

EARTH DAY – 22th April 2019

The world is God's wonderful creation. Humans have the task of shaping it and preserving it. Concern for "Mother Earth" is not one among many questions, but the essential issue to the planet's survival.

"God looked at everything, and found it very good." (Gen 1:31). God's creation is not a random product. She is wanted and created out of love. Even the first pages of Genesis say that the creation of the earth is "good." The biblical texts refer again and again to the Creator God, who is a lover of life (see Wisdom 11:24-26). God has called the world into existence and cares for all creatures. In the Book of the Psalms the joy of creation sounds: "Lord, how numerous are your works! With wisdom you have made them all, the earth is full of your creatures" (Ps 104: 24). As human beings, we thank our Creator; as we are made in the image of God (Gen 1:27, Gen 9,6, Ps 8) and we have the mission to bear responsibility for God's creation "The LORD God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it." (Gen. 2:15)



" For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them." Eph. 2:10

There are many individual programs and objectives around environmental protection. Let us especially remember Pope Francis' encyclical **Laudato si**, the **Earth Charter**, the **UN's Agenda 2030** and its Sustainable Development Goals (**SDGs**), etc ... We humans are called upon to critically review our use of resources, our consumption patterns and our waste production.

"The environment is a collective good, a heritage of all humanity and a responsibility for all." Pope Francis (LS 95)

Pope Francis clearly articulates in his 2015 encyclical *Laudato si'* an analysis of the current ecological and social crisis. He calls for conversion to stop global environmental destruction and climate change. The world community is calling for a fundamental rethinking of each and every one of us towards an environmentally-conscious and sustainable lifestyle. Christian spirituality is pushing for a different, prophetic and contemplative lifestyle that is capable of profound rejoicing without being subject to consumerism.

Exchange with your group:

Read and share on a topic in Position Paper on Integral Ecology - June 2018, page 16. Exchange about personal experiences in everyday life

Kyrie:

God, the Earth is exhausted. We pollute the air, pollute the waters, poison the soil, and waste resources that you have given us to administer.
Lord, have mercy.

God, we see the suffering of your creation, of our Earth.
We do not want to stand by apathetically, but courageously advocate, fulfilling your task of creation.
We want to beautify the face of the Earth and preserve it for future generations.
Christ, have mercy.



God, in our effort to care for your creation, in our zeal, we begin to easily condemn people who do not act according to our ideas. We want to remain open to the concerns of our fellow human beings.
Lord, have mercy.

Reading from the Book of Wisdom 11:17-26, 12:1 - Digression on God's Mercy:

17 For not without means was your almighty hand, that had fashioned the universe from formless matter, to send upon them many bears or fierce lions,
18 Or newly created, wrathful, unknown beasts breathing forth fiery breath, Or pouring out roaring smoke, or flashing terrible sparks from their eyes.

19 Not only could these attack and completely destroy them; even their frightful appearance itself could slay.

20 Even without these, they could have been killed at a single blast, pursued by justice and winnowed by your mighty spirit. But you have disposed all things by measure and number and weight.



21 For great strength is always present with you; who can resist the might of your arm?

22 Indeed, before you the whole universe is like a grain from a balance, or a drop of morning dew come down upon the earth.

23 But you have mercy on all, because you can do all things; and you overlook sins for the sake of repentance.

24 For you love all things that are and loathe nothing that you have made; for you would not fashion what you hate.

25 How could a thing remain, unless you willed it; or be preserved, had it not been called forth by you?

26 But you spare all things, because they are yours, O Ruler and Lover of souls,
12:1 for your imperishable spirit is in all things!

Intercessions:

Creator God, let us marvel at the wonders you have made. Help us to recognize your trace in all things. We ask you:

1. Our pilgrimage leads through fields, forests and meadows, over mountains, rivers and valleys. Open our eyes and ears and awaken in us the joy of your creation. Creator God, hear us.
2. You have given us the Earth to keep it. Help us to respect and protect all of creation so that future generations can live on Earth. Creator God, hear us.
3. Our knowledge and technology gives us unimagined opportunities to use the Earth's goods. Give us judgment and humility before creation so that we do not destroy the foundations of life. Creator God, hear us.
4. Give us reverence and respect for human life at every stage of its existence. Help us to protect human life where it is endangered. Creator God, hear us.
5. Sometimes we do not realize that creation is endangered. We close our eyes to what happens. Open your eyes and awaken in us the responsibility for your creation. Creator God, hear us.
6. Help those who have become sick, displaced, or lost their livelihoods through environmental destruction. Give them vitality, courage and people who stand by their side. Creator God, hear us.
7. Help us if we have not lived up to our responsibility to each other and to the creation. Help us to change and give us forgiveness. Creator God, hear us.

Let us pray: "Our Father/Mother...."

Almighty God, you have promised a new heaven and a new earth. Send us the Holy Spirit, through whom you created and preserve the world. Therefore, we ask through Christ, our Lord. Amen



Prayer submitted by Regina Hanko, Province of Austria – Switzerland – Czech Republic

All photos from Sr. Regina Hanko