

Fourth Sunday OF EASTER



PASTORAL CHALLENGE:

To reaffirm and give priority to an integral ecology in our communities, based on the four dreams of “Querida Amazonia”



“The best way to respect nature is to promote a human ecology open to transcendence, which, while respecting the person and the family, environments, and cities, follows Paul’s urging to recapitulate all things in Christ and praise the Father with Him “ (cf. 1 Cor. 3:21-23 (Dap 126).



Encounter with the Word to illuminate life*

From the Holy Gospel according to Saint John 10, 27-30

“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”

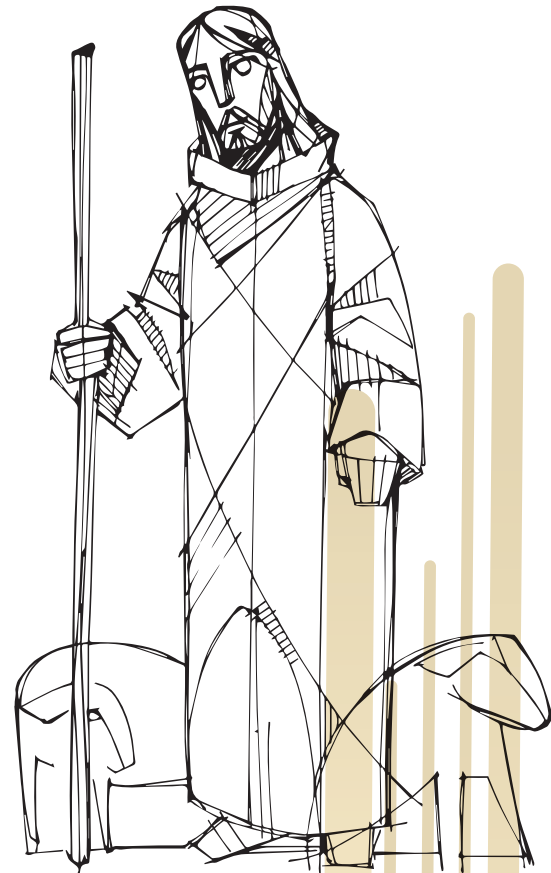
“We let ourselves be illuminated”

“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life”. (John 10, 27-28)

It is true that “in the family, we receive an integral education, which enables us to grow harmoniously in personal maturity” (Is, 213), although sometimes we experience “dialogues or monologues in two voices” (pope Francis 01/24/022), which impede attentive and empathic listening, leaving only the smell of “smoke” from what used to be home embers.

It is difficult to recognize familiarity in someone who shouts aggressively or fearfully, and even more so when we are in the world of the infomedic (with excessive, confusing, or false information) that leads to the collapse of our networks, minds, and hearts. It is not easy to “discern the voices of Christian love”, between the noise of weapons, the cries of the wounded, soporific sermons, songs from beyond the grave, or “political circus” speeches.

Given that an integral ecology is made up of “simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation, and selfishness” (LS 230), it is clear that our Christian communities must seek “communion, participation and mission” with eco-synodal, Samaritan and integral spirituality where the Word can be “seen” (cf. John 3,11) and each person can be “heard”, as Kairos of novelty (cf. Dt 6,4).



* For the biblical texts we use a translation offered by the Bible of the Church in America of CELAM.

It is also necessary to listen to how “all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now” (Rm 8,22), and it is emerging to “generate an ecological conversion that favors co-responsibility in personal, community and institutional actions in favor of caring for the Common House (AEALC 17), in such a way that we can urgently “reaffirm and give priority to an integral ecology in our communities, based on the four dreams of “Querida Amazonía” (AEALC 10).

Listening to each other, in diversity, interdependence, interculturality, and integrity is not a fad but an essential condition for the socio-spiritual and ecclesial shepherding that the documents ask of us and that our clericalism intends to block.

Just as we cannot leave “remains of mediocrity” to family love, eco-ethical co-responsibility, or intra-ecclesial pharisaic, neither can we miss the opportunity to “foster the development of each man and of the whole man out of the new life in Christ that transforms the person so that it makes him an agent of his development (DAp 399).

Do we recognize the “voice of Christ” in the speeches and practices of our social and ecclesial communities? Are we sheep “domesticated” by routine or perhaps shepherds looking for new “proselytes” to continue doing the same?

Jesus gives us life, calls us, and sends us to be “good shepherds” who “listen” more than speak, and who “offer life” more than rules.





Reflection to impact life from the Pastoral Challenges



An integral ecology is based on the notion that in our world “everything is connected” (cf. LS 16 and other numerals). For this reason, “a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach” (LS 49).

There is no doubt that the crisis that our Common Home is suffering is linked to a culture of unbridled consumption and a lifestyle without greater ecological responsibility, without responsibility towards future generations, and without “love for the common good” (FT 63). A “brave cultural revolution” (LS 114) towards a simple and sober lifestyle and an alternative way of understanding and practicing the economy at the service of life and people, especially the most impoverished and vulnerable is urgently needed. It is important to “weave networks with other groups that work for the dignity of people and care for the environment to start a cultural revolution that guides the whole of society towards the comprehensive care of each person and creation” (SN, p. 29).

During this Easter season, let us celebrate as an ecclesial community the life that Christ offers, and that includes the fullness of human existence, in its personal, family, spiritual, social, and cultural dimensions (cf. DAp 13), concretized by the Church in infinite paths, among which are the preferential option for the poor, facing the challenge of misery, of the excluded, of the common good, of integral ecology and of the transformation “of structures, especially those that create injustice” (ID 4).

May so many men and women who live under permanent threats against them and their families for their commitment to human rights and the implementation of integral ecology, find our sustained support in their just struggles for the recognition of their rights linked to their territories, and for the respect of human rights, as well as in their sustained efforts for the care of the Common Home.



The challenge we all face to influence life



Facing this challenge implies that this Easter, we review our conversion process at the personal, community, pastoral and synodal levels with sincerity; recognizing that conversion must be practical, accompanied by concrete works, and not a mere speech.

Bearing in mind and heart the desire to reaffirm and give priority to an integral ecology in our communities, based on the four dreams of Querida Amazonía

- What attitudes of Jesus do we identify that help us reaffirm and prioritize an integral ecology?
- Do you remember any words of Pope Francis that guide us before the challenge of considering the four dreams of Querida Amazonía?
- What could you personally commit to prioritizing an integral ecology in our communities?
- What new defies does facing this challenge pose to the pastoral care of your community?

Let us take another step in our conversion process, regarding our commitment to reaffirm and give priority to an integral ecology in our communities, based on the four dreams of Querida Amazonía.

- **From our conversion:** The missionary disciple to whom God has entrusted creation must contemplate it, care for it, and use it, while always respecting the order given it by the Creator. (Cfr. DAp 125).
- **From our community conversion** The universal destiny of goods demands solidarity with both the present and future generations. Because resources are ever more limited, their use must be regulated according to a principle of distributive justice, while respecting sustainable development. (Cfr. DAp. 126).
- **From our pastoral conversion:** Evangelize our peoples to discover the gift of creation, knowing how to contemplate and care for it as the home of all living beings and source of the planet's life, in order to exercise human stewardship over the earth and its resources responsibly, so that it may render all its fruits as intended for all, by educating for a sober and austere way of life in solidarity. (Cfr. DAp 474).
- **From our synodal conversion:** Deepen pastoral presence in the weakest populations and those most threatened by predatory development, and support them in their efforts to attain equitable distribution of land, water, and urban spaces. (Cfr. DAp. 474)



Celebrate life

*All-powerful God,
you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned
and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty,
not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray,
in our struggle for justice, love, and peace.*

A concluding prayer of Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato Si"



ACRONYMS

- AEALC: Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2021
CV: Christus Vivit, Papa Francisco
DAp: Documento of Aparecida, 2007.
DC: Document for the road. Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2021
DDC: Document for Community Discernment, Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2021
DI: Inaugural Speech, Aparecida.
IL: Instrumentum Laboris, Sínodo Amazonía.
EG: Evangelii Gaudium, Pope Francis.
EN: Evangelii Nuntiandi, Pope Paulo VI
FT: Fratelli Tutti, Pope Francis
LS: Laudato Si, Pope Francis
QAm: Dear Amazon, Pope Francis
SA DF: Amazon Synod, Final Document
SN: Narrative Synthesis. Listening to the 1st Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2021



The Virgin Mary is a splendid image of configuration to the Trinitarian project, which is fulfilled in Christ. (Dap 141).

Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception of "El Viejo", Nicaragua