



"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" Jesus - Jn 10,10

## "CELEBRATE AND THANK THE GIFT OF LIFE AND EARTH"

Celebrating International Earth Day on April 22, in the context of the pandemic, helps us to be more aware of the importance of learning from crises, to make the best of them and generate the necessary changes. Pope Francis tells us in Fratelli Tutti: *"I hope this is not another severe episode in history from which we have not been able to learn"*<sup>1</sup> And Laudato Si': *"We must examine our lives and recognize how we offend the creation of God with our actions and our inability to act. We must experience a conversion, a change of heart"*<sup>2</sup>. The Earth needs our help, she suffers the consequences of our consumerist, selfish and indifferent lifestyle.

*"Today, and more and more, there are wounded"*<sup>3</sup>. The earth is also our sister wounded by the roadside. *"There seem to be symptoms of a breaking point, due to the great speed of change and degradation, which are manifested both in regional natural catastrophes and in social or even financial crises, since the problems of the world cannot be analyzed or analyzed. Explained in isolation. There are regions that are already especially at risk and, beyond any catastrophic prediction, the truth is that the current world system is unsustainable from various points of view, because we have stopped thinking about the purposes of human action: If the gaze travels the regions of our planet, we quickly realize that humanity has disappointed divine expectations"*<sup>4</sup>

Now more than ever, a radical change is necessary in our lifestyle, in the way we are on our Earth; and for that change to be meaningful, we need to join forces.

Celebrate and thank



### Data that prevent us

\*. *The rise in global temperature.* The year 2020 was on par with the warmest year ever recorded, 2016; marking the end of the warmest decade since statistics are available, and CO2 concentrations continue to rise. The month of June 2020 was one of the hottest of centuries, almost equaling the record set by that of 2019.

\*. *The global average temperature could rise by as much as 1.5°C between the years 2030 and 2052, if global warming continues to advance at its current rate, according to a report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)*

\*. *Displacements due to climate change.* According to an Oxfam Intermón report, over the past decade,

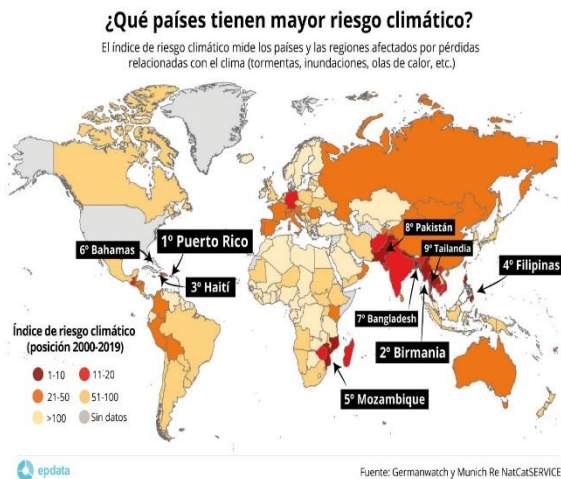
<sup>1</sup> Cf. Fratelli Tutti 35

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Laudato Si' 218

<sup>3</sup> Fratelli Tutti 69

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Laudato Si' 61

weather-related disasters have been the leading cause of internal displacement globally, forcing millions of people to leave their homes each year.



\*. *The rate at which ice is disappearing across the planet is accelerating.* A study carried out on January 25, 2021, by the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom, and published by The Cryosphere magazine, reveals that the Earth lost 28 billion tons of ice between 1994 and 2017, which is equivalent to a layer of 100 meter thick ice that would cover the entire UK.

\*. *The most recent Climate Change Index*, which assesses the climate protection efforts of the 57 countries responsible for 90% of the world's CO2 emissions, along with the EU, reveals that no country is doing enough to keep low control dangerous global warming. And according to the Emissions Gap Report, released this week by the United Nations Environment Program, the world is on track to see global average temperatures rise above 3 degrees Celsius by 2100<sup>5</sup>.

\*. *"Our planet is broken. Humanity is at war with nature, this is suicidal. Nature always counterattacks, and it does so with more and more force and fury"*, said the Secretary General of the United Nations World Organization (UN), the Portuguese Antonio

Gutierrez, on December 2, 2020, in a speech at Columbia University, in New York, and asked that the planet be "repaired" against global warming, while rebuilding a "new world" post-coronavirus .

\*. *Reduction of CO2 Emissions.* A statistical study, led by the University of Washington and published in Communications Earth & Environment, indicates that, if it followed the current path, humanity would only have one 5% probability of complying with the Paris Agreement. To increase the figure to 50%, countries would need to reduce their carbon emissions by an additional 1.8% each year.

### Actions in favor of the Earth.

\*. The World Day for the Reduction of CO2 Emissions, also known as the World Day of Action against Global Warming, was celebrated on January 28, 2021. Established by the agreement of 140 countries that ratified the Kyoto Protocol, it is the first great climate treaty promoted by the United Nations. This anniversary seeks to recall each year the urgency of the crisis facing the entire planet and serve as a call for increased ambition on the part of the international community to reduce CO2 emissions.

\*. *The Climate Adaptation Summit (CAS)*, organized by the Netherlands and held on January 25 and 26, 2021, had as main topics of discussion: the management of torrential rains, droughts, heat waves and the increase in sea level, seeking solutions and plans that *"allow citizens and the planet to adapt to the effects of climate change until 2030"*. The CAS is not a UN summit, although it has its backing. In the Assembly it was said: *"We know that climate change has not been stopped because there is a Covid-19 pandemic, and when we come out of the health crisis and the economic crisis associated with the pandemic, we need to prepare for the crisis of tomorrow, of which the climate emergency is an essential part"*<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> (DW Akademie Medios libres, libre opinión, personas libres)

<sup>6</sup> Patrick Verkooijen, director del Centro Global de Adaptación (GCA).

## The Capuchin Tertiary Sisters present in Honduras



Honduras is going through an economic and social crisis, promoted by a capitalist and consumerist system that, in the face of the exploitation of natural common goods to increase wealth and benefits, has generated greater environmental and territorial vulnerability, exclusion and poverty. This crisis promotes climate change, produces food insecurity, climatic displacement and increases problems, as a result of deforestation and expansion of urban housing policy. Although in 2018 an international agreement was signed that protects natural assets and the lives of their defenders, it has not been ratified at its signature.

Climate change is already taking its toll in the Honduran territory; without going too far, in October 2020, Honduras was hit by two strong hurricanes Eta and Iota, which have left in their wake, especially, *five types of impacts*: humanitarian, food insecurity, climate displacement, public health and increased violence of gender. In Honduras, these impacts are promoted by three underlying problems: climate change, the socioeconomic crisis, and weak institutions in risk management<sup>7</sup>.

In Honduras there are more than 30 environmental organizations in the fight to care for and protect the earth in all its manifestations. The report presented by the International Peace Brigades shows that in 2016, Honduras was the country in the world with

the most deaths of defenders of the land, territory and the environment<sup>8</sup>. Between 2015 and 2018 there were at least 31 murders. In more than half of the cases, the aggressor was a state actor. Indicating that at the government level there is no interest in protecting Mother Earth and there is little awareness in the population of the care and protection of it.

Of these organizations, the Capuchin Tertiary Sisters are part of the National Coalition of Environmental Networks and Organizations of Honduras: **JPIC-CONFEREH** in **CONROA**. And from there we accompany these processes of social incidence. At the time of the disasters left by the hurricanes, in the villages of the Department of Santa Bárbara, San José de Oriente and El Sapote de Gualala, more than 15 houses were razed and carried away by river beds and mudslides: children, women, young and old; leaving many family members alone.

A very painful testimony is that of Mrs. María Isabel Méndez, who lost her husband, her 19-year-old daughter, her 20-year-old son and two 4 and 5-year-old granddaughters. She was under the mud and was rescued within two days.

Sharing with Mrs. María Isabel, she told us: *"I have no words to explain what I experienced; it has been very hard, just hearing the water and the noise is what I remember... I ran to get the girls out and then I don't know what happened later, I didn't want to live, everything was destroyed, I had no home, the pain was very strong and I wondered why this? My daughter, who was just beginning her life... it hurts me to see everything... thanks to my family I can continue... The Sisters of Our Lady have helped me with therapies at "Casa Margarita". Today I know that God has given me another chance to live ... I will*



<sup>7</sup> Art. Coyuntura desde los territorios del Centro de Estudio para la Democracia.

<sup>8</sup> Global Witness, Honduras: el lugar más peligroso para defender el planeta, enero 2017.

*start over, because I have other children to continue living for...*

## A celebration proposal for Earth Day

We propose to you “Celebrate life, the life of Mother Earth”, who, despite our carelessness and irresponsibility, continues to generate life, nourish us, take care of us. United from our fraternities by our common home, we sing like Francis of Assisi “Praised be my Lord”.

### Monition

Let's celebrate the International Day of Mother Earth and strengthen our commitment to its care, because it is nature created by God, which gives us life and sustenance.

With this celebration we assume, once again, the collective responsibility, made in the Rio Declaration in 1992, to: “*promote harmony with nature and Mother Earth to achieve the right balance between the economic, social and environmental needs of the present generations and future*”.

**Song:** [https://youtu.be/fNvv\\_Zv6BGM](https://youtu.be/fNvv_Zv6BGM)

### Reflection:

*"Be praised, my Lord<sup>9</sup>, through our sister, our mother earth, who sustains us, and governs and produces various fruits with colorful flowers and grass".*

Mother and Sister at the same time. The first time I read the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, it struck me that this idea, considering the Earth as Mother and Sister, is still, to a certain extent, strange in the Western mind. It seems more like an idea of indigenous tribes. Now I see it differently; it is true that it is easy to understand the Earth as Mother: it gives us life, it sustains us, it nourishes us... But, if it is all this, how can it be, at the same time, Sister? I understand that being a sister means being like us, being even one of us, a creature of God and at the same time a mother... and a fragile mother...

Will we be able to care for our fragile mother? If we are not capable of taking care of our frail and elderly mothers and fathers, but we take them to institutions, we do the same with Mother Earth, that others take care of it, that institutions take care of it. Am I able to take care of it?



Our Father Luis, the compassionate man, said: “*The works of all creation, beloved children, proclaim each of them the glory of God in their own way, and in unison they sing a hymn of praise to his infinite power, wisdom and goodness, giving us to understand clearly to us, kings of creation, the love that we owe in return by which He shows us by subjecting all things to our empire and service*”<sup>10</sup>.

From our Franciscan-Amigonian spirituality we are called to praise the Creator for his creatures and at the same time to take care of them; today more than ever Mother Earth needs our being Franciscan, making us responsible for its care.

**Suggested reading:** Gen 1, 1-31 and 2, 1-3

### Psalm to Mother Earth:

“Mother Earth, you who was created by the Father, He separated the waters from the earth and made you alive.

Today we thank you for being our House, and we ask your forgiveness because we are destroying you.

We thank you because food sprouts from you, livestock graze on you, and fish sprout from your waters. Every fruit, every vegetable, every animal that feeds us is the fruit of your belly, it is the fruit of your soil and your waters.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Laudato Si'* 1

<sup>10</sup> OCLA 506





We thank you for each river, for each sea, for each lake, for each mountain, for each jungle, for each savannah, for each plant, for each animal, for fire, for water, for air and for the soil.

We are grateful that you are our home and our livelihood; May God

who created you also protect you from us.

To you Father, we thank you for giving us the gift of being able to live and breathe in our land.

"Mother Earth, dear Pachamama, wise old woman, on this day we ask for your wisdom and profit:

Pachamama, give us the strength of the stone that is not destroyed and is durable. Give us its calm and vigor from the waters.

Pachamama, teach us to take care of our children as each beast protects its cubs. Give us their strength and their memory from the trees. Give us its fertility and its life from the earth.

Pachamama, we want your humility from flowers. Herbs its freshness and the meadow its beauty. Like the seed, help us to sprout and like the plants, help us to be reborn with each spring.

Pachamama, of the lamb give us its innocence, the lion his strength, the serpent his cunning, the eagle his pride and the dove his goodness.

God save you, Mother Earth!"

**Song:** <https://youtu.be/yMjSHnMFBRs>

- Spontaneous prayers

**Our Father, Father of nature.**  
(Noé Morales-Rodríguez)

Our Father who art in the forest, in the sea, in the desert and in the city. Hallowed be your creation, full of strength and life development.

Let your wisdom come to us, to protect and develop the beauty that we have been given, which is in the flower and the rainbow, in the water and the fertile mother earth, in the warm breath of the sun and in the cool darkness of rest.

Your will be done, Lord, so that we as men in your image and likeness may take on the challenge of maintaining the vital process of your creation.

Give us today the greenery of each day, in the meadow and in the mountains, in the garden and in the dying land.

Forgive our irresponsibility, by not taking care of the land you have given us. Like us for your love, we forgive the polluters, and we vehemently urge them to abandon their work of destruction.

And do not let us fall into desertification, which leads to death, which denies your work, and annihilates life.

And free us from conformism, so that our lives may be transformed into dynamic force that reproduces life. AMEN

### FOR A DIALOGUE AND A PERSONAL COMMITMENT

1. Am I clear about the causes and consequences of climate change?
2. What is my way of relating to Creation?
3. Given the reality of climate change, what is my commitment for the year 2021?