

Laudato Si Week

"Listening and Journeying Together"



International Day of Biodiversity

22 May 2022

"Building a shared future for all life"

Today our humanity is called to reflect and celebrate the International Day of Biodiversity. The theme of this year is "Building a shared future for all life"[1], which invites us to reflect and commit with the life as a whole: all kind of species, and present and future generations.

The interconnectedness of all elements of ecosystem as such implies that whatever are been done to preserve, to care, to promote life benefits to whole life community or biomass. Humans, we are part of this beautiful life community, at the same time, we are called to take responsibility to build a healthy present to guaranty the future of every living creature.

Laudato Si' Week 2022, is celebrated on May 22-29. It marks the seventh anniversary of Pope Francis' landmark encyclical on creation care. This global celebration is envisioned to listen and respond together to the cry of creation. The daily events can be followed live on: <https://laudatosiweek.org/events/>



1 Opening prayer

*Triune God,
wondrous community of infinite love,
teach us to contemplate you in the beauty
of the universe, for all things speak of you.
Awaken our praise and thankfulness for
every being that you have made. Give
us the grace to feel profoundly
joined to every
creature.
Amen*

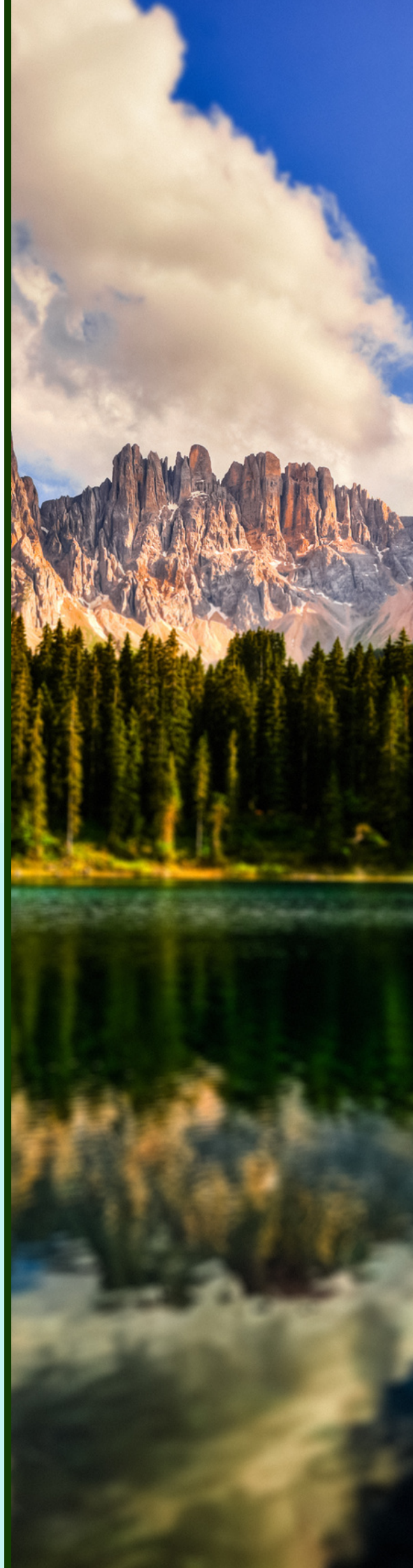
2 Brief history and meaning of “Biodiversity”

The United Nations has proclaimed May 22 The International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. When this day was created first in 1993 by the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly, 29 December was designated as IDB. In December 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted 22 May as IDB, to commemorate the adoption of the text of the Convention on 22 May 1992 by the Nairobi Final Act on Biological Diversity.

The term biodiversity (from “biological diversity”) refers to the variety of life on Earth at all its levels, from genes to ecosystems, and can encompass the evolutionary, ecological, and cultural processes that sustain life. Biodiversity includes not only species we consider rare, threatened, or endangered but also every living thing, from humans to organisms that we know little about, such as microbes, fungi, and invertebrates.

3 The present situation of the Biodiversity

We know only around 10 to 13 % about biodiversity (Vasquez 2021, 8). However, many species are being destroyed without been known by our human research. The life on the Earth has survived at least to five massive natural extinctions, but this time, the 0,01 % which represents human specie into bio-mass is driving to edge of total risk or six extinction. In 2019, a report by UN biodiversity experts said one million species could disappear in the coming decades because of climate change (global warming), pollution, destruction of the habitats and overexploitation by humans. UN’s International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) 2021 estimates that 80 % of the needs of the poor are derived from biological resources. All these bring us to realize how our human or social problems are highly interconnected to the environmental crisis. Nowadays we have more than enough knowledge about ecological crisis, but how much are we available and committed to solve the problem?



4 Bible on Biodiversity

An eco-social approach to the Scriptures can help us to be inspired, to see, to think, to do, and to pray to God integrally. We believe in a living God, who created everything that collaborates and fosters life. All creatures show God's love and beauty, that is biodiversity (cf. Ws 11:24-27). Let us listen and meditate the narration on creation.

Gn 1:11-13,21-31

11 God said, 'Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants, and fruit trees on earth, bearing fruit with their seed inside, each corresponding to its own species.' And so it was. 12 The earth produced vegetation: the various kinds of seed-bearing plants and the fruit trees with seed inside, each corresponding to its own species. God saw that it was good. 13 Evening came and morning came: the third day.

21 God created great sea-monsters and all the creatures that glide and teem in the waters in their own species, and winged birds in their own species. God saw that it was good. 22 God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas; and let the birds multiply on land.' 23 Evening came and morning came: the fifth day.

24 God said, 'Let the earth produce every kind of living creature in its own species: cattle, creeping things and wild animals of all kinds.' And so it was. 25 God made wild animals in their own species, and cattle in theirs, and every creature that crawls along the earth in its own species. God saw that it was good.

26 God said, 'Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild animals and all the creatures that creep along the ground.' 27 God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.

5 Claret's View

When we read our Claretian sources with both ecological and social eyes, we come to realize that Fr. Claret, as mystic and missionary, understood the reality integrally and contemplate God in all creatures, and he has learnt from them the wisdom and missionary virtues.

Botanical Garden: *"I had the whole ranch walled and enclosed and later divided into plots. Around and along the dividing lines of these plots, I had a sort of botanical garden of trees planted, some native to the island, others foreign but adaptable and useful in that climate. The trees were numbered and listed by number in a catalog that explained their type, source, use, propagation, improvements, etc. I myself planted more than 400 orange trees with my own hands, and they were doing just fine when I left. I also had a yard sectioned off for animals, some native to the island, others imported for purposes of breeding and improving the various strains" (Aut 567).*

Active contemplation: *“While I was traveling, I would strike up a conversation with those who chanced to join me about the various things we saw. If I happened to see some flowers, I would point to them and remark that, as these plants produced beautiful and fragrant flowers, we should produce virtues. The rose, for example, teaches us love, the lily symbolizes purity, the violet, humility, etc. We must, as the Apostle says, be bonus odor sumus Christi Dei in omni loco. If I saw a tree laden with fruit, I would remark that we, too, should bear the fruit of good works, so not to end up like the two fig trees in the Gospel. If we passed by a river, I would say that the running water reminds us that we are passing on toward eternity. If we heard birds singing or music being played, I would refer to the new and everlasting song of heaven, etc. I have personally witnessed the great value of conversations like these; their effect was like that of the conversation Christ held with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. I also found that they had the further advantage of avoiding useless talk and grumbling” (Aut 336).*

Wisdom and missionary virtues: *Father Claret learned from the birds and animals. He learned: from chicken: zeal, love, care, alertness (Aut 380); dog: faithful to the master, vigilance, and joy (Aut 670-673); dove: humility (Aut 351); donkey: humility, patient (Aut 666-669); rooster: praise God day and night, watch over and defend the souls, being alert, generosity, study and prayer (Aut 664-665).*

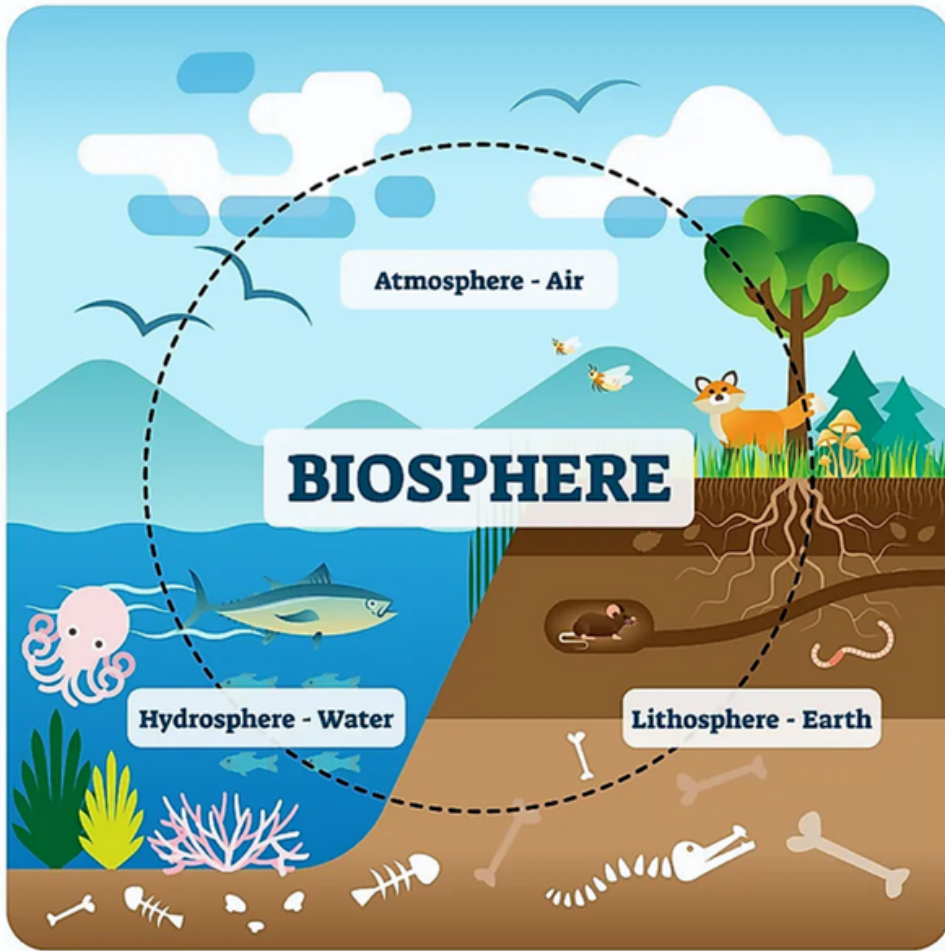
6 Church View

Pope Francis in his Encyclical document on ecology “Laudato Si” (2015) pointing out on biodiversity, states:

“It is not enough, however, to think of different species merely as potential “resources” to be exploited, while overlooking the fact that they have value in themselves. Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which we will never know, which our children will never see, because they have been lost forever. The great majority become extinct for reasons related to human activity. Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right” (LS 33).



7 Short Reflection



Almost all the living and non-living creatures have preceded us in their existence by millions of years. Human species is just the latest one into all evolutionary process of life, but is the most complex one, either to collaborate and enrich the biodiversity or to drive the life-system to a total risk as it is happening today. This very risk is because, since almost ten thousand years back we started fragmenting our mind and heart from the nature. The fragmentation from ourselves, nature and

“It may well disturb us to learn of the extinction of mammals or birds, since they are more visible. But the good functioning of ecosystems also requires fungi, algae, worms, insects, reptiles and an innumerable variety of microorganisms. Some less numerous species, although generally unseen, nonetheless play a critical role in maintaining the equilibrium of a particular place. Human beings must intervene when a geo-system reaches a critical state. But nowadays, such intervention in nature has become more and more frequent. As a consequence, serious problems arise, leading to further interventions; human activity becomes ubiquitous, with all the risks which this entails. Often a vicious circle results, as human intervention to resolve a problem further aggravates the situation” (LS 34).

God is the deepest cause of all ecological crisis.

Moreover, not everything is lost, our human community always has the chance to come back to our common home and join again with all other creatures of God, thus, experience the creational community (cf. LS 205). It was done by many saints and mystics. St. A.M. Claret continuously opened his mind and heart to God, reading the written Word and the Gospel of Creation, always open book. He understood what is the universal mission: to announce the Good News to all creatures, which means also to receive the Good News from all creatures.

8 Intercessory Prayers

Let us unite ourselves with whole creation, especially with the living creatures, and praise God, the author of all life. To each prayer, we respond:

God of life, help us to love all your creatures.

·We, as human community, open our hearts and minds to understand the value of each living creature in itself, beyond of human utilitarian view, we pray.

·All the religions and Christian faith may inspire our humanity to reconcile itself with all creatures and with God, who is present in whole creation, we pray.

·May our concrete and daily decisions and actions be mindful to preserve, care, and promote life. The life of all the visible and invisible to our eyes, wild and domestic, present and the future. We pray.

·May we continuously support and promote, politics, production of goods, consumption, and redistribution that protect and foster a sustainable interaction with the biodiversity, we pray.

·May we contemplate the creation and discover God's beauty in it, as well as we may learn the missionary virtues as St. Anthony Mary Claret did, we pray.



9 Actions

The following actions we can implement to preserve, care and foster the life of the living community:

·As person and as community, we commit to implement the suggested responses to the seven Laudato Si goals given by Claretian Family in May of 2021.

·Avoid the use of pesticides, insecticides, chemical fertilizer at all agricultural and gardening activities.

·Cultivate the love and care of biodiversity among the children encouraging them to contemplate the beauty of each creature.

·Promote the native or local plants and animals to reinforce and strengthen the ecosystem that flourishes the life of biodiversity.

10 Concluding Prayer

*God of love,
show us our place in this world as channels
of your love for all the creatures of
this earth, for not one of them
is forgotten in your sight.*

*Enlighten those who possess power and money
that they may avoid the sin of
indifference, that they may love the
common good, advance the weak,
and care for this world in
which we live.*

*The poor and the earth are crying out.
O Lord, seize us with your power and light,
help us to protect all life, to prepare
for a better future, for the coming
of your Kingdom of justice,
peace, love and beauty.*

Praise be to you!

Amen.