

10 Ecology and Justice: Climate Change

Check in

Grace: I ask for the grace of repentance and the courage to adopt an eco-friendly lifestyle

Hymn: selected by the leader

Explanation: The Church is aware of the weakness of human nature. While acknowledging the human causes in threats to the earth, the Church also acknowledges that with God's grace we can rise above human failings. We can own our propensity to selfishness, cruelty, overconsumption, but the Church believes that we can be transformed and can overcome our evil tendencies. Believers are aware that the climate issue is a matter of justice. Justice between the nations, the poorest countries are those that have contributed the least to global warming and are paying the highest price. Justice between generations: young people today live with the consciousness of the world with limited resources, exhaustible. Justice between rich and poor, more or less dependent on climate change.

That is why the Church set before the world the ideal of a "civilization of love". Social love is the key to authentic development: *"In order to make society more human, more worthy of the human person, love in social life – political, economic and cultural – must be given renewed value, becoming the constant and highest norm for all activity"* (LS. #231)

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

Jeremiah asked the Lord, "How long will our land be dry, and the grass in every field be withered? Animals and birds are dying because of the wickedness of our people, people who say, 'God doesn't see what we are doing.'"

The Lord replied,

*"Many foreign rulers have destroyed my vineyard;
they have trampled down my fields;
they have turned my lovely land into a desert.*

*¹¹ They have made it a wasteland;
it lies desolate before me.*

*The whole land has become a desert,
and no one cares.*

*¹² Across all the desert highlands
people have come to plunder.*

*I have sent war to destroy the entire land;
no one can live in peace.*

*¹³ My people planted wheat, but gathered weeds;
they have worked hard, but got nothing for it.*

*Because of my fierce anger
their crops have failed."*

¹⁴ The Lord says, "I have something to say about Israel's neighbors who have ruined the land I gave to my people Israel. I will take those wicked people away from their countries like an uprooted plant, and I will rescue Judah from them. ¹⁵ But after I have taken them away, I will have mercy on them; I will bring each nation back to its own land and to its own country. ¹⁶ If with all their hearts they will accept the religion of my people and will swear, 'As the Lord lives'—as they once taught my people to swear by Baal—then they will also be a part of my people and will prosper. ¹⁷ But if any nation will not obey, then I will completely uproot it and destroy it. I, the Lord, have spoken."

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

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

Exercise: Human life is not doomed to self-destruction but can exist in harmony with nature. Changing the course of history is possible. What effort do I have to do to act fairly? What can we do differently after reading the encyclical of Pope Francis?

Prayer in silence

Sharing

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

Ongoing practice: Listen to the expertise of the poorest, the most vulnerable of our communities and also all of creation. Let us allow ourselves to be touched by the life testimonies of those affected by our attitudes; migrants, homeless people, victims of environmental crimes, the elderly, children. Christ is healing many hearts, many families, many lives. Let us ask Him to give us the desire to cultivate this sense of healing by recycling, recovery, simplicity and generosity.

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