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**Mother Earth is Crying Out for Help**

On World Earth Day which we celebrate annually on April 22rd, “Mother Earth” is crying out for help to all of her “children”, all inhabitants of the planet to urgently care for her and repair the damage that is being done to the earth, which Pope Francis calls “Our Common Home -- Our mother is crying 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”. The earth can indeed be called a “Mother”, as she provides for what we need to live.

Earth Day is a time to appreciate the wonderful gift of planet earth and to commit ourselves, each and everyone around the world to assure her survival in the future. The theme of Earth Day 2022 is “Invest in Our Planet”. Together all nations of the world indeed must invest much more time, effort, and resources in our earth to ensure a green, healthy, equitable and prosperous future. More than ever, we need to act boldly, innovate broadly, and implement equitably. It is going to take all of us – businesses, governments of the world, churches, schools, all citizens, both the young and the old to accomplish this. All on planet earth are called to form a partnership for the planet. What unites us in this global partnership is our common humanity and the same basic human needs of all people and of all nations, and our great desire for a peaceful, healthy, and safe place to live. Climate change and global warming caused by human beings cannot be denied. Sadly, each year we see the great numbers of disappearance of plants and animal species which will never be known nor seen by our future generations because they have been lost forever. This is the moment for new zeal and courage to preserve and protect the health of Mother Earth. In accord with the Theme of Earth Day we seriously need to ask what will we, what will I invest to protect and preserve our common home? It begins in small ways with each person, in our homes and in our families.

Earth Day, I believe calls us to focus our attention on two major issues to show more care for and repair the damages done to Mother Earth. First, all on planet Earth need to “listen to the cry of Mother Earth” as regards the pressing issue of climate change with global warming and linked to this is a new and lively respect for biodiversity. Climate change is the critical concern for the very survival of the planet itself. The latest report from the U. N’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change points out that the dangers of climate change are mounting so rapidly that they could soon overwhelm the ability of both nature and humanity to adapt, creating a frightening future in which floods, fires, storms and famine displace millions, species disappear, and the planet is then irreversibly damaged. Startling heatwaves at both of Earth’s poles are causing alarm among climate scientists. The rapid rise in temperatures at the poles is a warning of disruption in Earth’s climate systems and are strong signal of the damage humanity is wreaking on the climate. Pope Francis when speaking on “the devastation of the environment, that an integral ecology emphasizes human beings are deeply connected with all the creation. When we mistreat nature, we also mistreat human beings at the same time. Every creature has its own intrinsic value that must be respected”.

The Pope also points out the great demands for the urgent care of our planet as we listen to both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor who are most affected by climate change. Water and climate change are inextricably locked together. Two billion people are living without access to water. The warming caused by huge consumptions on the part of rich countries has repercussions on the poorest areas of the world.

We also need a deeper and clearer understanding of biodiversity which is intricately connected to climate change. Earth day calls for a new and deeper respect for all life on planet Earth especially human life. Today this respect for the connections of all life is expressed in the term biodiversity. Biodiversity or biological diversity refers to the great wealth of beings that live on planet earth as well as the delicate equilibrium of interdependent and interaction that exists between them and the physical environment that hosts and conditions them. This biodiversity is translated into different ecosystems of which examples can be found in forests, wetlands, jungles, deserts, coral reefs, mountains, seas, and polar zones. Biodiversity is closely linked to human activity and our lifestyle as mentioned already. A dynamic biodiversity recognizes and appreciates the close relationship and dependency of planet earth with other celestial bodies especially the sun and moon. Earth day is a time for all of us, governments of the world, churches, businesses, families, and individuals to seriously ask the question, how can I, we invest more care and stewardship for all life on the planet.

World Earth Day is especially a time of grateful prayer for the wonderful gift of our common home with all its resources and pray for better care for all creation. We prayerfully reflect as individual believers and communities on this fitting opportunity to reaffirm our vocation to be stewards of creation, to thank God for the wonderful handy work which has been entrusted to our care. The more we care for all life on the planet, for the beauty and marvelous gifts of all creation, the more we realize that there exists in nature a certain reciprocity that as we care for creation, we realize that God through creation cares for us. We all need to imitate an action plan of some churches and schools for individuals, for children, families, and agencies to foster an integral ecology by following a seven-step plan. The seven action steps: commit to a greater use of renewable energy and reduction of fossil fuels; defend human life from conception to death; endorse ecological economics, such as sustainable production and fair trade; adopt a simple lifestyle and keep clean the portion of earth entrusted to each family and preserve water and avoid pollution; to rethink and redesign ecological education and recover a spiritual vision of God's creation; and emphasize community involvement.

As we listen to the cry of the earth on Earth Day, each one is called by God, by the nature that surrounds us to invest and show mercy to our common home.