

INVITED TO EXCLAIM ‘LAUDATO SI’!

Introduction – Is it still possible to dream?

The Congregation, which brings together its fundamental lines of action for the next six-year term in the Determination of the 18th GC, is making with it a process of deepening and prayer that will lead us to a true personal and institutional conversion.

After dwelling on the Constitutions and reading it in the light of the Word of God, we are entering the third moment of this journey: the Determination from the perspective of Laudato Si’.

Along with the Determination, the Calls arise, gathering the contributions of the laity and the reflection of the GC itself, reminding us that *“to go and proclaim”* is the axis of our vocation-mission.

Along with elements so typical of our spirituality and mission, such as discernment, human mobility with the pressing cry of migrants and refugees, young people - the first recipients of our educational mission, the universal articulation of our schools, we could not miss a Call to live ecology, and thus, the second of them tells us: *“In Laudato Si’ we are presented with the care of the common home as an urgency of the planet. We are responsible for the deterioration of the world. We must commit ourselves, from all areas of our mission, to protect this common home and live an integral ecology in communion with all creation, to combat poverty and restore the dignity of the excluded. It is a cultural, spiritual and educational challenge, inseparable from social justice.”*

We cannot do without discernment in order to thoroughly scrutinize the signs of the times, those of this concrete one, to discover the intense and urgent voices of our earth that groans and cries out to be cared for as a habitable place for all human beings.

We are invited to make this reflection as we are immersed in an unprecedented historical moment, in the global health crisis caused by Covid-19; invited, nevertheless, to continue believing that the God of history is present in ours to *“make everything new”*. Invited, therefore, to discern where He is and to what He is sending us today.

As we shall see, reality is imposed on us, sometimes harshly, with convulsive movements, with uncertainty, with global crisis, but we think that this time is also an opportunity, a *kairos*, a propitious moment to discover the presence of the Spirit that invites us to be healing, reconciling, liberating, to raise up and stand up, bringing the joy of the Risen One.

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This time allows us to remember other related events:

- Fifth anniversary of the publication of the Encyclical, opening of the year of the Laudato Sí’.
- Proposal by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development to promote the experience of 7 objectives for 7 years, which for religious life are transformed into a programmatic line that should be included in our life projects:
 - The cry of the earth,
 - The cry of the poor,
 - The review of the economy,
 - Simple / austere lifestyles,
 - Ecological education,
 - Ecological spirituality,
 - Active participation in common causes.
- World Environment Day, celebrated on June 5.

The permanent reference to the reality of our world, the call to conversion as a change in attitudes and the power of dreams as a project for the future in hope cannot be lacking in our reflection.

Pope Francis is making us realize that nothing in the world is indifferent to us, that the same concern, “caring for the common home”, must unite us. But in addition to making this urgent and universal appeal, the Pope invites us to change attitudes. We cannot remain unchanged in each of the fields referred to in his Encyclical.

The Final Document of the Synod for the Amazon, seen as a concretion of the Laudato Sí, tells us about four conversions: cultural, as Church we are called to be inculturated and to be intercultural because “the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (Jn 1,14); pastoral, “no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit” (Jn 3: 5); integral-ecological, underlining the care of the common home, “I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly” (Jn 10,10); synodal, in order for the Church to develop its ministries and expand the affective and effective participation of its members.

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If, as the book of Ecclesiastes says, “there is a time for every affair under the heavens”, (Eccles. 3, 1) this is the time – already urgently due to the deterioration of the planet – to occupy ourselves and worry about the “common home”. The encyclical appeals to all the inhabitants of the earth, beyond religious or philosophical creeds: the earth “*now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her.*” (LS 2).

Our Congregation has already been carrying out a process of increasing awareness regarding integral ecology. In the closing message of the 18th GC our Superior General, Graciela Francovig FI, expresses herself in this way: “*Laudato Si’* urges us towards an ecological conversion and to collaborate in maintaining a healthy environment, together with the economic, social, and cultural aspects that question our lifestyle. The Pope calls us to an integral ecology, while allowing a gaze of hope, when he tells us in the encyclical that “*humanity still has the capacity to collaborate to build our common home.*”

We invite you to enter more deeply into no. 17 of the Determination: “*Integral ecology, according to Laudato Si’, gives us a new vision of the world that inspires and moves us to be co-responsible for the care of the common home and in communion with creation. The ‘spirituality of care’ invites us to take on an alternative way: called to the restoration of creation; invited to reconciliation and healing of relationships; impelled to be hospitable, to be responsible in the use of goods and to change attitudes that affect our lifestyle.*”

We shall first explain the following points:

1. The person who is converted and dreams.
2. In our concrete world.
3. Realization of dreams as Daughters of Jesus.

Then, as a fourth part, we will propose some worksheets that can help us pray and reflect on this number of the Determination. We discover a call to contemplate our world, to allow ourselves to be affected, to be struck, so that in its light the best springs of compassionate solidarity, of a committed presence are awakened, becoming more and more “balm, warmth, kind presence, impulse of hope. ... life that reveals Jesus of Nazareth” (Det 4).

- ***Do you feel encouraged to enter into this process of personal and shared reflection / prayer? What is your disposition? Do you want to desire?***
- ***Do you consider yourself an active element to collaborate in the care of the common home? How?***

I. THE PERSON WHO IS CONVERTED AND DREAMS

WHICH PERSON FOR WHICH ECOLOGY?

From conversion to dream

As women of consecrated life at the service of others, through Christian education and other works of piety and charity, it will help us to reflect on what dimensions of the person we should emphasize for conversion to an integral ecology.

We want to know what is the anthropological foundation that underlies *Laudato Si'* and which must be present when we examine how and what to convert to. This is a necessary step to awaken to dreams that project us to a future with hope.

The term conversion, from the Latin *conversio*, means return, change: when the person turns away from God and chooses another path, but then returns to Him. It can be an individual person or a people – of Israel – as the Bible reminds us. In the Gospel there are always invitations to return “to the paternal home”, to resume a relationship that has been severed, to reconcile ourselves with those from whom we have been alienated: with myself, with others, with God.

Sometimes we call an idealistic person a “dreamer”, not very settled in reality, with ideas that are not very practical, who rather tends to fantasy and moves away from the conventional. But a dreamer is also someone who has great expectations, who sees the world not so much to observe or pay attention to what it is as well as to what it can become. He observes the potential of things, even when it is very small, imperceptible and improbable. A dreamer is a person who knows that change is a possibility and takes advantage of that change to get what he wants. A dreamer is a person with desires; it can be just one, a small one or a very big one, but he knows that with time and effort it can be achieved. He has a goal, even when he does not know how to start his path, and he begins to walk. A dreamer is a person who seeks to be better, for his own sake and for that of the people around him.

We know that dreams also have their place in the Bible. It is a whole literary genre: night dreams where God communicates, daytime dreams that contain deep desires and long-awaited projects. The dreams that Francis expresses in the Exhortation are of those of one who is awake, attentive, vigilant and clearly manifests that those dreams are directed towards more life, more freedom, more fulfillment for a world more similar to what God also dreams of.

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- What conversion do I need? How are my dreams? Where are my desires directed?
- What do I feel invited to do? What moves me inside?
- Caring for the planet, as such, but without forgetting people?
- Am I aware that this present needs future projects?

The spirituality of care

If we want to live conversion, as Christians, as women, we cannot do without the spirituality of care.

It is important to highlight and have this dimension as a backdrop, insofar as it has to penetrate every project that arouses possible and real channels of communion and any search for the recovery of values that generate life and salvation for all human beings and for our common home.

From there everything else will spring, in relation to the life project that Pope Francis has portrayed for us in *Laudato Sí'*, and it becomes a challenge, a confrontation with our way of being and of proceeding among ourselves and with creation:

- Spirituality of awareness, which must go further, to involve us: in concrete and defined options in favor of the defense of life and the care of the common home; in transforming action, such as the acceptance of and effective commitment to the weak, the fragmented, the vulnerable and defenseless, the “invisible”, which constitutes the majority of humanity. “Love ought to manifest itself more by deeds than by words.” (SpEx. 230)
- Restore, rebuild the broken, the disfigured, the unrecognizable, the brutally overwhelming and exclusive, the abysses into which the human being has fallen.
- Contribute to dignify, restore, recover the many faceless faces and the integrity of our planet, with real possibilities of delight and enjoyment of the goods of the earth for all.
- Recover the balance of our common home, result of the equitable distribution of the wealth of the earth that corresponds to each human being and of the co-responsible care of the roof that shelters us all.

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- Make hospitality visible and give it greater expression, broaden the horizon in the face of the great urgency of our itinerant world that cries out for welcome, affection, shelter, food, work, respect, solidarity ...
- Join efforts with others to make possible a true sharing of our goods and lead us to the effective change of attitudes that affect our lifestyle.

In this way we would make our experience of poverty and option for the least of the earth more credible, our consecrated life would be more and more “daring”, in incarnation, in identification with the poor and humble Jesus of the Gospel, and we would begin to see a greater radicalism to “follow closely Jesus Christ who chose poverty for himself”.

“There can be no ecology without an adequate anthropology” (LS 118). If we want to change our mentality we must change our way of seeing the human being. In fact, there are those who affirm that the current environmental crisis is a consequence of that anthropology that separates man from other beings. We need to assume a comprehensive anthropology overcoming dualisms that have not favored us throughout history: divine / human; soul / body; sacred / profane ... This dualism is still very present today. Idealism and materialism are characterized by a strong dualism. They lead us to neglect or absolutize the bodily dimension.

We are haunted by a tyrannical anthropocentrism, a technocratic paradigm and a throwaway culture. Even Human Rights have been reduced to defensive barriers to protect us from others. We are all wolves who tear each other apart, we are not people who can be trusted.

In a Christian vision, Human Rights should be a way of empowering ourselves to donate ourselves. We enter a society, the Christian one, because we are interested, because we have much to give and only by giving ourselves can we be fully what we already are.

The poor and the abandoned are, together with our mother earth, those who suffer the consequences of this distorted anthropocentrism, which elevates to self-sufficiency and despises all that is, on a subjective level, fragile and weak. It has led us to an impulsive consumerism that reduces everything to irrelevance, buying on mere impulse, using and throwing away.

This throwaway culture affects the excluded and reduces things to rubbish, work to a matter of commerce with no more value than the salary it offers. Its relational dimension, its Christian sense of joyful encounter with nature and collaboration with God’s creative work, has been forgotten. Work, a way of giving ourselves, is becoming a way of getting a salary.

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This is the theoretical basis that has led us to our ecological crisis.

Let's not stray from a humanistic perspective. The pandemic produced by Covid-19 can cause a change of perspective in our world: the health crisis has been followed by a deep economic crisis. Among other things, it has revealed our great vulnerability, the anthropocentric claim and the absolute desire to want to be like gods.

We are realizing that, fascinated by the advances in technology, we have neglected fraternity and interpersonal relationships, elements that sustain and strengthen our lives so much. With globalized indifference, we have given first place to the technocratic society. And Covid-19 has come to remind us that everything is connected, that we are beings in relationship, that we depend on each other profoundly. A small virus has been enough to reveal once again our dimension of brotherhood. We are united in a common destiny and we will survive only if we collaborate for the common good by accepting the fact of being dependent on each other.

This enormous crisis should lead us to revise our mentality: above all, this concept of humans as completely different; but also a spiritualism that tries to avoid personal involvement in the solution of social and ecological problems, instead of trying to change the structures of injustice and domination without resignation in the face of the inevitable evils of this valley of tears.

The current epidemic has highlighted the need for an integral ecology and universal brotherhood. Covid-19 knows no borders or social classes or any other type of division or limit. Any foreigner I see on the street is so connected to me that he could be essential to my own survival.

Assuming that nature is a network in which everything is interconnected and communicated changes our anthropological concept. Nature is a network of relationships and the person, created in the image of the Trinitarian God, is also relational and dialogical. Being in relationship is not an option for the human being, but an inevitable requirement for us. All human activities can be interpreted as processes of relationship, communication and interaction.

- ***What personal calls do I discover in my heart regarding the spirituality of global care?***
- ***How are our interpersonal and institutional relationships going?***
- ***Are we discerning the way to interconnect with people and the environment?***

II. IN OUR CONCRETE WORLD

CAN WE KEEP DREAMING IN THIS WORLD?

A contemplative gaze into the profound

To enter this chapter, it can help us to start from the reality of the world at this stage of its history that we live – this concrete world that is our place, which is the world to which we are sent - and ask ourselves:

- ***What do I see when I look at the world? How is my gaze? How are the eyes of my heart?***
- ***What noises do I hear in my ears? Can I distinguish the screams and whispers that come to me from this world?***

“There are eyes that look, - there are eyes that dream; there are eyes that call, - there are eyes that wait; there are eyes that laugh – pleasant laughter; there are eyes that weep – with tears of sorrow; some inward, - others outward...” (Miguel de Unamuno).

- ***“It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.” (“The Little Prince”) With what glasses do I look?***
- ***“You and I do not see things as they are. We see things as we are.” (Henry Ward Beecher). A matter of eyes or heart? Is everything according to the color of the glass with which you look?***

Looks or “glasses”:

Of joy: the joy of seeing beauty, art, nature ... the glasses with which to enjoy as many gifts as are given to us, material and spiritual.

Of goodness: *And God saw that everything was good* ... those eyes that see bad things but turn around and bring out the best, looks that go beyond appearances.

Of hope, that look and see that the best is yet to come; they trust and believe that each day is new and brings surprises and wonders that we could not imagine.

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From Jesus: how He looked, closely because He approached, touched and allowed himself to be touched, joined the worst in society, a contemplative look, of allowing himself to be affected, impacted, struck. His gaze was one of inclusive compassion, he embraced all diversity, his eyes went to those most in need, he went beyond appearances.

- ***What glasses do we use to see the different, the foreigner? Do we always look from afar?***
- ***The concrete world is our place: do we allow ourselves to be affected, does injustice hurt us?***
- ***Is my look at the world cordial? Hostile? Friendly? Condemning?***

The world to which we are sent is loved by the Father; the God of history is also present today. We need His gaze to intuit and discern new responses.

God, contemplating the world that comes out of his hands, falls in love with it! And he embraces it by sending his Son, and one cannot embrace without touching.

Laudato Si’ has an integral ecological perspective, which must lead us to achieve a totally integral gaze, listening, touch, smell and taste. In this way, our natural receivers of the state of affairs will be a useful GPS, for ourselves, for others, for the Church and for the world. This Ignatian methodology is what, in some way, underlies *Laudato Si’*.

The value of the word.

And we need a gaze that is not only contemplative, but also allows itself be affected and applies word and action, such as denouncing, seducing, influencing. Three actions that complement each other, that have the capacity to become levers that move tons of prejudices and abuses and that have the power to influence public policies, commercial dynamics, personal relationships.

A consistent ethics, renunciation for the good of the other, and caring go hand in hand with spirituality. They are based on it and it has to lead us to take care of what we think, so that the actions that these thoughts provoke are in accordance with the values of the Kingdom of God. It is an invitation to be and to live in a different, alternative, generous way.

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It can help us to recover the WORD as the origin of the cosmic order, which reminds us that it was in the beginning, was with and was God (Jn, 1, 1). Then it will be easier for us to pronounce words that encourage, sustain, empower and change everything inside or outside of us that deserves to be transformed, and contribute value; words that end the atrophy of thought, that neutralize those other words that end up making everything lost in noise, saying nothing, empty of content, or those others that are thrown in such a way that they cut and wound.

“The word is prior to the object” (Martín Caparrós). That is why words have a great power of persuasion but also of deterrence. Persuasion and deterrence are based on phrases and reasoning, they appeal to the intellect and personal deduction (Grijelmo, A.).

We will seek the networking, excellence and competence necessary to be agents of change. *Laudato Si’*, is a description, an analysis, an urgent call to ecological conversion, to the conversion of life. It is, above all, an invitation to rethink the dimensions of conflicts, and to generate networks to think about the common good, where dialogue is a useful tool, that provides creative solutions, however challenging they may be, on the environment, in international, national and local politics.

Dialogue is essential in decision-making processes, with the economy and even with religions and science. It is exactly what n. 17 of the Determination includes when it encourages us to use with responsibility goods which belong to all created beings, and also encourages us to generate conditions that allow changes, attitudes that make our way of life a living example that shows that another way of living, being and relating is possible (LS 206, 208)

The challenge of being restorers of creation entails that of being co-creators with God, Father and Mother, since we are necessary instruments for this task. And we cannot dissociate it from constantly listening and giving a discerned response to the cries that plead for mercy; from knowing how to find the sprouts that give us hope and reinforce our work, of valuing the traces of mercy that we will find wherever we move and of being generators of a culture merciful with creation.

How good it will then be to have precise words that emanate from knowledge and from a deeply evangelical practice! If we want to face the shadows that haunt us, but above all haunt the most impoverished, let’s charge ourselves with the energy that gives light to overcome obstacles, however complicated they may be, and to be able to ascertain the questions we ask ourselves and what they ask us, so that the answers may not be manipulated.

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Let us be useful instruments that build and offer conditions of possibility, and at the end of our pilgrimage in this beautiful world, we can say *Laudato Si’, mi Signore* [Praise be to you, My Lord]. Let us be artisans of the word, potters of the verb. Let’s build by talking, convince by acting. Our Foundress, St. Cándida, knew a lot about this: “*I will do all things as I would wish I had done them in the last hour of my life.*”

In times of pandemic

This reality that surrounds us means that we face the shadows of times of pandemic. For the past to help us improve the present, it is not enough to name a few culprits and tear down statues. It requires adopting the perspective of the victim and being able to ask for forgiveness (SCHWARZ, G.).¹

Following in the wake of St. Francis of Assisi, it would be interesting to be able to become instruments of his peace. To do this, it is necessary to know from which sources we drink. The vast information that we receive today challenges us to check it and to elaborate our own judgment, reliable and stimulating the necessary actions to offer light in times of darkness. It reminds us of our co-responsibility in generating hopeful spaces free of paralyzing fears, to be able to illuminate, inspire, support and care for relationships at all levels: interpersonal, regional, national, international.

This experience has valued the broad echo that solidarity and compassion have; it has valued a strong sense of community. It is worth thinking about what has been lived and realizing what has been experienced and with how much intensity, what it has meant to share spaces, emotions, illusions and fears and how it has shown that we live in a shared world, totally interconnected.

More and more experts are warning us in different ways: we may not yet know the precise way in which we will defeat the coronavirus, or how it will change our economy, or what our future romantic date with masks will look like, but there is something about which we can have no doubt - that already, before this global pandemic ends, we are facing a new one, the economic one.

Laudato Si’ encourages us to think about an appropriate anthropology that can face future challenges. It affirms that people cannot be expected to make a commitment to the world if they do not value - and at the same time - the capacities that are proper and peculiar to us, such as *knowledge, will, freedom* and *co-responsibility*. (LS 118). But Covid-19 came so quickly and forced us to think and act so quickly that sometimes we miss the point.

¹ En *El País* del domingo 28 de junio de 2020. *Sin memoria no hay democracia*. Schwarz, Geraldine.

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Unlike other global crises, in which events channeled sentiments that were in the air, the coronavirus crisis is going to transform the world not because our societies have precipitated a change, nor because there has been an agreement on the direction that has to be taken, but because of something much simpler: because we cannot go back. This is a spur for action, of course, but in a tired moment like ours, it is also a temptation for nostalgia.

There is something that the pandemic has also shown, and which supposes a good antidote: all those measures that our politicians and global experts have been telling us for years were impossible and impractical, have in the end turned out to be much more possible and practicable than previously thought. It has highlighted, among other things, the overwhelming resilience of nature or the enormous potential of solidarity and a sense of community.

Some turn to history to remind us that humanity has gone through and overcome other plagues and pandemics, such as those of the Middle Ages or of 1918, at the end of World War I. Others are amazed at the unitary European position against the virus, when until now they have disagreed on climate change, immigrants and the arms race, surely because this virus breaks borders and affects the interests of the powerful.

Now the first world has to suffer something of what is suffered by refugees and immigrants who cannot cross borders. There are humanists who point out that confinement plunged us into a kind of “secular Lent” that concentrates us on essential values such as life, love and solidarity, and forces us to relativize many things that until now we have believed to be indispensable and untouchable.

Suddenly, air pollution and the frenetic pace of consumer life drop, that until now we did not want to change. Our western pride of being omnipotent protagonists of the modern world, lords of science and progress, has fallen. In full domestic quarantine and unable to go out, we began to appreciate the reality of family life. We feel more interdependent, we all depend on everyone, we are all vulnerable, we need each other, we are globally interconnected, for better and for worse.

And where is God in this world?

Reflections also arise on the problem of evil, the meaning of life and the reality of death, a subject which today is taboo. The 1947 novel *The Plague* by Albert Camus has become a best seller. It is not only a chronicle of the plague of Oran, but a parable of human suffering, of the physical and moral evil of the world, of the need for tenderness and solidarity.

Believers of the Judeo-Christian tradition wonder about God’s silence in the face of this epidemic. Why does God allow it and keep silent? Is it a punishment? Is it necessary to ask him for miracles, as Father Penéloux asks in *The Plague*? Should we return to God the ticket of life, like Ivan Karamazov in *The Brothers Karamazov*, when we see the suffering of the innocent? Where is God?

We are not facing an enigma, but rather a mystery, a mystery of faith that makes us believe and trust in a God Father-Mother creator, who does not punish, who is good and merciful, who is always with us; he is Emmanuel. We believe and trust in Jesus of Nazareth who comes to give us life in abundance and has compassion on those who suffer. We believe and trust in a life-giving Spirit, Lord and giver of life. And this faith is not an achievement, it is a gift of the Spirit of the Lord, which comes to us through the Word in the ecclesial community.

All this does not prevent us, like Job, from complaining and complaining before God when we see so much suffering, nor does it prevent us from confirming the brevity, triviality and vanity of life, like the *Qohelet* or *Ecclesiastes*. But it will not be a matter of asking for miracles from a God who respects creation and our freedom, who wants us to collaborate in the realization of this limited and finite world. Jesus does not solve for us the problem of evil and suffering theoretically, but through his wounds as Crucified-Risen he opens us to the new horizon of his Passion and Resurrection. Jesus, with his identification with the poor and those who suffer, illuminates our lives and with the gift of his Spirit gives us strength and comfort in our difficult moments of suffering and passion.

Where is God? He is in the victims of this pandemic, in the doctors and health workers who treat them, in the scientists who look for anti-virus vaccines; He is in all those who these days work, collaborate and help to solve or alleviate the problem, He is in those who pray for others, among whom they radiate hope.

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- *How have you lived your relationship with God in confinement?*
- *What is your image of that Father-Mother God who cares for everyone?*
- *Have you heard about these points in your community? And from outsiders? Is there a longing for interiority?*

III. REALIZATION OF DREAMS AS DAUGHTERS OF JESUS

HOW DO WE REALIZE OUR DREAM?

In “Querida Amazonia” [the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation] Francis speaks of four dreams: cultural, social, pastoral, synodal. It is true that we need a permanent conversion, but we do not want it to be devoid of dreams.

With our Determination we wish to make explicit and illuminate the ecological dimension in the light of *Laudato Si’*. There are many numbers in the Encyclical that give us the foundation for what we intend. We see that they are nuclear, main themes of everything that can be innovated, articulated and reinvented in a growing commitment to the care of the common home, and they are very much consistent with our being Daughters of Jesus:

209 – 215: EDUCATING FOR THE COVENANT BETWEEN HUMANITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Fundamental numbers that concern us directly in our formal and non-formal educational mission and that would have to penetrate all the educational projects of our Centers, with concrete projections of solidarity commitment for our planet. These numbers have inspiring and illuminating paragraphs when one is searching for concretions that lead to a true holistic and ecological conversion. They cannot be missing from our proposal.

216: ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION

“More than in ideas or concepts as such, I am interested in how such a spirituality can motivate us to a more passionate concern for the protection of our world. A commitment this lofty cannot be sustained by doctrine alone, without a spirituality capable of inspiring us, without an “interior impulse which encourages, motivates, nourishes and gives meaning to our individual and communal activity”.

217: “... THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS IS A SUMMON TO A PROFOUND INTERIOR CONVERSION...

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“... an ‘ecological conversion’, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. 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.”

We must also take into account the paths that religious life is taking at this moment in human and ecclesial history when we wish to opt for an integral ecology.

Humanity is at risk from a virus ..., it has the experience of being confined to its own homes (Religious Life in its communities of life) and this same humanity is challenged by a planetary crisis, generating many reflections.

In this time of pandemic, our economic and social processes have been greatly affected and, subjected to enormous tensions, show enormous resistance to balancing with the environment. It is highly probable that, once this crisis is overcome, the urgencies to achieve the reactivation of the economy and social normalization will push the “reestablishment” of the mechanisms and processes that affect, in an increasingly worrying way, planetary environmental sustainability, making it recover and quickly exceed the rate of degradation of our ecosystems and of everything that generates the intoxication of the environment (Joaquín Benítez Maal – Venezuela). Therefore, it is urgent to:

- Promote the recognition of the sacredness of creation and the mutual interdependence between all creatures. Everything is interlinked, interconnected, related, woven with each and every one. And at the same time, each of us makes a difference through what we perceive as “reality.”
- Promote personal, social and ecological harmony in defense of life, peoples and cultures. A single cause that should help us to go beyond the coordinates of our territorial and institutional / congregational limits.
- Deepen in an ecological conversion that may reconcile us, strengthen us in communion (which implies a deep interior conversion and a desire for it to happen) and place us respectfully before the natural ecosystems, stimulating the care of life and of the common home.

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- *Do you think that reflecting and praying the Laudato Si' can help us grow in communion with people and with the environment?*
- *Do we have an extensive look at other spaces beyond our own?*
- *In what do we need to grow in order to have it?*

IV. PROPOSAL TO DEEPEN AND EXPERIENCE LAUDATO SÍ’.

We can extract 6 chapters that seem nuclear to deepen the subject at hand. We present them as worksheets to help reflection and prayer or, if you like, to share.

We can consider that, up to now, we have found a broad introduction in this work and that now what really matters, the work itself, has come. The texts and the questions can be a mere pretext to pray and allow ourselves to be led towards a new way of living dreamed of in Laudato Sí.

1. GRATEFUL FOR THE GIFT OF CREATION
2. EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED
3. THE CRY OF THE EARTH AND OF THE POOR
4. INTEGRAL ECOLOGY
5. PROMOTE DIALOGUE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF SOLIDARITY AND ENCOUNTER
6. ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY

1. WORKSHEET 1 – GRATEFUL FOR THE GIFT OF CREATION

A. Introduction

The Pope’s encyclical on ecology begins with a praise: “Laudato Si”, may you be praised. It is the gateway to care. Human beings are grateful when upon being received we feel loved, then we “awaken to love” and become capable of doing everything possible in caring. It is the dynamics of the Contemplation to achieve love (SpEx. 230-237).

When there is no love, there is no gratitude, but rather lazy reception of what we are given, so that we take it not as gratuitous but as due. Then we have plenty of realities, we are unable to appreciate them, we don’t care and we neglect them, we forget about them.

The greatest gift we have ever received is life. What have we done to be worthy of it? Life, all creation, is an undeserved gift. Hence the most honest human attitude is gratitude. The Bible opens precisely with a solemn thanksgiving in the form of praise for all that is created. The first chapter of Genesis presents the story of creation sequenced in seven days that successively give rise to all things: the sun and the moon, the seas and rivers, plants and animals, even the human being, man and woman. The entire creation is a wonderful gift from the One who is all good. It produces admiration and deep gratitude in us. The Encyclical follows the same steps as the Bible: gratitude is the gateway to the truth of the real.

We do not tire of admiring what we are grateful for, as we perceive it as good and worthy of being loved. So, one’s gaze is a form of caress, which does not intend to surprise intimacy, or possess things, but respectfully enjoys the beauty and goodness of people and realities. Things are not mere objects of use, at our disposal so that we can use them at will, or to satisfy our curiosity or to gratify our desires. The contemplation of creation elicits gratitude and calls for praise.

Things acquire additional value when they are given as gifts, as they are adorned with the affection of the one who gave them to us. The more we value whoever donated them, the more care we put into them. A child’s drawing is not hung on the wall for the value of his painting, but to frame the beauty of his generous heart.

This is also the case with creation; it has been given to us as an expression of God’s affection, and that makes it the creditor of our care. We are not authorized to plunder nature as owners

who do not have to give an account to anyone of what we make of it. God did not give us creation to exploit; He left her in our care, believing he entrusted her into good hands.

Thanking, loving and caring are expressions that go together when we correspond to the affection received. In a similar way, the dialogue between God and the human being makes it possible to discover the whole of nature as a gift, clothed in beauty, full of beauty and goodness. It is revealed as a blessing, its most authentic meaning. Heartfelt gratitude gives rise to a solicitude for everything created, especially for the weakest. In this care, communication in the key of love is expressed and strengthened. What is loved is cared for.

B. Texts from Laudato Si'

n. 84: *"The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God. The history of our friendship with God is always linked to particular places which take on an intensely personal meaning; we all remember places, and revisiting those memories does us much good. Anyone who has grown up in the hills or used to sit by the spring to drink, or played outdoors in the neighborhood square; going back to these places is a chance to recover something of their true selves."*

n. 11: *"If we approach nature and the environment without this openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters,,,"*

n. 116: *"... our "dominion" over the universe should be understood more properly in the sense of responsible stewardship."*

n. 12: *"Saint Francis, faithful to Scripture, invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness... Rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise."*

C. Determination

2 *The General Congregation XVIII, in giving us this Determination, wants to express the authentic desires of keeping the Body in its well-being and of adapting it to what the current circumstances of the world ask for, in order to manifest with greater clarity the goodness of God that makes us all brothers.*

4 *We have looked at the world to which we are sent, a world whose ambivalent reality demands help and impels us to be a response to some of its strongest needs. We see that people, many times, walk without strength, without hope ... and we have been reminded that consecrated life is called to be balm, warmth, kind presence, impulse of hope, comfort along the way, encouragement, provoking question, expert in communion, life that reveals Jesus of Nazareth.*

6... *we perceive that needs, demands, individualism, consumerism... as well as the difficulty of assuming the limits of life itself. Once again, we recognize that the third paragraph of the Formula is the most forgotten.*

D. “...TO GO AND PROCLAIM”, nº 8

The charism of Mother Candida is a gift of the Spirit to the Church, lived from two vocations: lay and religious. We want to remain open and to seek the perspective and the steps that the Spirit urges us to give as charismatic family... it is necessary to continue growing in reciprocity and joint formation.

E. Guidelines for reflection and prayer

- Sit down and recall some natural space from your childhood that has filled you. Try to reproduce its atmosphere: its sounds, colors, scents. Let yourself soak in it. Be thankful for it as a gift from God and feel within you the desire to care for it, preserve it and nurture it.

INVITADAS A EXCLAMAR ¡'LAUDATO SI'!

(You can do this same exercise in a place where you are before nature)

- Are you growing in responsibility for the care of the common home?
- Do you contemplate nature? Do you allow yourself to be invaded by its beauty, are you sensitive to it? Do you ever sit down to look at it, to let yourself be caressed by it, as if before a gift that God has given you?
- Do you know the realities of nature? Do you know how to name them? It is difficult to love or admire what is not known.
- Try to take care of some natural reality in your daily life. Perhaps the simplest is a plant, or if you dare more, a garden or an animal. You will exercise your sensitivity, you will listen, you will be amazed and you will learn the vulnerability and greatness of what is small.

WORKSHEET 2 – EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED

A. Introduction

The text of *Laudato Si’* begins by saying that the earth is “like a sister... like a beautiful mother” (LS 1). It situates itself from the beginning in the field of family relationships, where recognition, communication, mutual nurturing and reciprocal responsibility prevail. The family is proposed as a reference image to comprehend the Universe.

The privileged communication that Saint Francis of Assisi had with the divine Mystery allowed him to have a new vision of things that defined his attitude towards reality. Each being was his brother, his most precious brother. He conceived reality as embraced and interwoven by innumerable threads of affection; he discovered in the background the love of God covering everything with a mantle of tenderness.

If everything is connected, then all realities have meaning and value, each in itself separately and also as part of a whole. Nothing is trivial. Every single thing has its own goodness and perfection. The degradation of any reality or its decomposition into less complex units impoverishes the universe. Nothing is superfluous. The Gospel says it with the characteristic language of Jesus: “*Are not five sparrows sold for two coins? Well, none of them is forgotten by God*” (Lk 12: 6). Each reality of the cosmos has its meaning and function, it has dignity.

This leads to defending even more emphatically the value of each human being, also created by love, made in the image and likeness of God. “Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary.”² The vulnerability of the least is not an excuse to ignore them, take them for surplus or lose them, but a reason to assume our responsibility before them.

Being part of a large family means that our autonomy is not absolute, but is ordered towards other beings. An exacerbated and disaffected individualism does not do justice to the world as it is, since “no creature is self-sufficient” (LS 86). We need one another. We are beings in need and that does not make us weaker, but more brothers and more human. The ideal of life is not situated on the path of self-sufficiency, but on that of solidarity.

In Western civilization we need a new self-portrait of the human being. It will no longer be that of the male individual propped up on a pedestal of dominance, but that of the family who shares a table with friends and siblings –male and female – in a warm and crowded home in the middle of nature. This is a more complete image of the human being and a

² Benedicto XVI, 24 abril 2005, *Homilía en el solemne inicio del ministerio petrino*, citado en LS 67.

more suitable window through which to peer into the being of God: *“The universe as a whole, in all its manifold relationships, shows forth the inexhaustible riches of God.”* (LS 86).

B. Texts from ‘Laudato Si’

n. 11: *St. Francis of Assisi “communed with all creation, even preaching to the flowers, inviting them ‘to praise the Lord, just as if they were endowed with reason’. His response 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.”*

n. 89: *“... all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect.”*

n. 91: *“A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings... Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society.”*

n. 92: *“Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth.”*

n. 139: *“When we speak of the “environment”, what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it.”*

C. Determination

7 *Recovering the radicality of evangelical poverty is more than just a call. It is a necessity, an urgency, a charismatic healing in order to grow in the well-being of the Body and be a response to the cry of this world that is asking from us the best of ourselves.*

8 *God the Father is revealed through the incarnation of his own Son and he does so in weakness and poverty. He sends us his only Son who "although rich, became poor for your sake" (2 Cor 8,9). God is not an impassive God, he has a human face in Jesus of Nazareth. To speak of God is to speak of communion, of a relationship of love. We announce the hope of the Gospel itself when we fulfill the aim of our poverty out of charity to enrich others.*

10 *We are called to embrace the poverty of Christ, our greatest wealth ... True evangelical poverty is made possible when we put our hope only in Jesus and we assume his way of life.*

D. "... TO GO AND PROCLAIM", nº 9

To promote union and articulation, on a universal level, among the educators of the schools that follow the educative approach of Mother Candida, to reflect on the educational challenges that the present world poses to us and to envision future paths ...

E. Guidelines for reflection and prayer

- Sit peacefully somewhere that is meaningful to you. Close your eyes. Listen, feel surrounded by the reality around you. Take a deep breath and feel accompanied, connected with everything, part of something greater, immersed in the festive and joyful atmosphere of God's gift.
- Are my relationships healing? Free? When they are not, in what way do I heal wounds?
- Am I a bridge of reconciliation? Am I creating inclusive communion with diversity?
- Do you need to restore relationships with the realities that surround you? Are they relationships of ignorance, suspicion, contempt? Try to turn them into relationships of respect, amazement, solidarity, love and care. What help would you need for this?
- Does the experience of the Principle and Foundation in the Exercises help you to conceive of yourself as part of life on this Earth of ours, a gift among gifts, a gift of life for the good of the world?
- How can we, as a person and in your community, recognize more clearly that deep down, each one of us is a knot of life in a gigantic network of relationships that sustain and nourish us?

WORKSHEET 3 - THE CRY OF THE EARTH AND OF THE POOR

A. Introduction

Among the numerous damages that manifest the deterioration that the Earth is experiencing today, the Encyclical has chosen to speak of four:

- Of the contamination and waste generated by our production processes.
- Of global warming. The current development model is based on the production of energy from fossil fuels and on deforestation, two key factors in the emission of greenhouse gases that produce this warming. Hence the alteration in weather patterns and a greater frequency and virulence of extreme events such as floods and droughts.
- Of the loss of biodiversity. We have forced the disappearance of many species through hunting or overfishing. We have deteriorated ecosystems and their interconnection, isolating natural populations and making it difficult for them to survive.
- Of the scarcity and greater contamination of water, which impacts all living beings.

But the Encyclical is not just a "green card" but a text of the Social Doctrine of the Church, concerned about the situation and the future of the poorest. For this reason, it points out that *"a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor"* (LS 49). Or as it will say elsewhere: *"We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental."* (LS 139). The Pope's concern is for the life that is threatened, that of so many living beings and that of countless marginalized human beings.

The impact of human activity on nature hits everyone, but disproportionately, the most disadvantaged. It is unfair, since it is precisely the poor communities that historically have contributed the least to environmental degradation. They are also currently the ones that consume the least amount of resources. By contrast, rich countries have benefited more from natural assets, have deteriorated the environment to a greater extent and, paradoxically, are better prepared to protect themselves or benefit from the changes that will inevitably occur.

The current development model simultaneously threatens both nature and vulnerable human beings, fostering a mode of production and consumption and lifestyles that produce unsustainability and exclusion. A defense of living beings as well as of human beings is necessary. The protection of nature while neglecting that of persons has little sense.

B. Texts from Laudato Si’:

n. 25: *“Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. Its worst impact will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades.... There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. They are not recognized by international conventions as refugees; they bear the loss of the lives they have left behind, without enjoying any legal protection whatsoever. Sadly, there is widespread indifference to such suffering”.*

n. 33: *“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 forever. 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.”*

n. 34: *“... a sober look at our world shows that the degree of human intervention, often in the service of business interests and consumerism, is actually making our earth less rich and beautiful, ever more limited and grey, even as technological advances and consumer goods continue to abound limitlessly.”*

n. 48: *“The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation. In fact, the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet... the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest.”*

n. 49: *“Today ... we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.”*

C. Determination

9 *The richness of Jesus is rooted in his boundless trust in the Father, which enables him to empty himself divesting himself of his divine condition (Phil 2: 6-8). The incarnation of the Son calls us to share with him his filial and fraternal spirit, to become daughters in the Son and, assuming his poverty, to seek with others life in abundance for every living being. The identification with the poor Jesus also means committing oneself to the defense of life.*

11 *The living of true evangelical poverty ... is an integrating dimension that can qualify other aspects of our life wherein we also feel the need for conversion...*

18 *The living of true evangelical poverty is a process that requires discernment. The Holy Spirit will help us to be faithful to tradition, inspiring us with multiple novelties and helping us to glimpse into what kind of consecrated life we are journeying in today, what presences manifest more clearly that God is in the midst of his people and what steps we must necessarily take.*

D. “... TO GO AND PROCLAIM”, nº 6.

The drama of human mobility sets us off to respond to the pressing cry that reaches us from migrants and refugees. It challenges us to continue collaborating with others and to take bolder and more defined positions that guarantee the protection of human dignity, accompaniment and the ways of integration in society.

E. Guidelines for Reflection and Prayer

- In the first week of the Exercises, St. Ignatius proposes that we examine our conscience to become aware of our sin, which otherwise goes unnoticed. Are you aware of the evil that we are causing to our planet with our common way of life? How could you gain clarity in this area?

INVITADAS A EXCLAMAR ¡‘LAUDATO SI’!

- How can it be seen that I have incarnated in my daily living the Principle and Foundation and that from there I contribute to making others aware of this great responsibility in relation to the purpose for which we have been created?
- The evangelical movement that leads to service passes through compassion, in this case towards creatures and towards the poorest. Listen to the pain of the world and of threatened nature and let that double cry of the earth and of life at risk resound in your heart.
- Is it difficult for you to recognize your participation in the dynamics of our world that threaten nature and the poor? Do you ever share that participation in the sacrament of forgiveness?

WORKSHEET 4 - INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

A. Introduction

Faced with ecological and social problems, we need a perspective that offers the appropriate orientation for our action, because in this way we will be able to judge to what extent our decisions are on the right track. Pope Francis has raised this question and offers us an answer.

He proposes the concept of integral ecology: the care of all life, in the multiplicity of its forms. The urgency of a comprehensive response stems from the mutual dependence of all things, from their interrelation and interpenetration. With it, a logic that simplifies problems by creating compartments and generating divisions is broken. Integral ecology does not consist only in the defense of nature in a restricted way, but in the protection of all life - including human life - especially where it is in danger.

Integral ecology includes the common good, which demands respect for the inalienable rights of every human being. The common good is above legitimate private interests when they violate the rights of other human beings. It calls for solidarity and demands the preferential option for the poorest. That among us there have been those who are excluded, is evidence in the most eloquent way of the lack of respect for the common good.

This holistic ecology also includes intergenerational justice. We have an obligation to leave to those who come after us a planet where they can live and develop as human beings to the full. They are owed the same opportunity as ours. Our rights do not exceed theirs.

The Pope has extended his integral ecology, the concern for life in all its expressions, to the protection of cultures. Cultural forms that carry a wisdom and wealth that go back to societies before ours, in which there was a deep knowledge of the meaning of the human being, must be respected. There is a call here to deepen the values of our traditions and cultures and of our native languages in order to continue cultivating them.

Indigenous peoples, threatened in practically all latitudes, require particular attention. They suffer from the exploitation of the natural and mineral resources of the territories they inhabit. They are expropriated from their lands, displaced by major development projects and challenged in their integrity by the force of more powerful cultures.

An integral ecology also speaks of the meaning of a good life, that is, one worth living and deeply human. It urges us to thrive by living in harmony with other human beings and with other creatures, nurturing them and helping them grow. This affects each of us and our own body.

B. Texts from Laudato Si’

n. 137 – *“Since everything is closely interrelated, and today’s problems call for a vision capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis, I suggest that we now consider some elements of an integral ecology, one which clearly respects its human and social dimensions.”*

n. 158: *“... the principle of the common good immediately becomes, logically and inevitably, a summons to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters... We need only look around us to see that, today, this option is in fact an ethical imperative essential for effectively attaining the common good.”*

n. 159: *“Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us. The Portuguese bishops have called upon us to acknowledge this obligation of justice: ‘The environment is part of a logic of receptivity. It is on loan to each generation, which must then hand it on to the next’. An integral ecology is marked by this broader vision.”*

n. 145: *“The disappearance of a culture can be just as serious, or even more serious, than the disappearance of a species of plant or animal. The imposition of a dominant lifestyle linked to a single form of production can be just as harmful as the altering of ecosystems.”*

n. 155: *“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. Learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning, is an essential element of any genuine human ecology. Also, valuing one’s own body in its femininity or masculinity is necessary if I am going to be able to recognize myself in an encounter with someone who is different. In this way we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and find mutual enrichment.”*

C. Determination

3 *A very positive aspect in the whole Body Congregation is currently the concern to make our charismatic identity more visible. The Lord has been revealing to us that our strongest weakness today is not in the field of work, but in maintaining vitality and making the well-being of the Body grow.*

15 *The poverty proper to our apostolic vocation demands, on the one hand, a personal and communitarian life that is poor, and on the other, to give special attention so that the goods destined for apostolic service are not used for our own benefit, but rather, that we use them with total detachment.*

16 *We feel the need to deepen in and think about our economy and management of goods in fidelity to the charisma. We seek that it be a means that will bring us to a simple and austere life, in solidarity with the most vulnerable in every context and that it can contribute to social justice.*

D. “... TO GO AND PROCLAIM”, nº 5

*In Laudato Si’ we are presented with the care of our common home as an urgency of the planet. We are responsible for the deterioration of the world. We must **commit ourselves, from all areas of our mission, to protect this common home and live an integral ecology in communion with all of creation**, to combat poverty and restore the dignity of the excluded. It is a cultural, spiritual and educational challenge, inseparable from social justice.*

E. Guidelines for reflection and prayer

- Spend some time thanking God for life - yours, your loved ones, the life that surrounds you, the one that dwells in the universe, the life of yesterday, the life of the future. Be grateful, contemplate and celebrate.
- In your community dynamics, what place does the care and celebration of life in all its forms occupy? Does it move you to praise and gratitude?

INVITADAS A EXCLAMAR ¡‘LAUDATO SI’!

- How would you express your commitment today to future generations? What forms does it take?

- Do you think there is something that we can do congregationally to protect threatened millennial cultures and the ethnic minority and indigenous groups?

- How do you take care of your body, of the life that God has given you? What relationship do you have with your body: affection, respect, gratitude, forgetfulness, ill-treatment, contempt, shame ...?

- How are you attracting others with your own life so that, from a deep experience of the Triune and incarnate God, they become passionate about and committed to the care of the common home and of an integral ecology?

Even if you dwell more or less on the previous questions, do not omit to answer the following in a personal and communitarian way:

- What can you do personally, in your community (and in the center where you work or apostolic places where you are) to respond to this call to integral ecology?

WORKSHEET 5 - PROMOTE DIALOGUE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF SOLIDARITY AND ENCOUNTER

A. Introduction

Pope Francis insists on the idea that everything is connected so that we can properly situate ourselves before the socio-environmental challenge. We are all part of each other. We form a whole in which nothing that happens to one of the members is indifferent to the whole. If this is so, in the face of common problems that affect us all, we also all have the responsibility and the right to contribute to their solution. It is there where dialogue appears as the instrument through which we take charge of common problems as a human community. We have an obligation to involve everyone in dealing with the problems of the common home.

At the bottom of this perspective is a profound theological insight. The Spirit of God throbs inside each person expressing himself in his own way. We all have something substantial to contribute because, however partial it may be, it is essential for the construction of common scenarios.

The Pope conceives dialogue as a form of encounter (EG 239). If something has characterized his pontificate to this day, it has been his ability to meet with a great diversity of people of different creeds and ideologies. The Holy Father is building bridges to respond jointly to the challenges of humanity today. He does not believe that dialogue is a way to negotiate interests. *“To dialogue is not to negotiate. Negotiating is trying to get your own ‘slice’ of the common pie. That’s not what I mean. Rather, it is to seek the common good for all”*.³

In reality, the entire Encyclical *Laudato Si’* is an exercise in dialogue: it addresses everyone who inhabits this planet, to “enter into dialogue... about our common home” (LS 3). He turns to science in his diagnosis and wants an intense and fruitful communication with them (LS 62). The text was published a few months before the celebration of COP 21, the Conference on Climate Change that took place in Paris in 2015, as the Pope wanted to make a contribution to the intergovernmental discussions that took place there.

The exercise of politics requires a public dialogue. It is the quality of the dialogue that gives value to political action. In fact, the tradition of the Church invites us to value politics positively

³ Papa Francisco, 10 noviembre 2015, *Discurso en el 5º congreso de la Iglesia italiana*, en <http://bit.ly/1NwmEMu>, visitada en julio 2020.

as an art of the possible, in which the common good is sought, trying to safeguard private goods without nullifying them, but subordinating them to the most universal good

The fifth chapter of *Laudato Si'*, “Lines of Approach and Action”, is dedicated to dialogue. It highlights some fields in which this dialogue is necessary:

- First is the international community. The environment is a common good that goes beyond borders. Shared diagnoses, practical consensus, public regulations, their monitoring and sanctions are needed in case of violating the regulations.
- In second place we find the national level, in which we have many more tools for public debate and greater knowledge about the issues. It is at the local level where many times a difference can be made in people’s lives.
- A third area is the dialogue among religions for the defense of the environment and the poorest.

B. Texts from Laudato Si'

n. 3: *“Now, faced as we are with global environmental deterioration, I wish to address every person living on this planet. In my Apostolic Exhortation Evangeliu Gaudium, I wrote to all the members of the Church with the aim of encouraging ongoing missionary renewal. In this Encyclical, I would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home.”*

n. 62: *“...science and religion, with their distinctive approaches to understanding reality, can enter into an intense dialogue fruitful for both.”*

n. 174: *“What is needed, in effect, is an agreement on systems of governance for the whole range of so-called ‘global commons’.”*

n. 189: *“Politics must not be subject to the economy, nor should the economy be subject to the dictates of an efficiency-driven paradigm of technocracy. Today, in view of the common good, there is urgent need for politics and economics to enter into a frank dialogue in the service of life, especially human life.”*

n. 201: *“The majority of people living on our planet profess to be believers. This should spur religions to dialogue among themselves for the sake of protecting nature, defending the poor, and building networks of respect and fraternity. Dialogue among the various sciences is likewise needed, since each can tend to become enclosed in its own language, while specialization leads to a certain isolation and the absolutization of its own field of knowledge. This prevents us from confronting environmental problems effectively. An open and respectful dialogue is also needed between the various ecological movements, among which ideological conflicts are not infrequently encountered. The gravity of the ecological crisis demands that we all look to the common good, embarking on a path of dialogue which demands patience, self-discipline and generosity, always keeping in mind that ‘realities are greater than ideas’.”*

C. Determination

13 *Evangelical poverty in Mother Candida is to go to live and proclaim the Gospel. Availability leads us to be in continuous internal itinerancy, to out of ourselves towards the most needy. It asks us to be bold, as a Body, to reach the frontiers of the current world and disposes us to listen to the cry of the world in order to share the Mission of Christ.*

14 *Following in the footsteps of Saint Ignatius, Mother Foundress reminds us that poverty is a mother because from her are born the freedom, the ability to appreciate and to choose what God wants, and it is also the strong wall that protects religious life from mediocrity.*

17 ... *“The ‘spirituality of care’ invites us to ... reconciliation and healing of relationships...*

D. “...TO GO AND PROCLAIM”, nº 4.

Discernment, as our way of proceeding and constant attitude in life, disposes us to leave our own self-love, wants and interests, enabling us to seek and choose what God asks of us. It is urgent to practice discernment in common so that our apostolic projects respond to the greater universal good and the greatest needs.

E. Guidelines for Reflection and Prayer

- Engage in a dialogue with Jesus, let him tell you today how to learn to dialogue with others, ask him how he did it, what he was looking for, what he intended, how he made room for others to let them express themselves and to open up, to make them feel as protagonists.
- Check to what extent your prayer is a form of dialogue with the Lord today, built on trust, openness and the search for his will, or if it is an extended monologue which includes many things, but in which there is little listening.
- What is your personal encounter with God leading you to? What kind of encounter do you have with God?
- When have you felt that the Spirit speaks to you through what others say or express? In what way is the Spirit present to you in the mouth of others?
- Do you practice dialogue in the areas of decision-making in which you move? Do you listen, trust, open up, let them question you, search with others? Do you think that this is an attitude practiced in the Congregation?
- In what ways can we as a Congregation participate in civil dialogue on common goods, at the local, municipal, national or international level? Can we participate in an ecological, civil or ecclesial movement, national or international?
- In what daily gestures can you contribute to caring for the common good?

WORKSHEET 6 - ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY

A. Introduction

There is something radically wrong in our way of producing and consuming and in our lifestyles. Our current civilization causes death and exclusion and is in full colonizing expansion of latitudes and social environments. The recognition of the wrong done is the path to conversion. The ecological and social crisis asks us for a radical transformation in our relationships with others, with the environment, with ourselves and with God.

Conversion begins with the person himself. In Christian spirituality, conversion is a process of progressively resembling Christ when we allow the Spirit that inhabits us to conform our being to that of Jesus, according to the characteristics of our particular personality. How can it be achieved? Pope Francis points out that this conversion supposes the cultivation of certain attitudes (LS 220).

First of all, it implies gratitude for so much good received. Gratitude expands our interior and frees it from unfounded fears of being helpless. Second, it includes the perception of being part of a large family united by the bond of love. This perspective transforms the way we see ourselves and those in our care. Third, the Pope mentions the enthusiasm for solving the world's dramas. It is not a mere obligation, a heavy burden to shoulder, but a task that we feel fortunate and happy to carry out.

The fruit is a new sensitivity, a new attitude to reality. When conversion is authentic, a long list of prohibitions and precepts does not emerge from it. New life springs lightly from within.

It begins with the person, but cannot ignore the community (LS 219). In reality, personal and community conversion call forth one another. They do not walk separately, but help each other to progress.

The Holy Father does not believe that it is enough to give answers to the many urgencies that appear. He believes that the challenge is much deeper and that it requires from us “a distinctive way of looking at things, a way of thinking, policies, an educational programme, a lifestyle and a spirituality” that are new (LS 111). We are therefore talking about a true revolution in the field of culture.

A new paradigm of being human requires a strong mystique, that is, a source of inner motivation. The challenge is not solved in the effortful change of habits and behaviors. We need a new spirituality incorporated into our way of understanding and behaving, a new way of understanding what “good life” means.

B. Texts of Laudato Si’

n. 118: *“There can be no renewal of our relationship with nature without a renewal of humanity itself. There can be no ecology without an adequate anthropology.”*

n. 193: *“We know how unsustainable is the behaviour of those who constantly consume and destroy, while others are not yet able to live in a way worthy of their human dignity. That is why the time has come to accept decreased growth in some parts of the world, in order to provide resources for other places to experience healthy growth.”*

n. 223: *“Such sobriety, when lived freely and consciously, is liberating. It is not a lesser life or one lived with less intensity. On the contrary, it is a way of living life to the full. In reality, those who enjoy more and live better each moment are those who have given up dipping here and there, always on the look-out for what they do not have. They experience what it means to appreciate each person and each thing, learning familiarity with the simplest things and how to enjoy them. ... Even living on little, they can live a lot ...”*

C. Determination

7 *Recovering the radicality of evangelical poverty is more than just a call. It is a necessity, an urgency, a charismatic healing in order to grow in the well-being of the Body and be a response to the cry of this world that is asking from us the best of ourselves.*

12 *The experience of knowing that we are loved unconditionally by God brings us to a vital stance of full and total trust in the Father. It calls us to deepen in the following of the poor and humble Jesus and to participate, in the measure that is possible, in the living condition of the poor. From there a new way of being and becoming in the world will be opened for us.*

D. “...TO GO AND PROCLAIM”

nº 5. *“... We must commit ourselves, from all areas of our mission, to protect this common home and live an integral ecology in communion with all of creation, to combat poverty and restore the dignity of the excluded. It is a cultural, spiritual and educational challenge, inseparable from social justice.”*

nº 7. *“Jesus continues to call young people to live lives with meaning... we are invited... to walk with young people; according to the Synod of 2018 ‘young people themselves are agents of youth ministry. Certainly they need to be helped and guided, but at the same time left free to develop new approaches, with creativity and a certain audacity(...) The young make us see the need for new styles and new strategies.”*

E. Guidelines for Reflection and Prayer

- In your prayer ask the Lord for new eyes, to recognize the gift of his presence in every reality of nature and life. Look at some simple reality and try to listen through it to the voice of the Lord who calls you to thank, praise and love.
- What spirituality am I, and are we, living? Is it embodied or does it become spiritualism?
- To what extent has your sensitivity been changing in relation to the poorest and simplest realities? Are you able to recognize their suffering, to let yourself be affected by it and to do something to alleviate it? Or does suffering make you run away and avoid it?
- What communitarian and congregational aspects need an ecological conversion today? What could that conversion consist of?
- What aspects of your own life need to be transformed in this ecological conversion?
- What community practices do you think can help us grow more towards ecological spirituality?

V. CAN WE CELEBRATE THE DREAMS?

- Gather the fruits of the work: Evaluation
- Thank and offer in celebration

a. Celebration of the final Word around the Laudato Si’

- In contact with nature: sea, mountains, plains ...
- With elements of the same at home: flowers, plants, birds ...
- Cantic of the creatures.
- Story of creation.
- Share fruits of the earth.

b. Day of Retreat drawing on the experience lived

(We can go back to a specific worksheet that impressed us the most, or to the synthesis of what we lived, to some LS texts, to the Contemplation to Attain Love or to the Principle and Foundation, with some biblical texts, etc.)

VI. COMPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

- **Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “Querida Amazonía”**
- **Querida Amazonía: De la conversión al sueño. Tatay sj-Berzosa fi-Luciani.**
- **La espiritualidad en la sociedad digital. Francés Torralba.**
- **La venganza de la tierra. James Lovelock. [The Revenge of Gaia]**
- **Introducción práctica a la ecología. A. Samo-A.Garmendia-JA Delgado.**