



April 22

INTERNATIONAL MOTHER EARTH DAY

# IN CARE OF CREATION



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## Historical Review

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/earth-day>

1. The General Assembly designated April 22 as the International Mother Earth day through a resolution adopted in 2009.
2. Its origin dates back to 1970, a period when environmental protection was not a priority on the political agenda.
3. The 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm laid the foundations for the global awareness of the interdependent relationship between human beings, other living beings and our planet. Likewise, June 5 was established as World Environment day and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) was created, the UN agency in charge of setting the global environmental agenda, promoting the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development in the United Nations system and act as an authoritative advocate of the environment.
4. In 1992, more than 178 countries signed Agenda 21, the Declaration on Environment and Development and the Declaration of Principles for Sustainable Forest Management at the "Earth Summit", held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil).



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## Context

### BIG CURRENT ISSUES: RECORDS OF EARTH'S SUFFERING

Nature suffers the highest records of terrestrial heat, the worst invasion of locusts, COVID 19 resulting from the intervention of man in nature, as well as crimes that disturb biodiversity, such as deforestation, changing of the use of the land, intensive agriculture and livestock production or the growing of illegal wildlife trade that can increase the contact and transmission of infectious diseases from animals to humans.



**EXTREME HEAT WAVES**

- ▶ The concentration of greenhouse gases has been increasing due to environmental pollution in the world.

**IMPACT ON THE HEALTH OF THE POPULATION**

- ▶ Indeed, urban air pollution increases the risk of suffering from acute respiratory diseases, such as pneumonia, and chronic ones, such as lung cancer and cardiovascular diseases.

**WATER CRISIS**

- ▶ "Is there anything in the world that is not powered by water?" 97.5% of the existing water in the world is salty or is not suitable for our direct consumption, nor for the irrigation of crops. Of the 2.5% of fresh water, most of it is difficult to access because it is concentrated in glaciers (69%) and stored in aquifers (30%), and only 1% is found in rivers and lakes. Of the latter, only a small part is available for human consumption. More than half of the world's rivers are polluted.

**DESTRUCTION OF ECOSYSTEMS**

- ▶ Of the approximately 16 million square kilometers of tropical rainforest that originally existed in the world, less than 9 million remain.
- ▶ The current rate of deforestation is 160,000 square kilometers of annual logging, which represents a loss of around 1% of the original forest per year..

**UNCONTROLLED FIRES**

- ▶ "More deforestation means an increase in climate change, which increases the chances of vegetation drying out, which in turn increases the risk of fire."
- ▶ Due to deforestation, since 1990, some 420 million hectares of forest have been lost due to conversion to other land uses.
- ▶ Forests contain 60,000 different species of trees, 80 percent of amphibian species, 75 percent of bird species and 68 percent of mammalian species on Earth, deforestation causes the loss of these.



**Time for Reflection**

**MESSAGE FROM POPE FRANCIS \_ LAUDATO SI**



- 1. RECONCILIATION WITH CREATION.** To accomplish this reconciliation, we must examine our lives and recognize how we offend God's creation with our actions and our inability to act. (218)
- 2. PASSION FOR CARING FOR THE WORLD.** Living the vocation to be protectors of God's work is an essential part of a virtuous existence, it does not consist of something optional or a secondary aspect of the Christian experience. (217).
- 3. GRATITUDE AND GRATUITY.** Recognize the world as a gift received from the love of the Father, which provokes a consequence of gratuitous attitudes of renunciation and generous gestures, even if no one sees or recognizes them. (220)
- 4. COMMUNION WITH ALL BEINGS.** It implies the loving awareness of not being disconnected from other creatures to form a precious universal communion with the other beings of the universe. For the believer, the world is not seen from the outside but from the inside, recognizing the ties with which the Father has united all beings. (220)





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## Claret's Gaze

### CLARET AND HIS APPRECIATION FOR THE EARTH

The land served as a support for his tireless feet in his mission to bring the Good News to a large part of the extensive territory of the Caribbean island of Cuba. It was the scene of all his missions and spiritual exercises for the clergy. The extent of the land and cities that he visited allowed him to manifest the way in which the Spirit prompted him to walk up to approximately 3.4 miles, always thinking of serving the people and getting to where they were.

Claret exposes his sensitivity in relation to the manifestations of the earth and explains in detail and with great compassion the reaction of domestic animals before an earthquake occurred. He also tells us about the suffering of the people and the appreciation that the sick communicated for life when they felt the manifestations of the earth tremors. He made them look back at Jesus, crying out for mercy.

On the farm that P. Claret bought in Port-au-Prince, he developed a project to help and house poor children. He showed his interest in planting fruit trees and plants; once again acting, bearing fruit in everything he did. He sowed with his "own hands" showing his sensitivity and appreciation for the land he touched, served and worked to offer it as a common good. He offered it for the benefit of the most in need and preferred by our Father God in a planned, considerate and careful way. He ensured that this work could reach future generations by writing down the details on how to care for and cultivate the bountiful land.

We can corroborate it in the following paragraphs of his autobiography:

- 526.** *After the Clergy I went to the town and at the same time a mission was carried out in three different points for the convenience of the people, since this city is more than a league long.*
- 530.** *Those who have not experienced what large tremors are, cannot form an idea of them, since it does not consist only in the oscillation of the earth or undulation of the earth and seeing how the junk and furniture moves in the room from one part to another.*
- 567.** *I walled and fenced the entire extension of the farm, and then I divided the land into different squares, and both around and along the lines of the squares I planted trees which were found on the island and from abroad, so they could be acclimatized and used as a botanical garden, listing all the trees, and by numbers put in a book, explaining the nature of each tree, where it came from, its usefulness, how to propagate and improve itself, etc., etc. To the effect; I had planted more than four hundred orange trees by my own hands and they were growing admirably. There also had to be a part of the farm for the animals on the Island and from other places so that they could use and improve the breeds.*

## 5 Prayer

### At the beginning ...

Before the prayer, we watch the videos about **Laudato Si and the care of the common home** .

- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KIVuISZGdug>
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGmOnBiz2xw>



### Motivation

The Earth is the common good that God has given us to take care of it and live in a grateful and harmonious way with it and with all our brothers and sisters.

### Song: "Psalm of Creation" - Cristóbal Fones

<https://youtu.be/FNb9ZrhMbFE> (in spanish)

*For your blue ocean and the water of the sea,  
across the continent and the rivers that flow,  
for the fire that you saw as a burning bush  
by the wing of the wind, **I want to scream:***

**MY GOD, YOU ARE GREAT AND BEAUTIFUL,  
LIVING AND IMMENSE GOD,  
YOU ARE THE GOD OF LOVE.  
MY GOD  
YOU ARE GREAT AND BEAUTIFUL,  
LIVING GOD AND IMMENSE, GOD PRESENT  
IN ALL CREATION**

*And for the animals of land and water,  
by the song of the bird and the song of life,  
for the man you made like yourself,  
and for all your children, **I want to scream:***

**MY GOD, YOU ARE GREAT AND BEAUTIFUL,...**  
*By the outstretched hand that invites you to dance,  
for the kiss that sprouts when hope arises.  
the look of love that lifts and revives  
for the wine and bread, **I want to scream:***  
**MY GOD, YOU ARE GREAT AND BEAUTIFUL,...**

### Invitation

Let us pray the psalm in two choirs, feeling that we are brothers and hope that all humanity will be sensitive enough to generously care and share the bounties of the Earth without taking hold of this first gesture of love from our Father God towards us, his children.

**Psalm 104: "Praise the LORD, my soul"**

*LORD my God, you are very great;  
you are clothed with splendour and majesty.*

*The LORD wraps himself in light  
as with a garment;*

*he stretches out the heavens like a tent and lays the  
beams of his upper chambers on their waters.*

*He makes the clouds his chariot  
and rides on the wings of the wind.*

*He makes winds his messengers,  
flames of fire his servants.*

*He set the earth on its foundations;  
it can never be moved. You covered it  
with the watery depths as with a garment;  
the waters stood above the mountains.*

*But at your rebuke the waters fled,  
at the sound of your thunder they took to flight;  
they flowed over the mountains,  
they went down into the valleys,  
to the place you assigned for them.*

*You set a boundary they cannot cross;  
never again will they cover the earth.*

*He makes springs pour water into the ravines;  
it flows between the mountains.*

*They give water to all the beasts of the field;  
the wild donkeys quench their thirst.*

*The birds of the sky nest by the waters;  
they sing among the branches.*

*He waters the mountains from his upper chambers;  
the land is satisfied by the fruit of his work;*

*He makes grass grow for the cattle,  
and plants for people to cultivate—  
bringing forth food from the earth:  
wine that gladdens human hearts,  
oil to make their faces shine,  
and bread that sustains their hearts.*

*The trees of the LORD are well watered,  
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.*

*There the birds make their nests;  
the stork has its home in the junipers.*

*The high mountains belong to the wild goats;  
the crags are a refuge for the hyrax.*

*He made the moon to mark the seasons,  
and the sun knows when to go down.*

*You bring darkness, it becomes night,  
and all the beasts of the forest prowl.*

*The lions roar for their prey  
and seek their food from God.*

*The sun rises, and they steal away;  
they return and lie down in their dens.*

*Then people go out to their work,  
to their labor until evening.*

*How many are your works, LORD!*

*In wisdom you made them all;  
the earth is full of your creatures.*

*There is the sea, vast and spacious,  
teeming with creatures beyond number—  
living things both large and small.*

*There the ships go to and fro,  
and Leviathan, which you formed to frolic there.*

*All creatures look to you  
to give them their food at the proper time.*

*When you give it to them, they gather it up;  
when you open your hand,*

*they are satisfied with good things.*

*When you hide your face, they are terrified;  
when you take away their breath,*

*they die and return to the dust.*

*When you send your Spirit, they are created,  
and you renew the face of the ground.*

*May the glory of the LORD endure forever;  
may the LORD rejoice in his works—  
he who looks at the earth, and it trembles,  
who touches the mountains, and they smoke.*

*I will sing to the LORD all my life;  
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.*

*May my meditation be pleasing to him,  
as I rejoice in the LORD.*

*But may sinners vanish from the earth  
and the wicked be no more.*

*Praise the LORD, my soul.*

*Praise the LORD!*

### Gospel Reading

Let us allow ourselves to be touched by the words and exhortation of Jesus **(Mt 6: 25-34)**

*“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”*

**THE WORD OF THE LORD**

### Contemplation

After meditating in silence on the Word of God, we look at this image. We recreate it and bring to mind others in which we have discovered traces of the hand of the Creator.



*The copious rains that have fallen in recent weeks (March 2021) in the Namib desert in Africa have caused the most spectacular phenomenon of nature: the flowering of millions of bulbs in a vast field of ten kilometers that were covered by sandy ground and that had been completely dry three years ago. (March 2021)*

**Final Prayer** (Pope Francis)

**Father**, you who showed us your infinite love through that first gesture of love of Creation, give us a merciful and generous heart towards our poorest brothers and sisters abandoned by our selfishness and indifference.

**Grant them** to be valued and respected there in their place, in their land. Make us aware of our lifestyles and in our daily lives direct our Spirit and actions to take care of and be kind to our sister Earth.

**We ask this** through Jesus Christ your son who admired your creation and communicated to us that the love you feel for all your children is more, and through the intercession of the Virgin Mary who is our mother.

**Amen**

We unite in prayer and commitment as Claretian family with all those who speak out in defence of our Mother Earth. There are many people who have left a legacy and have given their lives in defence of the earth. Among them...



**VANDANA SHIVA**

Academic from India, environmental activist, advocate for food sovereignty and anti-globalization writer. Vandana is the author of more than twenty books.



**WENDELL BERRY**

Writer, activist, teacher, and farmer. He still lives on a farm in Kentucky, farming with traditional methods.



**BERTA CÁCERES**

Lenca Indian of Honduras. It helped the Lenca people resist illegal logging. She resisted the illegal construction of a dam in the Rio Blanco area. In 2016 she was murdered in her home.



**DENIS ALLEN HAYES**

Defender of the environment and solar energy. He became famous in 1970 as the coordinator of the first Earth Day. Hayes founded the Earth Day Network and expanded it to more than 180 nations.



**WANGARÍ MUTA MAATHAI**

Renowned Kenyan social, environmental and political activist, she was the first African woman to win the Nobel Prize. She founded the Green Belt Movement, an organization focused on tree planting, environmental conservation and women's rights.



**MÁXIMA ACUÑA ATALAYA**

Peruvian farmer and environmental defender. Known for her fight against the Conga mining megaproject owned by Newmont Mining Corporation and Buenaventura Mining Company, for which she received the Goldman Environmental Award in April 2016.

## 6 Commitment

### Some initiatives in countries and organisations around the world

- ▶ In France, the participants formed a human chain along the Loire River, reaching some 800 km in length, with the purpose of honoring one of the last clean rivers in Europe.
- ▶ In Asia, Chinese, Soviet and American mountaineers formed a team to collect rubbish left on Mount Everest by previous expeditions, collecting more than two tons.
- ▶ Some 5,000 people in Italy blocked roads, protesting pollution from cars.
- ▶ In Haiti, Earth Day was officially declared a national holiday.
- ▶ Around 10,000 students participated in a cleanup campaign in Jordan.
- ▶ About 35,000 Japanese environmentalists gathered on the Island of Dreams, (an artificial island, located in Tokyo Bay, built with garbage) for the purpose of establishing a temporary recycling center.

### What can we do?

**Personally.** Stop a little, take into account that your life is related to the earth, you can make a difference. We can carry out small actions that can give great results: what each person can do for the environment in which we live such as:

- Use the 3Rs: reduce, reuse and recycle.
- Segregate your waste correctly.
- Save water, energy and paper.
- Use a cloth bag.
- Plant a tree.
- Join an environmental volunteer.
- Get around by bike.
- Be an agent of change, and educate your brothers and sisters in the community, your friends and your whole family.

**As a Claretian Family.** Specify our commitment in favor of the care of our land in each of the mission posts where we live.

**How will I promote care for our Mother Earth in my community and in my environment?**