lead. On a second front, it aims to give specific support for initiatives like the Amazon project, creating direct contact with people on the ground. It seeks to have a deep reflection on how to pursue this type of involvement, nurturing the first level of reflection and changing consumption habits - so necessary to achieve a sustainable action over time.

Such sustainable activity seeks to challenge in a practical way the hyper-active model by which we live today, which is based on a theory of a linear and ever-increasing progress, progress that is not really achievable, but which instead creates serious damage to the planet. To achieve this it is necessary to go out to those territories where they do not like such reformed model, territories where they do not care about alternative models that are developing on the ground, because their sole interest is to extract the resources needed for their operational needs. In practice the aim is to choose to go out there and meet the people, to understand the underlying dynamics of their life, and how we can work together, either within the territory itself, living the same situations which

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1 Presentation from the Course: Political dimension of social commitment of CLC in Latin America and the Caribbean - March 14, 2015.
people live, or creating the necessary awareness which, empowered with an authority derived from the experience of real people facing real daily struggles, promotes more and better changes in the way we use resources and reform our consumer habits. The Amazon project aims to be a concrete proposition for collaboration between CLC members and other institutions, currently Church ones, to support the mission inside and outside the Amazon territory, always with the aim of defending the territory and within it, the people who live there.

To elaborate on this context, we want to address two aspects: the first is to geographically locate the mission and secondly to share details of what we have done to advance the Amazon project.

Geographically, we are located in the State of Pará, this state is part of what is known as the Amazon proper, one of nine states in northern Brazil (Acre, Amazonas, Roraima, Amapá, Maranhão, Tocantins, Mato Grosso, Rondônia and Pará). This region which is known as the proper (legally defined) Amazon, has a particular relationship with the Amazon ecosystem. We do not find clean rivers and forests in the entire Amazon proper. It is more a creature of a legal and political order that comprises what used to be a large pool of water resources, forests, flora and fauna, but is no longer so because of the ever increasing penetration of deforestation in that territory. In fact, the State of Pará has one of the worst records for deforestation within Brazil.
Within the State of Pará, we are based in the southeastern region, specifically in the city of Maraba which is the fourth largest city of the state with about 230,000 inhabitants and is located exactly at the meeting point of the rivers Tocantins and Itacaiunas. The economy of the city is based mainly on farming, whether large (and in many cases single-crop ones), or small farms. People say that in Maraba there are more cows than people, because it is strongly characterized by livestock production. There are expansive grasslands that are used to feed livestock, especially cattle, for meat production.

A second line of the economy is the steel industry, seeking to add value to the iron ore mined in the largest mine in the world, located in the same State of Para, through the production of pig iron which is the raw material for steel production. Both the agricultural activities and the steel mill of Maraba are the largest money earners of this region. They are also activities which have the most devastating effects on the ecosystem, already in its second phase, i.e., arising after the first deforestation of the original forest. We are in the presence of an ecosystem totally transformed by man.

In contrast to the wealth generated by agricultural and steel production sectors, the population gets low levels of health care, a poor education system... There is also widespread corruption at government level... In contrast to the wealth generated by agricultural and steel production sectors, the population gets low levels of health care, a poor education system (one of the worst in Brazil), hardly any system of basic sanitation, and lack of pavement in the streets and other associated problems. There is also widespread corruption at government level. This shows how all the wealth generated in the region does not translate into an improved quality of life for the population.

The lack of infrastructure in services to meet the fundamental rights of the people contrasts with this substantial infrastructure to extract the resources of the area. Maraba has an airport, a railway (currently being increased to twice its size), and also has a small port earmarked for expansion through the construction of the planned waterway. Moreover, the municipal government is also planning to build the Maraba hydroelectric, to generate power, not for the pe-
ople, but to further expand and strengthen the extractive process. Most of this energy goes to producing iron ore following the same logic. We live in a neighborhood called Bela Vista in the suburbs of Maraba and that's where we carry out some of our specific missions.

Our work in the Amazon project has been developed on three fronts: we have a way of life which is no different to any other work done by laymen anywhere in the world. Usually, lay people have a job to go to to earn an income, but in addition as lay people in CLC we have an ecclesial commitment which is expressed in the small community where we meet. At a third level, we have the apostolic level which is not always or necessarily linked with income generating work.

The mission works this way, on the one hand we have the foundation that allows us to generate the income needed to live, which is the VOJAM volunteer program, within the project Education and Citizenship. The project is part of the platform of the Jesuits who enabled us to be in this territory. The project applies to children who are starting their school years, between age 6 and 12. By means of supplementary education, values are formed and enriched, self-esteem strengthened, self-care habits developed: all processes needed in the context of poverty that is always threatening the children. The project directly benefits the poorest families.

On a second level there is our ecclesial link, expressed in the life of faith as part of a parish community both helping the Jesuits and also belonging to a group for pastoral visitation. This group goes out to visit the sick in the community, who are really in need. This allows us to get to know a little more the background of the neighborhood and the real life of the people with whom we
live. The group is like an image of our small CLC group, where we share faith and life.

The third level is the apostolic one: we look at this as a means to progress the development of the Amazon project, generating stronger collaboration between CLC members and institutions that are working in the territories. Currently, such links exist with the Society of Jesus, the Comboniani Fathers and the Pastoral Land Commission, and some others that are taking place within the framework of the Ecclesial Pan-Amazon Network -REPAM. This way we can strengthen the Amazon project generating more links that allow more people within CLC to serve practically in the territory as we are doing.

**What has the experience of the mission in the Amazon meant?**

We can say that taking up the mission in the Amazon has marked a major milestone in our life history and our faith journey. We can speak of a before and after the experience because now our life will never be the same. Getting near the Amazon, and living in the sharp end of a neighborhood in the suburbs, has transformed our view of what ecology is. We have moved away from the ideas and stereotypes we had about the needs and realities that are here. Gradually we became more and more involved with the people, we were sharing their stories of joy and deep pain, and we were gaining new friends. Existentially uniting with them is what has converted our hearts. We have discovered that for these territories ecology means conflict over land, rights taken away from the poor, defense of life that necessarily brings confrontation with powerful and seemingly invincible forces of capital.

Our life as a couple has changed: we have become accomplices and witnesses of the transforming action of God in everyone. We have been given the grace to conceive in this context of difficulties and hopes a new life with this expected child. God shows us once again his commitment to humanity as he continues creating and making all things new. We came as two and now we are three missionaries called and sent to give a response to the infinite love of the Lord of life.

A major new experience of faith is revealed in the contemplation of a God who makes himself known in our history and whom we share jointly with our brothers. He who does not forget the suffering and injustice because he has perso-
nally suffered, has led us gradually into the mission, our commitment in response to the Lord’s call made once and which now persists with more urgent entreaty, to such an extent, that it is not possible for us to forget or abandon this task.

We believe this experience has also been significant for the lives of others, for the lives of children who participate in the Project Education and Citizenship - PEC, because in every encounter we saw them change, learn, discover; we were witnesses of the power of education from the love and appreciation of the greatness of each person. Despite coming from backgrounds of hunger, violence, disease and abandonment, many children changed their behavior and at the same it changed our language and tone, our voice and our attitude: we discovered the nobility of their being and we were stripped of the harshness of our preconceptions.

For the children’s families, this dream has represented one of the few chances they have to educate their children, education facilities are very bad in the north of Brazil. With each family we met we understood the circumstances in which the children live and so were convinced that education is only part of the story, that little or nothing can be done without understanding the reality which people live. We became friends of parents to the point of closely accompanying them in their many difficulties, valuing the love and efforts they made to give their children the best they can.

For the families we visited, this experience took varying forms: company for elderly people living alone with their illnesses, solidarity and listening for families facing poverty and unemployment, or families made up of single women with a large number of children in their care, for those with their stories of violence and loss being the balm that helps to heal the wounded hearts. Each visit has been for us a chance to contemplate the Lord on his cross, it is the same burden carried by the vanquished of the world today.

Many are the names that we remember, many the memories that pull the strings of the heart. It is the memory we cannot forget because in
effect therein lie the burning coals of ardent that move us to continue with this task.

It was especially impressive to meet Father Dario Bossi, a Comboniani missionary, and to reflect on his hard work to accompany the struggles of communities defending themselves against the onslaught of the big mining companies that extract every day thousands of tons of minerals from the Amazonian territories and leave behind only poverty, disease, pollution, violence and death. Getting to know working groups like the activists from the Debate and Action movement, the Pastoral Land Commission or the women of the Movement the Landless, companions in the conviction for whom our presence was not only important but one of joy and fraternity because we discovered together that religion becomes only one element in the narrative of defending life as it is and why our sharing was even more authentic and open.

For our CLC, this experience is perhaps the seed of a road that is still to be traveled. For many of our brothers and sisters our experience of leaving everything in our country to be here became a challenge and posed a question, hence the show of affection, solidarity and encouragement we received. Some were moved to join us as Mauricio Lopez, who has taken on this project as part of his way of life and always encouraged us to continue believing in the midst of
difficulties and to reinforce the project. Basically the Amazon project could represent for CLC the opportunity to get involved existentially with the deepest cries of a humanity excluded and marginalized, with the reality that we will miss if we stay on our comfortable balconies without realizing the effects of the type development we espouse today in our daily living and which will progressively become more untenable. It is the hope to meet face to face with the Lord.

**CLC Identity and relationship with social policy situation**

The identity of CLC invites us to live apostolically. Life as mission is part of our charism. We understand that to achieve this, the mission needs to be discerned that we need to be sent on this mission, because it is not a personal whim. On this mission we cannot go alone, so the support of others is essential and we understand that the mission should be evaluated, NOT in terms of success or failure, but to reflect on the footprints of God and where they leads us.

When we began our process of discernment, we wanted to know why our hearts rejoiced when we were called to participate in this project. We felt that God was calling us by our names, and therefore what is significant for you is not necessarily so for others. We decided to apply as a couple, although it was were clearly the appeal was for one person. During my monthly (spiritual) exercises I had the chance to contemplate the life of Jesus and at the end came back home to find that God spoke to Carmen in my absence ... the call was shared. At that point we started finding answers to the practical logistical needs and to be able to be here.

Another process was to free ourselves and make ourselves available for the mission. Letting go of the work, material goods, family and friends was only possible because God gave us the grace to see him working from the simplicity of life and that of the simplest. Clearly we strongly believe in the simple life, because otherwise we will be too tied to respond to the calls of God.

Prayer is essential, praying is of great help when we need to find the meaning of life that sometimes gets lost in the midst of difficulties. To pray and contemplate the life to the Lord every day and in every meeting are habits that help transform the heart and make it docile in service and strong in difficulty.
Our CLC identity helped pave the way for this mission. In CLC found a medium that works for us in our wish to follow the Lord. So our desire is to walk with Him, along with the Church for the service to all.

Now we want to express some thoughts about the relationship between the Amazon Project, CLC and the possibility of socio-political impact.

As a resource, to be able to set out some points that are fundamentally important for a socio-political impact, we will refer to some elements found in a proper interpretation we make of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, specifically the Contemplation on the Incarnation, and also using our experience.

The first element we discovered is GOD SURVEYING THE WORLD. Seeing the reality of the world through the eyes of God is a grace that we must ask for. God of the Exercises observes the world in its diversity and complexity and sees that the project of humanity is frustrated... Ignatius expresses it as "seeing that all is lost." In simple terms, it is a look that searches where life is de-humanized, where the plan of the deification or humanization has not been achieved.
God's answer as to what to look out for is radical: What is the impact on God? THE SECOND PERSON BECOMES MAN. It is through the INCARNATION of God in the world that we understand what it means TO BE HUMAN. God offers us as a model of human life. And that is the second element INCARNATION AS RESPONSE TO THE SURVEYING LOOK OF GOD.

In our experience, incarnation goes hand in hand with integrating with the people. This is the power behind those who work with people because they live in the same conditions and become close to them. It provides realistic ways to defend life and seek allies to do so. The experience uses the existential reality of people as its strength and in turn as its limit and therefore it ensures that the fundamental impact does not depend on illusions, nor on expectations on the processes of community organization, or on the intentions of people. Finally, this insertion can see how God acts among his people by encouraging them to offer resistance.

A final element that we want to address is that the Incarnation in reality introduces a new way of conceiving HISTORY. Impact at the ground level contributes to better live in harmony with the inherent conflict that is not always manifested in society. That is, history is built on the necessary claims of those whose expectations to live to the full were previously thwarted, and who today, even though not actually physically present, spur the fight to change the situation. So history is no longer lived as the desire for progress and a better future, but as a way of being located in the present always looking in past struggles to still see today how they are relevant.

That is why in our faith we believe in the cross because it shows us a fight that is still going on ... because Jesus announces to us that to enter in his Glory all life, passion and death is required.

This way of conceiving history nurtures the struggle necessary to bring about changes and also to free us from the trap of thinking about success or failure. It is not to fail not to have the desired response to our demands for change, failure is not "loss" (in quotation marks) in the life of those who struggle. It is not a
failure not to realize the utopia. Failure in this sense is when there was no utopia, no one wanted to fight and thought that there is nothing needing change.

That is why in our faith we believe in the cross because it shows us a fight that is still going on ... because Jesus announces to us that to enter in his Glory all life, passion and death is required.

Therefore the impact can be seen: on children in Citizenship and Education Project who overcoming their own limitations can learn and understand that they are not doomed to be left behind by the poor quality of the education they receive at school; on their parents, because they begin to understand that they have a right to a better education for their children and should not have an inferiority complex in front of a teacher or school principal when they demand their right.

The impact is also ... on the Comboniani Missionaries of Acaílandia living with the people in an unhealthy environment because of the pollution from the Steelworks. They make others feel uncomfortable when they speak out and support the struggle for better living conditions and for the defense of Human Rights. There are also the people in the movement Churches and Mining, who founded in diversity, but united in faith, seek that the victims of the extractive industry are heard while they await for justice that they deserve.

The impact can be seen on the women of the Group of the Visits, who even without preparation and shyly, go to meet the poorest of the poor of the neighborhood and look for ways to improve their lives with dignity.

Finally, it is enough to say that this simple impact is the necessary condition of other forms of impact. We do not fall into the temptation of making baseless impact. We think creatively about how we, as members of CLC, can be intimately linked to these movements to bring about the changes we both desire.
Conclusion

Dear brothers and sisters, it is not possible to create such a mission from the world of ideas, as our experience of God cannot be abstract, disembodied and superficial. It is in the reality of everyday life travelling with other people that we will become more human and build in us the dream of the Lord: the glory of God, is the life of men and women.

So we make an appeal, a very fraternal and warm invitation to all and every one of you who are part of CLC throughout the world, and have approached this experience ... to embrace it, fall in love with it and embark on the task to provide the continuity and deepening of our understanding of the problems of those who live in the Amazonian territories by getting involved, pouring yourself into, going to meet and spending time, not only days but years, sharing the way they live, and why not, sharing with them your destiny. There are many communities today in the Amazon that need a helping hand, too many projects and plans plotting the devastation of what remains of traditional, indigenous, ancestral knowledge. The forests that are still standing today are being exterminated.

Our Church is organizing itself to become aware both of its responsibility in the defense of the peoples and territories and of the importance to allow the inhabitants of the Amazon to be the agents and builders of their own destiny and not quietly
accept what others plan from outside. Of this, REPAM (in which our CLC members participate and are involved) or the network of Churches and Mining are rising examples. However we can assure you that the hands and feet that are implanted today in the Amazon territory to live and understand these realities, are very few and insufficient.

Let us not be taken in by the theories of the Amazon from many sources, by many people including academics and scholars. Much of what they say does not take into account the essential. Let us go and see and understand, to be involved with the Christ of the Amazon, let's not just do it for future generations or to build a better future, but for all those generations who join with ours in the present and were never able to live and realize fully and to whom we still have and will always have a debt to settle.

We appreciate we were asked to share our life experience and to also share our concerns and major questions about the unsustainability of economic, social and political model in which we live, and our responsibility in its transformation.

Original in Spanish - Translated by David Formosa
We are living in the mindset of a “throwaway culture”, as Pope Francis has pointed out. And at the same time, we are living in an era of great hope because something new is happening in our reality as the Church and People of God, a Church which is the institutional expression of the path of Christ. With a fresh approach, Pope Francis has challenged us, questioning many things that were considered far from the heart of the people, confronting the issues with courage and promoting the conversion of believers and people of goodwill.

Many servers in the Kingdom project who have surrendered their lives and continue to do so under the most complex circumstances, today feel reaffirmed in heart and mission, which is wonderful news and a profound change in the situation.

The proposal of the Pan-Amazon Ecclesiastic Network - REPAM²

“The Church is not in the Amazon acting as a person ready to leave after having exploited it.” From the outset it has been present therein with missionaries,

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1 Red Eclesial Pan-Amazónica
2 This text is written by several people, given that the dynamics of this network has always been framed by this community spirit in the mission.
The work of the Church in the Pan-Amazon region represents the best of the tradition of commitment with the peripheries since the times in which the cultures of two continents met. Despite its limitations, the ecclesiastic role has been heroic; and it continues to be so, due to the enormous complexity of accessibility, distances, limited resources and the misunderstanding of the full inculturation of the mission which, in most cases, carries the evangelising vocation to its greatest extent. Testimonies of religious missionaries, along with others, are countless, and the lives of many indigenous communities, both mestizo and riverside dwellers have been transformed by the pastoral commitment thereof.

However, we can observe the deep frailties of ecclesiastic teams working in the Pan-Amazon region (lack of missionaries, structural and financial constraints, isolation, difficulties in systematising their experiences to transcend to advocacy efforts in a wider network, partial or reduced vision of some missionaries and pastors).

It is within this context that REPAM has been launched, promoted by major regional bodies of the Church: Episcopal Council for Latin America and the Caribbean (CELAM), Commission for the Amazon of the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB), Caritas of Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Latin-American and Caribbean Conference of Religious People (CLAR), together with ecclesiastic nuclei, agents, congregations, Episcopal Conferences, specialised institutions, as well as others working with the Pan-Amazon perspective, and with the close support of the Vatican Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

New scenarios and individuals calling for a change

The Pan Amazon region has been conceived historically as a space that should be occupied, controlled and integrated according to the external hegemonic interests, i.e., at the service of foreign capital; given that from the beginning it was considered an unoccupied territory. It became a priority region upon the

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3 Adapted from multiple presentations by experts at the founding meeting of REPAM. Brasilia 2014.
discovery of natural resources, nevertheless there is a concept of backwardness surrounding the area, separated from central urban development and devoid of population, thus allowing it to become a territory at the disposal of the interests of power groups and making its cultural richness of flora and fauna invisible. It went from being the “backyard” to the “world’s central square”.

The Pan Amazon region is a biome, i.e., a living system, which functions as a regional and global climate stabilizer maintaining moisture in the air and producing 1/3 of the rains that nourish the earth. The Pan Amazon region houses a great cultural diversity in which 2,779,478 natives live, pertaining to 390 indigenous peoples, 137 isolated or non-contacted peoples, as well as 240 languages comprised within 49 language groups. The following are some of the most numerous groups: Aruak, Karib and Tupi-Guarani, which in total add up to nearly 40 million inhabitants.

Currently more than 20% of the vegetation cover of the Pan Amazon region no longer exists. The same was cut down and burned to allow access to various projects involving mining, farming, logging, hydroelectricity and farmer settlements, among others. Today we are experiencing a high incidence of droughts in the Amazon region, a situation which in the past was not believed possible but now it is happening at a high rate. As a result thereof, climate change has increased as well as its impact on various socio-environmental areas. The region is facing the prospect of consolidation of vertical and authoritarian planning, i.e., the implementation of mega-extraction projects that consider the Amazon territory as a means to obtain resources and economic growth. The Church walks in the midst of this reality, adapting to the pace of the poorest people.
walking therein. The vitality of the missionary Amazon Church is perceived in these realities. All efforts seem insufficient in the face of the enormity of the challenges, but in its smallness, its missionary testimony becomes a sign pointing to the possibility of another Amazon.

“The Pan-Amazon region covers an area of 7.5 million square kms. Distributed throughout 9 countries of South America4. The Amazon River has over 1,100 main tributaries with more than 25 thousand navigable Km. The Amazon region concentrates 20% of the non-frozen fresh water on the planet... In which 34% of the primary forests of the earth are concentrated and houses between 30% and 50% of the fauna and flora of the world” (Amazon Travelling and Inter-Congregational Team).

Heart of humanity in and from the Pan-Amazon region

This initiative arises from the action of the Holy Spirit who has guided and continues to guide the Church in the process of incarnating the Gospel in the Pan-Amazon region. This portion of land is the biome where life is expressed in its mega-diversity as God’s gift to everyone. The Pan-Amazon region is a “source of life in the heart of the Church”, where the ancient cultures express harmony between people and nature.

Pastoral service for the Pan-Amazon region

As Amazon Ecclesiastic Network and from the specificity of each ecclesiastic instance, we want to accompany our peoples and communities as follows:

- Promote a joint pastoral plan, collaboration in key territory and the dynamism of activities articulated as a Church based on the Pan-Amazon vision.
- The comprehensive promotion of the Amazon populations, in order to make them the subjects of transformation in the Church and in society.
- Respect for the cultures, traditions, customs, beliefs, organisations and rhythms of the Amazon people.
- Make a preferential option for the poor and excluded people from these territories.


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Assume the defence of human rights and particularly the rights of indigenous peoples, riverside dwellers, urban population and those of African descent.

Respect and care for the environment in the Amazon.

The impact on local, national and international public policies in favour of the Pan-Amazon region and the various Amazon territories.

**Vision of REPAM**

In the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ who died and rose again, we want to live an experience of fraternity and solidarity in the context of real inculturation, acting as an instrument of dialogue and ecclesiastic unity, the sign and evidence of the Kingdom of God (together with other people of goodwill), at the service of the Pan-Amazon region, in defence of life as God’s gift, seriously threatened, which means “create awareness in the Americas of the importance of the Amazon for all mankind” (DA 475).

**Mission of REPAM**

From a platform of mutual enrichment, exchange and a confluence of efforts on the part of local churches, religious congregations, ecclesiastic institutions and the laity, as well as related organisations, with a prophetic voice and at the service of life, of creation, of the poor and for the common good, we as the PAN-AMAZON ECCLESIASTIC NETWORK, hereby promote, in an articulated way, the action carried out by the Church in the Pan-Amazon region, updating and implementing Apostolic joint, comprehensive and multi-scale options within the framework of doctrine and under Church guidance.

*Original in Spanish. Translated by Clifford Schisler*
Experiences across the Planet

COP21 and the Climate Pilgrimage

Estelle Grenon
CLC France

Youth Ecological movement in Africa

Allen Ottaro
CLC Kenya

Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM)

Ann Marie Brennan
CLC USA
Reflection on COP21 and the Climate Pilgrimage

Estelle Grenon - CLC France

Our hopes, fears and expectations for a world-wide response to the urgent call to care for creation.

Men and women of good will are coming together from 30 November to 11 December in France, north of Paris, to work for the future of our common home. Delegations from 195 states, members of civil society – businesses, NGOs, scientists, territorial groupings, indigenous peoples, but also religious people from the whole world, in total more than 40,000 participants are expected with one objective: to keep global warming below 2°C.

This is a crucial time of reckoning. Between Laudato Si, the definition of the Sustainable Development Goals and COP21, humankind is at a crossroads. A pivotal moment, a moment of hope. This is no longer the time for skepticism, for disputes about numbers that discredit rather than mobilize. There can no longer be an attitude of indifference, of claiming that there is no problem. Or that there is one, but we cannot do anything. Or that there is a problem, that we can do something, but we have not yet decided how to resolve it.

Some men and women have decided to go to COP21 using their own human energy. On foot, by bicycle, as a group, on pilgrimage. A climate pilgrimage. A walk to cast a new look at our world. Why not slow down, they say? Why not take the time to look at what surrounds us? Why not take the time to meet the ones with solutions, on the road. This is a pilgrimage for justice and peace. Let us pray for them and all those who are working for this world to come.
Our hopes for COP21? That the Church challenges everyone in a constructive way towards respect for God’s Creation and of listening to the poorest people during COP21. May the question of the climate bring us back to the call for respect for Creation and touch the very heart of our faith.

Our fears? That each individual will defend their own interests before thinking of the interests of the whole of humanity. It would be insulting not to go in the direction of the poorest; who expect from the Conference an awakening of the international Community and a surge of solidarity, especially financial, in support of their sustainable development. It would be shameful not to have confidence in the work of scientists. It would be senseless to hide the link between the climate and the dangers to world peace, climate and international migrations, climate and the weakening of ecosystems. Let us go on in the wake of the Pope, who has become the megaphone for the cry of the Earth and the Cry of the poorest.

Our expectations? That each one of us become active as guardians of Creation entrusted to us by God. That our wonderment before Creation invite us to communion and hope. That the link between justice, development, peace, and global warming become fixed in our minds. The climate question is a question of justice. Justice between nations: the poorest countries are those who have contributed least to global warming and pay the heaviest price for it. Justice between the generations: young people of today live with the awareness of a world of limited, finite resources. Justice between the rich and the poor, more or less dependent on climate hazards. There is a strong expectation of progress on the route to an ecological conversion, a source of deep joy.

We must hope, the Pope tells us in his Encyclical, Laudato Si, no. 165, that “humanity at the dawn of the XXIst century will be remembered for having generously shouldered its grave responsibilities.” The challenge is great but the planet is so beautiful. Let us be committed Christians so that generations to come will admire its splendour.

*Original in French. Translated by Patricia Kane*
Youth and Care of Creation in Africa

Allen Ottaro - CLC Kenya

When the encyclical ‘Laudato Si’ was released on the 18th of June 2015, I quickly flipped through to find references to Africa and to young people. It wasn’t long before I found the first one, in paragraph 13: “Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded”.

My colleagues were equally excited and it was easy to see why, in the statement that we jointly crafted.

“After weeks and months of prayerful anticipation, the Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa (CYNESA), is delighted to finally welcome Pope Francis’ Encyclical letter, ‘Laudato Si’ (Praised Be), On the Care of Our Common Home. We thank His Holiness Pope Francis for this gift, to the Church and to the world. ‘Laudato Si’ comes to us on the 1st anniversary of our Summit, which gathered 20 CYNESA leaders from 6 African countries and an ecumenical guest from the African Lutheran Youth Network. As the immediate heirs to poor leadership and therefore to this unsustainable future, Africa’s current youth population has an urgent responsibility to ensure that its communities, countries and the continent at large act as frontrunners for a safe, sustainable and productive future for them and their children. Africa, the continent with one of the youngest populations, rich in natural resources will also be hardest hit by climate change. Its limited adaptive capacity is threatened by widespread poverty. This is why the encyclical from Pope Francis, ‘Laudato Si’ is so important. Pope Francis draws attention to the plight of the poor among us and our relationship with all of creation.”
Young people today long for a way to make a difference in the world. They live at a critical time in the history of the world. The impacts of climate change are real and are taking their toll on the earth and its people.

The Church’s social teaching sheds light on a situation like climate change through Scripture, Catholic social teaching and the movement of the Holy Spirit. Young Catholics can be empowered to draw on our tradition and the Spirit to confront the threat of climate change with creativity, reflection, learning and action. When faith, knowledge, morality and compassion meet an issue… things begin to happen!

Inspired by Saint Pope John Paul II’s 1990 message for World Day of Peace, in which he called for the need to upscale ecological awareness and to find fitting expression in concrete programmes and initiatives, young Catholics from Kenya, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Zambia, Rwanda and South Africa, drawn from and representing university chaplaincies and parish groups, joined up to respond to this invitation, and to set up the Africa-wide Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa (CYNESA) in January 2012.

CYNESA’s mission is to help young Catholics in sub-Saharan Africa – their movements and communities, individually and with their colleagues – to respond to the twin challenges of environmental degradation and climate change. In the last 3 years, we have shaped this response to be effective, coordinated and evangelical, culturally sensitive and spiritually grounded. Its mission is to link young Catholics together with colleagues in mutual encouragement and support.

1. Effective: CYNESA aims to create core teams of young Catholic leaders in each country, appreciating what Catholic youth are doing and making these efforts known, strengthening initiatives already underway, and helping potential programmes to get off the ground.

2. Coordinated in mutual encouragement and support, working not individualistically but as a body, taking advantage of social media to communicate and give shape to this initiative. As in any network, communications is CYNESA’s
nervous system and its blood supply too. With Catholic youth scattered throughout sub-Saharan Africa, communications are vital capillary and nervous systems which help bind us into one body. CYNES'A encourages those involved and links them together step-by-step in an active continental network with its own voice and capacity to act and advocate in coordination.

3. Evangelical: As God’s children, we have a special responsibility toward each other and the rest of Creation. Nature is our sister. As responsible stewards and co-workers with Christ, we are part of Creation, not separate from it. We must demonstrate the meaning of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection in our treatment of Creation. We are to begin the process of properly conserving, developing, and restoring Creation, a process that will be completed by God - the Creator (Father), Redeemer (Son), and Sanctifier (Holy Spirit) of the whole Universe.

“Human beings, endowed with intelligence and love, and drawn by the fullness of Christ, are called to lead all creatures back to their Creator.” LS. #83

4. Culturally sensitive: Globalized culture is obviously imposing itself on Africa with irresistible force, manifesting itself through consumerism and individualism. African indigenous knowledge on the environment has guided communities over many generations in making environmentally sound choices. This knowledge needs to be integrated in current responses, and must not be allowed to erode in the face of globalization. CYNES'A aims to make its...
contribution by engineering its responses in a way which is sensitive to local culture, faith and spirituality, and which works side by side with other agencies in the field, especially within the Church.

“All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvement and talents.” LS. #14

5. Spiritually grounded: An ongoing formation of moral conscience and discernment for making difficult choices according to Gospel and Church teaching, is a main pillar in CYNESA’s approach to the environmental crisis. Our relationship with Christ is fundamental in walking the path of social responsibility and responsibility for creation. Such fidelity is the “guarantee of freedom (cf. Jn 8:32) and of the possibility of integral human development.”

What we do

The environmental crisis does indeed pose a huge threat to the survival of the entire continent of Africa and cannot be underestimated. But even more, this highly complex phenomenon cries out for urgent action at many levels and in many ways. If our initiatives are to be both effective and truly Catholic, they need to take deep roots in the reality of those who suffer.

CYNESA initiatives begin in our prayer for all those concerned, and for the authenticity and generosity of our particular contribution. But after that it has to take shape on the ground, in the lives of countless thousands of fellow African citizens. That means working in parishes, schools, with youth movements at various levels and creating fruitful partnerships with other agencies.

CYNESA has already identified more than 50 young Catholic leaders, drawn from parishes, university chaplaincies and Catholic youth movements representing 7 African countries, with a growing list of expressions of interest being received from more Catholic youth.

Our activities are tailored into three main areas:

- Education and awareness creation – We are preparing a toolkit on climate change that draws from scripture, Ignatian spirituality and Catholic social teaching. In coming months, we will be working with local parish youth in setting up ‘Laudato Si’ study groups.
Networking and advocacy training – We are establishing and building relationships with like-minded partners, and training young Catholics in advocacy on environmental sustainability.

Encouraging and supporting concrete action plans at the local level – We encourage young people to act in their parishes, schools and within their youth movements by developing appropriate sustainable practices to conserve resources.

The CYNESA Core team plays a coordinating role for the entire network and its members work from multiple locations, to grow and develop the network’s profile and identify resources to make this possible.

While our initiative is a grassroots, youth-led and youth-driven, and Africa-based, we link our endeavors to global networks. Late 2014, we joined the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM), as founding members, and help coordinate GCCM projects on the continent.

We look forward to 2016. Together with GCCM we will offer ecology programs at the World Youth Days in Krakow, Poland. Just before the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), a gathering in Nairobi of environment ministers and stakeholders from all across the world (May 23-27, 2016), CYNESA will host its second summit, a week-long meeting of leaders from all CYNESA national chapters. All these are challenging to pull off, but we will “sing as we go...and pray that our struggles and concern for this planet may never take away the joy of our hope.” LS. # 244
CVX-CLC Joins Network of Global Catholic Climate Movement!

*Ann Marie Brennan - CLC USA/World ExCo member*

**A Little History First!** This is a significant time in history where movements worldwide are converging around the issue of ecological awareness, climate change and responsible action. Though conservation and environmental groups have been in existence for about 200 years since the Industrial Revolution where the effects of pollution were clearly visible, there has been a growing and evolving understanding of the harmful impacts of human activity on the environment, the limits of environmental resources, and the moral and ethical imperative to protect the environment for present and future generations. Even more understood is the link between ecological disasters and mass poverty. Among people of faith, this has become a social justice issue, where we see the interconnectedness of humanity and all of God’s creation. Most often, it will be the poor and most vulnerable who will feel the brunt of climate change—reduced harvests due to shorter growing seasons, loss of homes and jobs due to more devastating weather patterns, violent conflicts due to limited access to water and energy resources, forced migration of indigenous people due to massive deforestation, mining, and violence; extinction of plants,
Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) came together to discuss ways to promote care for God’s creation, care for the poor—who are the most vulnerable to climate disruption—and care for our children, who will face the worst impacts in the coming years. For many years, environmental sustainability has been a discerned priority area for World Christian Life Community. For many years, we focused on water issues. In 2005, we signed on to the Earth Charter, a civil society document originally proposed at the UN and endorsed by over 6000 organizations worldwide. The Earth Charter describes an ethical framework for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society that Pope Francis quotes in Laudato Si’. At our World General Assembly in Lebanon, we confirmed Ecology as one of our four frontier priority areas. With our NGO status at the UN, we participated in the 2014 DPI/NGO conference at the UN in NYC where CLC hosted a couple of workshops. The purpose of this Conference was “to harness the strategies, expertise and resources across the broadest spectrum of civil society to move poverty eradication, sustainability, human rights and climate justice into the mainstream discourse, and spark sustained public demand for lasting political action in support of an ambitious outcome from the post-2015 sustainable development process.”

Conferences raise awareness, but to realize concrete actions—well, that is another matter!

This is where the GCCM begins! Last January 2015, concerned about human-made climate change and united by our Catholic faith, the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) came together to discuss ways to promote care for God’s creation, care for the poor—who are the most vulnerable to climate disruption—and care for our children, who will face the worst impacts in the coming years. The GCCM has grown to a network of more than 200 Catholic organizations worldwide. “We encourage Catholics to renew our relationship with creation and with our brothers and sisters in poverty, and we urge our po-
political leaders to commit to ambitious climate action to solve this urgent crisis and keep the global temperature increase below 1.5 degree Celsius (relative to pre-industrial levels).”

Members of World ExCo saw several advantages in networking with the GCCM on this priority area of Ecology. As we read in our General Norms: we “seek constantly the answers to the needs of our times and to work together with the entire People of God and all those of good will for progress and peace, justice and charity, liberty and the dignity of all people.” And “our responsibility to develop the bonds of community does not stop with our local community but extends to ... the whole Church and to all people of good will.” With the GCCM, we found much common ground in our foundations of Catholic Social Teaching combined with a depth of experience and expertise, wonderful synergies, vitality of fresh ideas and approaches, and support for efforts to raise awareness and mobilize people to act on these very important issues. Mauricio Lopez, Fr. Luke Rodrigues SJ, and Ann Marie Brennan contribute to the GCCM steering committee and help out with gathering of resources for their website. Additionally, Allen Ottaro of CLC Kenya works as a GCCM representative in Kenya. Mauricio Lopez has also been working with REPAM and REBAC, working with rainforest nations in Africa and the Congo and in the Pan-Amazonian ecclesial network. REPAM and REBAC bring together many themes of Laudato Si – human rights and thriving, in the context of life for all people, cultures, and species. Combined with sustainable, clean energy such respect for people and
the earth, and leadership by defenders of the earth may steer us on a better path, away from ecological destruction and climate change.

**What are the GCCM objectives?**

- To raise awareness within the Church about the urgency of climate action in light of Catholic social and environmental teachings
- To support global solidarity on the current ecological crisis and to restore our relationship with all species
- To advocate with our brothers and sisters in poverty who are on the frontline in bearing the brunt of the effects of climate change
- To promote ecological conversion through personal and organizational change to reduce our emissions and transition to a low carbon world
- To advance the Catholic relationship between faith and reason, especially as it relates to adaptive decision making in areas of climate change policy
- To urge political, business and social leaders to commit to ambitious climate action to solve this urgent crisis and keep the global temperature increase below 1.5 degree Celsius (relative to pre-industrial levels)
What are some GCCM actions?

1. **Praying and Fasting** in solidarity with those who are most affected by the changing global climate

2. **Educating** about the climate crisis and how it impacts all peoples and species, the Church’s social and environmental teachings, and how to reduce our carbon footprint

3. **Advocating** for the world’s policy makers and all Catholics to act in ways appropriate to their spheres of influence to protect the common good through mitigation and adaptation policies which promote social and environmental resilience to climate change

4. **Mobilizing Catholics on an individual, community and regional level**, at scale ahead of the 2015 Paris COP 21 – along with the global climate movement

5. **Sharing Catholic actions**, best practices and case studies on climate change

6. **Promoting interfaith dialogue and action** on climate change and with all people of good will

One of the biggest initiatives of the GCCM has been its **Climate Action Petition**!

Global Catholic Climate Movement representatives Tomás Insua, left, and Allen Ottaro (CLC Kenya), center, present Pope Francis with a copy of a petition calling for world leaders to address climate change. (Fotografia Felici) The petition, released in late March and addressed to world leaders, reads:

“Climate change affects everyone, but especially the poor and most vulnerable people. Impelled by our Catholic faith, we call on you to drastically cut carbon emissions to keep the global temperature rise below the dangerous threshold of 1.5°C, and to aid the world’s poorest in coping with climate change impacts.”
On May 7, Msgr. Guillermo Karcher, a papal master of ceremonies, signed the petition on behalf of the pope, as protocol prevents popes from signing such documents themselves. “The Pope’s endorsement was a huge support for the ongoing promotion of this climate petition in the Catholic community, and his support legitimizes our movement,” Insua said. The network is seeking 1 million signatures to present to world leaders in December at the Paris climate negotiations, where they are expected to achieve a fair, legally-binding and universal agreement on climate, from all the nations of the world.

GCCM responds to Laudato Si

Pope Francis’ Encyclical Laudato Si is a beautiful document that promotes a culture of care for all creation to protect our common home, Mother Earth. Additionally, the Pope very clearly emphasizes the importance of engaging in the political arena in order to do this. “Climate change hits the poorest first and hardest, and will leave an unnecessarily dire legacy for future generations,” said Allen Ottaro, of CLC Kenya, and director of the Kenya-based CYNESA. “We Catholics need to step up against climate change and raise a strong voice asking political leaders to take action urgently.” “Climate change is a symptom of a greater issue,” said Patrick Carolan, executive director of Franciscan Action Network, who attended the meetings. “And the greater issue is our lack of connectedness, our viewing ourselves as separate from creation instead of part of creation.”

When Pope Francis visited the United States in September 2015 to give historic talks to the US Congress and the UN General Assembly, members of the GCCM organized 10-Day Fasts and Overnight Interfaith Prayer Vigils in sup-
port of Pope Francis and his significant message. In November, GCCM made massive efforts in advance of the Paris Climate Summit to mobilize people in signing the Climate Petition, in praying in solidarity for a strong climate agreement, and in attending Global Climate Marches in over 3000 cities!

In 2016, following the COP21 Paris Climate Summit, GCCM will focus on political elections and holding leaders accountable to commitments made at the COP21. In observing the Year of Mercy, we will continue to make links to environmental justice. Some ideas and planned projects include: creating “Green Parishes,” Lenten Fast for Climate Justice, resource sharing with focus on Laudato Si, Season of Creation in September, and World Youth Day. We will continue to work with the expanded network of over 200 Catholic and faith-based organizations who together feel what Pope Francis calls a summons to profound interior and ecological conversion. “Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.” (LS # 217)

We invite CLC members to join together in the actions promoted by the Global Catholic Climate Movement of which we are all part of. Together, we pray that we will be instruments of God’s justice, holding in our hearts those who are already deeply affected by climate disruptions.
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Canticle of brother Sun

Most High, all powerful, good Lord,
Yours are the praises, the glory, the honor, and all blessing.
To You alone, Most High, do they belong,
and no man is worthy to mention Your name.
Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures,
especially through my lord Brother Sun,
who brings the day; and you give light through him.
And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor!
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.
Praise be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon
and the stars, in heaven you formed them
clear and precious and beautiful.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind,
and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of
weather through which You give sustenance to Your creatures.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water,
which is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom you light the night and he is beautiful
and playful and robust and strong.
Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Mother Earth,
who sustains us and governs us and who produces
varied fruits with colored flowers and herbs.
Praised be You, my Lord, through those who give pardon for
Your love, and bear infirmity and tribulation.
Blessed are those who endure in peace
for by You, Most High, they shall be crowned.
Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death,
from whom no living man can escape. Woe to those who die in
mortal sin. Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most
holy will, for the second death shall do them no harm.
Praise and bless my Lord, and give Him thanks
and serve Him with great humility

http://www.franciscanfriarstor.com/archive/stfrancis/stf_canticle_of_the_sun.htm)
1 And God Saw That it was Good
(The Goodness of Creation)

**Grace:** To experience a sense of wonder at creation.

**Hymn:** Joyful Joyful we adore Thee

**Scripture:** Genesis 1, 9-25

**Prayer and Sharing:** After some time for silent prayer, members share briefly what touched them in this passage.

**Explanation:**
There is an inherent goodness present in all of created reality, a goodness that is affirmed by the Creator himself (Gen 1: 4.10.12.18.21.25.31). The natural world has a value that is independent of its relationship or utility to human beings. The world is good not merely because it is useful to humans; the world is good because it IS. Every species and every creature has a right to existence, a right that is derived directly from its own divine origin. The earth is not merely the object of aesthetic and spiritual appreciation. The earth herself has a spiritual mode of being.

“In our totality, we are born of the earth. Our spirituality itself is earth-derived. If there is no spirituality in the earth, then there is no spirituality in ourselves. Subjective communion with the earth, identification with the cosmic-earth-human process provides the context in which we now make our spiritual journey.”

Thomas Berry.

**Exercise:** All are invited to recall a place of natural beauty which has touched them deeply - a landscape, a garden, park, forest etc. They recall the goodness of creation experienced in that place.

Each one is invited to sketch out some features of that place. The emphasis is not on art or on accuracy. This sketch is only an aid to help me externalize what has touched me most deeply about this place. In turns, each one shares her/his sketch. The following questions could be used to guide the sharing

- What are the features of this place?
- How often have I visited it?
- What are the feelings that it rouses in me?
- When do I plan to visit this place again?
Final prayer: A prayerful reading of the following poem

God’s Grandeur by Gerard Manley Hopkins

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;  
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil  
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?  
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;  
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;  
And wears man’s smudge and shares man’s smell: the soil  
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;  
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;  
And though the last lights off the black West went  
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —  
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.


Ongoing practice: I spend time contemplating some mystery of creation. I allow this mystery to fill me with a sense of awe and wonder. I enter into conversation with different aspects of nature - a tree, a river, the stars, the soil etc.
Grace: To encounter the sacramentality of creation

Hymn: Great indeed are your works O Lord.

Scripture: Psalm 19, 1-10

A pause for silent prayer and short sharing on the above Psalm.

Explanation: A sacrament is defined as a sign and instrument of God’s presence. Creation is the primary sacrament because it enables us to experience the presence of the divine. The universe is the medium of our encounter with God. It not only points to the Divine but also makes the Divine present to us. It is thus a sacrament in itself. The Psalms abound with passages of how God’s presence and qualities are made manifest through Nature. The heavens reveal the majesty of God’s name and tell of his glory (Psalm 8, Psalm 19). His voice is heard upon the waters and the wind (Psalm 29). St. Paul asserts that God has
left us an enduring witness of his eternal power and divinity in all of created reality (Rm 1,20).

In the Principle and Foundation, St. Ignatius presents a vision whereby all things are ordered towards God. All created things in this world have the potential to lead us towards the goal for which we are created – to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord. When viewed in the right manner, they become pathways towards God. (SpEx 23)

*I said to the almond tree, “Friend, speak to me of God. And the almond tree blossomed.” - Nikos Kazantzakis*

**Exercise:** Does nature teach me something about God? Do I recognize some of God’s attributes reflected in the natural processes all around me?

After a period of reflection, each one shares on the above questions.

**Final Prayer:** Canticle of the Sun – St. Francis of Assisi (Page 63)

**Ongoing Practice:** I observe the miracle of life that keeps unfolding all around me during different seasons – green shoots, maturing of fruits, nesting of birds, first steps of a toddler, etc.
The Place on which I am standing is Holy Ground

(Using the Third Method of Prayer in the SpEx)

Grace: A lasting change in my heart, as I contemplate our distant planet Earth.

Hymn: Job 38:4–11

Scripture: Exodus 3: 3-6 - The Burning Bush

Explanation: In 1971, from the window of the Apollo 14 Command Module astronaut Edgar Mitchell beheld our Earth as a distant blue dot. His heart changed; he saw the planet as a living being, harmonious and whole.

He wrote: “....Suddenly, from behind the rim of the moon, in long, slow-motion moments of immense majesty, there emerges a sparkling blue and white jewel, a light, delicate sky-blue sphere laced with slowly swirling veils of white, rising gradually like a small pearl in a thick sea of black mystery. It takes more than a moment to fully realize this is Earth . . . home. “

He stared at the “blue jewel-like home planet suspended in the velvety blackness from which we had come. What I saw out the window was all I had ever known, all I have ever loved and hated, longed for, all that I once thought had ever been and ever would be. It was there suspended in the cosmos on that fragile little sphere. I experienced a grand epiphany accompanied by exhilaration... ..........” “....My view of our planet was a glimpse of divinity.”

... he came, later, to see his experience in mystical terms, as a profound meditative state called savikalpa Samadhi in Sanskrit, meaning union with the divine.

Exercise: A glimpse of the mystery of the cosmos

Beforehand ask your group members to collect two oranges each about 3 inches in diameter, a few grains of sand, a few dried peas, a sheet of paper, a tape measure, an atlas or a laptop.

On the floor of the meeting room, use these objects to set up a scale model of the solar system.

On a chair place an orange; it represents the Sun, source of all heat, energy,
life, on planet Earth. One person measures out a distance of thirty feet (10 m) from the orange and there places the sheet of paper. At the centre of the paper, place a grain of sand. It represents our Earth. As a group, prayerfully reflect that all of evolutionary history occurred and is continuing on the surface of the grain of sand. The sand grain does not just stay in one place; it constantly circles the orange.

Jupiter, 11 times larger than Earth, is a pea seed, circling the Sun at a distance of 200 feet (65 m). Imagine the location of that place in relation to your meeting room.

Saturn with its wonderful rings is another pea, 400 feet from the orange, and Pluto, another grain of sand, is situated 2000 feet from the orange (about 0.3 miles or 0.6 km).

Now, as a group become aware that the nearest star to our Sun, on the scale of our model, is about 1000 miles (1500 km) away. Use the atlas or laptop to find a city which is that distance from where you are meeting today. The second orange represents that star and would be placed in the city you identify.

So far, we have considered only our solar system; it is one of many such in the Milky Way galaxy. We imagine our solar system shrunk to the area of a one inch coin, the galaxy would be the area of Australia, or the USA on the same scale. There are billions of other galaxies.

In the modern context, ponder the deep implications of these thoughts of scientists:

**Paul Davies, Physicist**

“There is now broad agreement among physicists and cosmologists that the Universe is in several respects ‘fine-tuned’ for life”.

He refers to the fact that certain conditions necessary for life were built into the Big Bang from the very beginning; for example the Strong Force which binds protons and neutrons together. Humans may not be at the physical centre of the universe, but we appear to be at the centre of its purpose.

**Freeman Dyson, Physicist**

“The more I examine the universe and study the details of its architecture, the
more evidence I find that the universe in some sense must have known we were coming”

Reflect briefly on the wonder of this reality: Our Earth seems so insignificant and lonely, yet Almighty God longed so deeply to live among us that He chose to be born into a family, in a crib among the cattle!

Closing Prayer Together, in silence, use the Third Method (#258, Puhl translation)

This is as follows: With each breath or respiration, one should pray mentally while saying a single word of the Our Father, or other prayer that is being recited, in such a way that from one breath to another a single word is said. For this same space of time, the attention is chiefly directed to the meaning of the word, to the person who is addressed, to our own lowliness, or the difference between the greatness of the person and our own littleness. In this way, observing the same measure of time, he should go through the other words of the Our Father. Let the other prayers, the Hail Mary, the Soul of Christ, the Creed, and the Hail Holy Queen, be recited in the ordinary way.
Grace: I ask the Holy Spirit to open my heart-mind so that I can listen to Earth’s living beings.

Hymn: (to be read aloud together): “For these, O Lord, the humble beasts that bear with us the burden and heat of the day, and offer their guileless lives for the well-being of humankind; and for the wild creatures whom You have made wise, strong and beautiful, we supplicate for them Your great tenderness of heart, for you have promised to save both human and beast, and great is Your loving-kindness, O master, Saviour of the world.” (St. Basil the Great, Bishop of Caesarea (329 – 379)

Scripture: Job 12: 7 –10

Prayer and Sharing: Take 10 minutes to pray Ignatius’ Third Method of Prayer, paragraph [258] in the Spiritual Exercises. Then share briefly an experience of your own related to the poem, and/or the scripture passage above.

Explanation: The emerging discipline of Biosemiotics gives us a new story of planetary connectedness. It is a scientific project based on the recognition that life is fundamentally grounded in semiotic, that is, communication processes. It offers new ways of understanding culture, nature and evolution. It asserts that life and matter are not just structures, they are signs, they tell us something, they have meaning. It is a theory of life’s creative agency. As Christians, we believe that God’s love is this creative agency.

Biosemiotics gives a framework for environmental ethics, which is the study of the moral relationships humans have with Earth’s ecosystems and life. How do we interact with plant and animal organisms ethically, recognizing that they have a moral value? If God’s love is the transcendent power of creation, then how do we enter into this power so that we love all creatures as God loves them? Our brain-mind gives us knowledge, but it is our heart-mind which gives us awareness of this planetary communion and the energy to act. And we activate the heart-mind through simple meditations like the Third Method of Prayer or the Jesus Prayer.
Exercise: The energy to act. Approximately 33% of agricultural output depends on insect and animal pollinators. Broad spectrum pesticides, habitat loss and invasive species are destroying insect populations and/or making them more susceptible to disease, for instance colony collapse in bee populations. Take a minute or two to recall the gardens you love, the ones where you feel immersed in the planetary communion. Recall the bees, wasps, butterflies, flies and birds you have seen in these gardens. What are they saying to you? Share on the following focus questions: 1. Can I support insect and bird pollinators by growing a diverse population of native flowers in my garden, or in pots on my balcony, outside my front door, on my driveway? 2. Can we, as a CLC community, commit to this simple action as a commons, a community that supports insect pollinators and therefore, biodiversity and food crops? 3. What is my heart telling me?

Final Reflection: “The Gift”: “I wanted to thank the mockingbird for the vigour of his song. Every day he sang from the rim of the field while I picked blueberries or just idled in the sun. Every day he came fluttering by to show me, and why not, the white blossoms of his wings. So one day I went there with a machine, and played some songs of Mahler. The mockingbird stopped singing; he came close and seemed to listen. Now when I go down to the field, a little Mahler spills through the sputters of his song. How happy I am, lounging in the light, listening as the music floats by! And I give thanks also for my mind, that thought of giving a gift. And mostly I’m grateful that I take this world so seriously.” (Mary Oliver in “House of Light”)

Ongoing Practice: I contemplate the community of flowers and insects, give thanks to the Creator for the interconnectedness of all life, and open my heart to right action.
5 Responsibility to care for Creation: the role of Humans

**Grace**: A consciousness to live my life in the world as a gift and in a way that makes God proud

**Hymn**: The Canticle of the Creatures by St. Francis of Assisi (Page 63)

**Scripture**: Genesis 2, 4-15

**Explanation**: Our Christian conviction tells us about this earth as a gift: This earth and its unique thin covering layer, is not our property, but a gift from God, which we have to sustain and to protect by all means. It is the duty of each human generation to leave behind this earth to our children and grandchildren in ways which still allow for sustainable and acceptable living conditions in future for all. The rediscovery of nature can never be at the cost of the freedom and responsibility of human beings who, as part of the world, have the duty to cultivate their abilities in order to protect it and develop its potential. If we acknowledge the value and the fragility of nature and, at the same time, our God-given abilities, we can finally leave behind the modern myth of unlimited material progress. A fragile world, entrusted by God to human care, challenges us to devise intelligent ways of directing, developing and limiting our power. Laudato Si #78

**Exercise**: Searching for moment I felt gardener of our common earth, moment I took care of our common house, of the people, creature, elements with whom I share the rooms of this house. What was my feelings at that time? How did I feel linked with God? How do I convey these gardening actions? Do I share them with family, friends, poor people? What arguments do I have to the one who say that the care of creation is not their priority? When do I face my limits? What brakes to action do I face? How do I ask God’s help?

**Final Prayer**: *A prayer for our earth, Laudato Si*

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

Ongoing practice: Exchange pictures of natural places we love. For the love of these places we will change some habits. Exchange seeds and plant them. Organize a cleaning day between generations. Pray for our planet, to take care of it like a garden.
Context: Deepening our mission as Christian believers and as CLC Ignatian members to respond to the call of the moment in the ecological frontier.

Introduction: Within our Catholic tradition there are several references to concern for our world including society and our environment. This reflection invites us to reflect on some of these teachings in the light of our current responsibilities.

Grace: That I recognize my place and responsibility within and for all of creation.

Opening Prayer: to be selected by the session leader.

Hymn. “Canticle of the Sun” (Page 63) or other appropriate hymn.

Scripture: St Paul to the Romans: Chapter 8: 19-23.

Quotes for reflection:
Blessed Pope Paul VI wrote in 1971, “Due to an ill-considered exploitation of nature, humanity runs the risk of destroying it and becoming in turn a victim of this degradation.” (Apostolic Letter Octogesima Adveniens 14 May 1971, 21 AAS 63,416-417.)

“Saint John Paul II became increasingly concerned about this issue. He warned that human beings frequently seem to see no other meaning in their natural environment than what serves for immediate use and consumption.” (Encyclical Letter Redemptor Hominis, 4 March 1979, 15AAS 71, 287)

Benedict XVI proposed “eliminating the structural causes of the dysfunctions of the world economy and correcting models of growth which have proved incapable of ensuring respect for the environment” (Address to the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See 8 January 2007:AAS 83, 840)

Pope Benedict asked us to recognize that the natural environment has been gravely damaged by our irresponsible behaviour. The social environment has also suffered damage. (LS. # 13)

Glance at the sun. See the moon and the stars. Gaze at the beauty of greenings. Now, think. What delight God gives to humankind with all these things... All
nature is at the disposal of humankind. We are to work with it. For without it we cannot survive. (St Hildergard of Bingen as quoted by Matthew Fox in “Original Blessings”.)

Sharing: After some time in reflection, members share briefly what touched them in these readings.

Exercise: Individually write a brief statement describing your key responsibilities in responding to the above readings and the tradition of care for all creation.

Final prayer: A Christian prayer in union with creation (from Laudato Si’)

Father, we praise you with all your creatures.
They came forth from your all-powerful hand;
They are yours, filled with your presence and your tender love.
Praise be to you! Son of God, Jesus,
Through you all things were made.
You were formed in the womb of Mary our Mother;
you became part of this earth,
and you gazed upon this world with human eyes.
Today you are alive in every creature in your risen glory.
Praise be to you! Holy Spirit, by your light
you guide this world towards the Father’s love
and accompany creation as it groans in travail.
You also dwell in our hearts
and you inspire us to do what is good.
Praise be to you!

Ongoing practice: I spend some time in contemplating and naming for myself a possible way forward in embracing my responsibilities towards creation.
7 Integral Ecology, the Central Call of the Encyclical Laudato Si

Grace: To ask the Lord that we are able to take the call of the encyclical Laudato Si as the basis of our discernment and action as CLC on the frontier of ecology. That all my intentions, actions and operations are purely aimed to the service of caring for our common home, and that of God of life present in the beauty of our vulnerable and wounded creation.

Hymn: Video on the Encyclical Laudato Si available https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1tYdOIqvpqg

Scripture: Exodus (3, 2-7)

Group prayer and sharing: After a moment of personal prayer in silence, a space for every member of the group to share about the following questions: How is the God of life revealed as sacred ground amidst the beauty of creation today? What is depressing and oppressing this sister and mother earth, wonderful creation of God? What are the most urgent cries of this earth and the most vulnerable in it?

Explanation of Integral Ecology:
The crucial principles running across the entire encyclical which are fundamental to understand the novelty of the concept of Integral Ecology are:

1. the close relationship between the poor and the fragility of the planet,
2. the conviction that in the world everything is connected,
3. the critique of the new paradigm and forms of power that arise from technology,
4. the invitation to seek other ways of understanding the economy and progress,
5. the unique value of each creature,
6. the human sense of ecology,
7. the need for open and honest debate,
8. the grave responsibility of international and local politics,
9. the throw-away culture, and
10. the proposal for a new lifestyle.

At the heart of the Encyclical’s proposal is an integral ecology as a new paradigm of justice, an ecology "which respects our unique place as human beings
in this world and our relationship to our surroundings" (LS. #15). Because we cannot understand nature as “something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live” (LS. #139). This applies to all that we live in different fields: the economy, politics, the different cultures – especially those most threatened - and in every moment of our daily life.

**Exercise:** In the light of the concept of Integral Ecology of the Encyclical Laudato Si, we now dwell on each of the components of this integrated vision. Each one of us here present will read every one of the concepts listed below, and after stop for a while to reflect together on the following questions: What does this concept say to me? What is most relevant and important point of this? How does this concept relate to my own reality and my daily life? And how does this concept integrate into our CLC identity and vocation?

1. Environmental, economic and social ecology: everything is connected. Time and space, physical, chemical and biological components of the planet form one network that we do not fully understand. Fragmented and isolated knowledge should be integrated into a broader vision that considers "the interrelation between ecosystems and between the various spheres of social interaction" (LS. #141) and also invest at the institutional level, because "the health of a society’s institutions has consequences for the environment and the quality of human life" (LS. #142).

2. Cultural Ecology "Ecology, then, also involves protecting the cultural treasures of humanity in the broadest sense" (LS. #143). It is necessary to integrate the rights of peoples and cultures with the leadership of local stakeholders from their own culture, with "special attention to Aboriginal communities" (LS. #146).

3. Ecology of everyday life: the integral ecology also incorporates everyday life, to which the Encyclical gives special attention, particularly in the urban environment. Human beings have a great capacity for adaptation and "an admirable creativity and generosity is shown by persons and groups who respond to environmental limitations [...] learning to orient their lives amid disorder and uncertainty" (LS. #148). Nevertheless, real development presupposes an overall improvement to the quality of human life: public spaces, housing, transportation, etc. (LS. #150-154). The human dimension of ecology also implies "the relationship between human life and the moral law, which is inscribed in our nature " (LS. #155). Also "our body itself establishes us in a direct relationship with the environment and with other living beings. The acceptance of our bodies as God’s gift is vital for welcoming
and accepting the entire world as a gift from the Father and our common home, whereas thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation "(LS. #155).

4. The principle of the common good: integral ecology "is essential for effectively attaining the common good" (LS. #158); in the contemporary world, in which "injustices abound and growing numbers of people are deprived of basic human rights and considered expendable", to strive for the common good, means taking decisions in the name of solidarity and based on "a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters " (LS. #158).

5. Justice between generations: the common good is also relevant to future generations, "you cannot talk about sustainable development without solidarity between the generations” (LS. #159), but without forgetting the poor of today.

Daily practice: Over the next few weeks, and before our next meeting, each and every one will do a little written record of the strongest motions they have experienced in their daily lives and in their discernment on each of the 5 points above regarding integral ecology. We will begin our next meeting with a sharing these points.

Closing Prayer: God, who calls us to generous commitment and to give him our all, offers us the light and the strength needed to continue on our way. In the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present. He does not abandon us, he does not leave us alone, for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward. Praise be to him (LS. # 245).
8

Ecological Sin
Lack of Respect, Excessive Consumption

Context: Deepening our mission as Christian believers and as CLC Ignatian members to respond to the call of the moment in the ecological frontier, with an emphasis on ecological sin including lack of respect and excessive consumption.

Preparation Exercise: Searching for experiences of light and shadow. I look over my life story searching out those experiences where creation/living creatures have been a source of light that have consoled me and lifted me up. I then look over my life story in terms of the suffering and disorder of the creation that I have personally experienced. I realize that my whole life is an experience of being loved (graced) by the Trinity whether in light, shadow, suffering or hope-filled experience with the community of life in the universe.

Grace: To feel sorrow for our part in the misuse/degradation of the environment.

Hymn: Own choice.

Scripture: 1 John 1:7-8 “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

Reflections from Laudato Si’:
Many of those who possess more resources and economic or political power seem mostly to be concerned with masking the problems or concealing their symptoms, simply making efforts to reduce some of the negative impacts of climate change. However, many of these symptoms indicate that such effects will continue to worsen if we continue with current models of production and consumption. (LS. # 26.)

Caring for ecosystems demands far-sightedness, since no one looking for quick easy profit is truly interested in their preservation. But the cost of the damage caused by such selfish lack of concern is much greater than the economic benefits to be obtained. Where certain species are destroyed or seriously harmed, the values involved are incalculable. We can be silent witnesses to terrible injustices if we think that we can obtain significant benefits by making the rest
of humanity, present and future, pay the extremely high costs of environmental deterioration. (LS. # 36.)

These situations have caused sister earth, along with all the abandoned of our world, to cry out, pleading that we take another course. Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home as we have in the last two hundred years. (LS. # 53)

Prayer and Sharing: On the scripture and reflections.

Final prayer: Prayer of Generosity (St Ignatius of Loyola)

Lord, teach me to be generous
Teach me to serve you as you deserve:
to give and not to count the cost,
to fight and not to heed the wounds,
to toil and not to seek for rest,
to labour and not to ask for reward,
save that of knowing that I do your will.

Ongoing practice: Continue to identify both sources of light and suffering of the creation in my daily Examen.
Building Peace through Sustainability and Environmental Justice

**Grace:** I ask for wisdom to understand the relation between environmental justice and peace

**Hymn:** Make me a Channel of your Peace

**Scripture:** Amos 5, 21 – 24

**Prayer and Sharing:** Pause for silent prayer, followed by sharing on the above passage

**Explanation:** It is absolutely urgent to promote a transition in our society towards living within the limits of the biosphere. The continued destruction of the ability of nature to sustain our lives and the economy is the primary source of social displacement, wars, scarcity and inequalities. Overconsumption on one side, deep scarcity on the other side – this current model of development cannot be sustained any longer. The path to peace lies in promoting a sound relationship with Mother Nature and in providing for the needs of all.

More than anything we need to change our lifestyle. The rest would flow as consequences of this fundamental attitude. Human behavior needs to be changed if we want to avoid strong ruptures that have already been initiated and can throw our society into great despair and suffering.

However, we have to recognize that as yet there is no social and political demand for such a change in human behavior. Herein lies our challenge – how do we bring about this demand for fundamental changes in our behavior?

The answers lie within us and comprise a wide set of ethical, spiritual, political and practical issues. But it will be impossible to initiate a process of transformation without understanding the sacredness of creation … without solid ethical and spiritual fundaments. Accelerating a transition for sustainability – and thereby for justice and peace – depends on a new human attitude centered on respect for creation and a concern for the common goods. That’s why discussing about sustainability, justice and peace demands a reflection under the light of our spirituality.
Without neglecting the real need for material goods, we must promote a concept of prosperity where human beings can flourish as human beings with a focus on health, quality of life, happiness and good relationships. This new concept of prosperity must include the regenerative capacity of the environment and the ecosystems, the role of biodiversity, the integrity of the atmosphere, the soil and the oceans. These resources are not infinite and if not properly treated will condemn the entire humanity to live in an impoverished planet.

We need to act in the most collective and comprehensive way possible to create a strong demand in society for a this transition towards sustainability.

**Exercise:** Take some minutes to think about the social consequences of environmental disasters … how communities and entire countries are suffering with prolonged droughts, floods, typhoons. Who are the ones who are the most affected? Take some minutes to think about the consequences of the erosion of soils and desertification… What are these people doing; where are they migrating to? Take some minutes to think about fishing in ocean and inland waters… How will these people survive; what will be their occupation? Think about the municipalities and metropolitan regions without a water supply… how can we organize a city without water?

**Final Prayer** (from St. Francis of Assisi)

> Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.  
> Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
> where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith;  
> where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light;  
> where there is sadness, joy  
> O, Divine Master, grant that  
> I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;  
> to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love;  
> For it is in giving that we receive;  
> it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
> it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life.

**Ongoing practice:** Am I ready to build a great future based on sustainability, peace and justice? The price is our personal commitment. I commit myself to finding out more about an issue of environmental justice in my neighborhood.
10 Ecology and Justice: Climate Change

**Grace:** Repentance and the courage to adopt an eco-friendly lifestyle

**Scripture** Jeremiah’s Complaint 12:4, 10-17 and from Laudato Si

Par. 204: *When people become self-centred and self-enclosed, their greed increases. The emptier a person’s heart is, the more he or she needs things to buy, own and consume. It becomes almost impossible to accept the limits imposed by reality. In this horizon, a genuine sense of the common good also disappears. As these attitudes become more widespread, social norms are respected only to the extent that they do not clash with personal needs. So our concern cannot be limited merely to the threat of extreme weather events, but must also extend to the catastrophic consequences of social unrest. Obsession with a consumerist lifestyle, above all when few people are capable of maintaining it, can only lead to violence and mutual destruction.*

Par. 205. *Yet all is not lost. Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start, despite their mental and social conditioning. We are able to take an honest look at ourselves, to acknowledge our deep dissatisfaction, and to embark on new paths to authentic freedom. No system can completely suppress our openness to what is good, true and beautiful, or our God-given ability to respond to his grace at work deep in our hearts. I appeal to everyone throughout the world not to forget this dignity which is ours. No one has the right to take it from us.*

**Explanation:** The Church is known as an expert in humanity. While acknowledging the human causes in the threats for the earth, the Church anchor its message about God’s mercy on human resilience. Without doubting the human rampage capacity, predation, selfishness, cruelty, overconsumption, it continues to believe that the man may change, recover from his peach, and can overcome evil. It’s time for that. Believers are aware that the climate issue is a matter of justice. Justice between the nations, the poorest countries are those that have contributed the least to global warming and are paying the highest price. Justice between generations: young people today live with the consciousness of the world with limited resources, exhaustible. Justice between rich and poor, more or less dependent on climate change.
That is why the Church set before the world the ideal of a “civilization of love”. Social love is the key to authentic development: “In order to make society more human, more worthy of the human person, love in social life – political, economic and cultural – must be given renewed value, becoming the constant and highest norm for all activity” (LS. #231)

**Exercise:** Human life is not doomed to self-destruction but can exist in harmony with nature. Changing the course of history is possible. What effort do I have to do to act fair? Confess to each other some sin against nature and see how we can progress thanks to our community? What can we do differently after reading the encyclical of Pope Francis?

**Closing Prayer:** God, you gave us a beautiful gift, your Creation, so that we lived on earth in peace. By entrusting us, you attend our work taking care of it and sharing its fruits. We know that our sins spoil your creation and turn away thy goods. Therefore, we invoke your help and protection, your mercy for the sins committed against the earth. We receive gratefully your Creation and ask for your help deploying all our energies at the service of your project of love. Amen

**Ongoing practice:** Listen to the expertise of the poorest, the most vulnerable of our communities and also on ecology. Let us allow ourselves to be touched by the life testimonies in sobriety, chosen as incurred. Migrants, homeless people, victims of environmental crimes, the elderly, children. Christ was repairing force many hearts, many families, many lives. Let us ask him to give us the taste to cultivate a sense of the repair, recycling, recovery, simplicity and generosity. Sources of joy and a new alliance with nature.
11 Concrete Example: The Amazon Project

Grace: Lord, grant me the grace to know the real effects of my way of consuming and make me passionate for your simple way of life.

Hymn: Evangelical Poverty

Having nothing. Do not take anything.
Unable to do anything. Do not ask for anything.
   And, in passing,
do not kill anything; do not silence anything.
   Only the Gospel, like a sharp knife.
   And tears and laughter in his eyes.
   And the extended hand clasped.
   And life, riding horseback.
   And this sun and these rivers and land is purchased,
to witness the Revolution and exploded.
   And "nothing more"!

(Pedro Casaldáliga)

Scripture: The Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18: 9-14.)

Prayer and sharing: Having read the text from Luke, for the next 10 minutes, I place myself in the temple scene to see what happens there, the characters, their thoughts and attitudes, I put myself there. After the meditation, I answer the following question: Faced with the concern of creation, do I feel more in the attitude of the Pharisee or that of the publican? I take careful note of what happens in my heart, in my thoughts and movements within me.

After having time in this personal space, I share with the group what has happened to me. I listen carefully to what the Lord tells me through what my brothers and sisters share.

Explanation: We are particularly aware of the pressing need to work for justice through a preferential option for the poor and a simple life style, which expresses
our freedom and solidarity with them. (General Principles 4 - Our Charism)

Because we hold and seek to further develop our sensitivity for the concern of creation, we find it necessary to understand the reality of people who need to survive and as well as our consumer pattern that generate the demand for raw materials that come from distant regions in our planet. Thinking our responsibility in relation to the environment, we can say that this relationship can take on the same value judgments that the Pharisee sets down for the publican, "we condemn" those who commit crimes against the Amazon, not realizing that these are the results of our little care in the way we consume. We know little or nothing of how the goods we consume are produced, perhaps we should call ourselves "thinking authors" of crimes against the environment.

In the parable of the Pharisee and the publican we see that the approach of the publican is simple and humble, unlike that of the Pharisee who reflects the certainty of one who knows what to do and how. The logical, technical and economic attitude makes us approach nature like one who knows what to do and not with the reverence of someone who knows that to get something out of nature takes a lot of effort and respect.

Maybe we need to think that the tax collectors and the prostitutes are ahead of us in the kingdom of heaven, perhaps also those who have spent all their lives in this territory are no more guilty than he who puts a price for everything they, with much effort and humility, extracted from the land.

**Exercise:** find out as consumer, producer and maker
For a moment I will use all my senses to contemplate my life, my daily life, as we suggest below:

**I as a Consumer** Quickly I look at my life, I notice my body, the way that I dress today, I write or enumerate the things I use daily: goods, products that I normally use, eat, frequent ... why do I use these products? Do I know where they come from?

**I as a Producer** Now I think for a moment what is the fruit of my daily work, the exercise of my profession or what I do to earn an income. I also think of the waste I generate daily, how do I see the impact? Who is affected? How I can reduce it?
I as Maker

Look around your home or place of work the materials with which you can make a creative work: crayons, sheets of white or colored paper, vinyl, putty, wool or yarn, craft sticks, etc. Now, take yourself to a quiet place and start creating a work of yours that expresses who you are, a unique creation that no one else can reproduce, which cannot be standardized or adopted for a whole group of people, it could be a painting, poem, object, sport, dance, musical composition, etc. Let your creative self flow...

You can share or write briefly the reflections that this exercise raises in you.

Final Prayer: We place in the center of the space our creative works. Around them we place those objects that represent what we produce, and finally, we place the objects that represent our personal consumption. We take a few minutes to reflect.

I glean in a personal and communal way the answer to the question: What is the Lord inviting me/us to do in this meeting?

We close with a sentence proposed by Pope Francisco in the Encyclical Laudato Si:

Ongoing practice: I take a few minutes of my day or week to check on the news, newspapers or the Internet, what is happening in the Amazon, with special attention to what relates to the exploitation of raw materials.

Also I review what is happening in the Church initiatives aimed at communities that live in this territory and the actions being undertaken by the Ecclesial Pan-Amazonian Network - REPAM.
Grace: Lord, grant me the grace of openness to see the needs of the Earth and of the poor. Grant also the grace of wisdom and courage to respond to these needs with care and compassion.


Scripture The Fellowship of the Believers Acts 2:42-47

Prayer and sharing: Read the text of the Acts of the Apostles and pray with it for about 10 minutes. I place myself in the home of one of the disciples where together they are reading scripture, breaking bread, sharing a meal, and caring for one another. Observe what happens there. Who are the characters I see? What are their thoughts and attitudes? What inspires them? How do they care for one another? Where am I in this scene? Reflect on the following: As I consider the call to care for all of creation, I allow myself to feel with the attitude of these first disciples. I take careful note of any movements in my heart, in my thoughts, and in my body.
After a time of personal reflection, I share in community what has happened to me. I listen carefully to what the Lord tells me through what my brothers and sisters in the community share.

Explanation: In his Encyclical, Laudato Si, Pope Francis calls us to “a new and universal solidarity.” (LS #14) As a world community, we better understand how human actions have caused environmental degradation and contributed to climate change. There are many instances where the detrimental environmental impacts have threatened human life and indeed all of God’s creation. Around the world, we see rising sea levels, more dramatic and damaging weather conditions, hurricanes, droughts, water shortages, massive deforestation, destruction of coral reefs, plant and animal extinctions, and more. Millions of our brothers and sisters worldwide experience hunger, unemployment, homelessness, violence, war, forced migration and more—due to these climate change impacts. As a world community, we are called to come together in solidarity to address these ecological problems. ‘As the bishops of Southern Africa
have stated: “Everyone’s talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God’s creation”. All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents.’ (LS #14)
We look within our spheres of influence to make positive impacts in our cultures and environment.

**Living Out Our Interconnectedness and Solidarity in our Daily Lives.** Personally, we can make lifestyle changes such as reducing, reusing, recycling! Pope Francis states, “Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it.” (LS #23) In GP#4, “we aim to become committed Christians in bearing witness to those human and Gospel values within the Church and society, which affect the dignity of the person, the welfare of the family and the integrity of creation. We are particularly aware of the pressing need to work for justice through a preferential option for the poor and a simple life style, which expresses our freedom and solidarity with them.”

**Living Out Our Interconnectedness and Solidarity in our Communities.** In the communities where we are involved, we can advocate for and support environmentally sustainable practices in our families, schools, workplaces, companies, institutions, parishes, etc. Pope Francis emphasizes the need for us to “find ways that help people to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care.” (LS# 210)

**Living Out Our Interconnectedness and Solidarity in our Politics.** The Pope also calls us to act at the political level. “A healthy politics is sorely needed, capable of reforming and coordinating institutions, promoting best practices and overcoming undue pressure and bureaucratic inertia.” (LS# 181) “Society, through non-governmental organizations and intermediate groups, must put pressure on governments to develop more rigorous regulations, procedures and controls. Unless citizens control political power – national, regional and municipal – it will not be possible to control damage to the environment.” (LS #179) Internationally, “a more responsible overall approach is needed to deal with... both the reduction of pollution and the development of poorer countries and regions... it is essential to devise stronger and more efficiently organized international institutions, with functionaries who are appointed fairly by agreement among national governments, and empowered to
impose sanctions." (LS #175) In GP #12b Since the Christian Life Community aims to work with Christ for the advancement of God’s reign, all individual members are called to an active participation in the vast field of apostolic service. Apostolic discernment, both individual and communal, is the ordinary way of discovering how best to bring Christ’s presence, concretely, to our world. Our broad and demanding mission requires of each member a willingness to participate in social and political life and to develop human qualities and professional skills in order to become more competent workers and convincing witnesses.

**Exercise**: Examine how I am a good steward in caring for others and for creation. For a few moments, I contemplate my life, how I live out an interconnectedness and solidarity in my daily life, in my communities, and in the political arena.

**In My Daily Life**: Briefly, I look at my life. I consider those steps I have taken in my everyday life experience to be a good steward of the earth. What changes can I make in my lifestyle and in my consumption of energy and other resources to better care for others? How can I contribute to a more sustainable and just world, even if it entails personal sacrifice?

**In My Communities**: I consider the communities with whom I am involved—family, CLC, parish, school, work, etc.
What are some of the creative initiatives that are being taken in these communities on behalf of creation and/or the most vulnerable?

What concrete efforts need to be taken in our families and communities in order to respond to the environmental crises?

**In My Local, Regional, National, and even International Politics:** as members of Christian Life Community, with our rich understanding of our role as stewards of creation, how are we responsible to engage in the global debate to ensure that policies on a local, national, or global level help care for creation rather than lead to environmental degradation impinging on the poor, and advancing cultures of consumerism and waste?

What do I see are the most urgent ecological needs that require our involvement in political action at the Local level? State level? National? Global? How do I feel called to engage in the political dialogue and process? You can share or write a little about the thoughts that you generated.

**Final Prayer:** Pause for two minutes of silence to consider the questions: What invitation might the Lord be asking of me personally? Of our community? Then, do a round of sharing with just a phrase or two.

**Ongoing Practice:** In my daily awareness examen, ask: Where did I hear the cries of the poor today? Where did I hear the cries of the Earth? Next, ask the Lord, “How are you inviting me to respond to these cries?”
Carmen Amaya and Jairo Forero

Carmen and Jairo were sent by CLC as missionaries to the Brazilian Amazon during the period of June 2014 to May 2015. Their work through the CLC - Jesuit Volunteer Program collaboration

Ann Marie Brennan

Ann Marie is married, with four children, and is a mathematics teacher at a secondary school. She has been a CLC member for 29 years and is currently a consultor in the CLC World Executive Council and a member of the CLC- United Nations New York Working Group. She is participating with the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM).

Chris Gardner

Chris is married to Jenny with two adult children, in their thirties. He is now retired from social work and is currently President of CLC Australia. His lifestyle includes vegetable and fruit tree growing, walking, grandchildren, and CLC initiatives. He has made a Permanent Commitment to CLC.
Estelle Grenon

Estelle was the COP21 Coordinator for the French Bishop Conference. She has been a member of a CLC Community for 2 years.

Luiz Fernando Krieger

Luiz is married to Ana Maria and father of two children. Brazilian, living now in Sweden and has been working with environment for more than 30 years. Has great joy in giving spiritual exercises.

Mauricio Lopez

Mauricio resides in Quito, Ecuador. He is the current president of the World CLC and Executive Secretary of the Ecclesial Pan-Amazonian Network. He coordinates the CLC Ecology Commission.
Allen Ottaro

Allen lives and works in Nairobi. He is co-founder and Executive Director of the Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa (CYNESA). He was responsible for the ‘Magis Kenya’ program, an Ignatian youth ministry.

Luke Rodrigues S.J.

Luke is currently the Vice Ecclesiastical Assistant for World CLC. He has been a member of various environmental groups in India.

Lois and Kuruvila Zachariah

Kuruvila and Lois are parents and grandparents. They have taught biology in post-secondary institutions for 30 years. They actively give retreats and workshops on planetary ecology.
Caring for Creation