

International Mother Earth Day

22 APRIL 2023



**INVEST IN OUR
PLANET**



Introduction

The UN General Assembly designated April 22, as International Mother Earth Day through a resolution adopted in 2009. The theme for this year is *'Invest in Our Planet'*. This theme is designed to persuade businesses, governments, and citizens around the world, of the need to invest the time, labour and money in our planet, to improve our environment and give our descendants a better and safer future. On this day we resolve to accelerate the solutions to combat the climate change and to activate everyone to do their part.

All people have a collective responsibility to accelerate the transition to prosperous green life and economy for all. As Claretian Missionaries we join in partnership with the people of the globe, to do good work and to make a positive difference. Mother Earth deserves our combined efforts.

Opening Prayer

**Oh God,
We and the planet are
earthen vessels from
your hands,
These vessels are
fragile yet they are
graced to hold you.
Help us to recognize
your presence in the
earth and in all forms
of life.**

**May our hands align
with yours, in caring
and shaping the
earth. Amen.**

[Opening Hymn](#)

Psalm 104

Antiphon: O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

Praise the LORD, my soul.

LORD my God, you are very great;
you are clothed with splendor and majesty.

The LORD wraps himself in light as with a garment;
he stretches out the heavens like a tent
and lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters.
He makes the clouds his chariot and
rides on the wings of the wind.

He makes winds his messengers, flames of fire his servants.
He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved.

You covered it with the watery depths as with a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.

But at your rebuke the waters fled,
at the sound of your thunder, they took to flight;
they flowed over the mountains,
they went down into the valleys,
to the place you assigned for them.

You set a boundary they cannot cross;
never again will they cover the earth.

He makes springs pour water into the ravines;
it flows between the mountains.

They give water to all the beasts of the field;
the wild donkeys quench their thirst.

The birds of the sky nest by the waters;
they sing among the branches.

He waters the mountains from
his upper chambers;
the land is satisfied by the fruit of his work.

He makes grass grow for the cattle,
and plants for people to cultivate
bringing forth food from the earth:
wine that gladdens human hearts,
oil to make their faces shine,
and bread that sustains their hearts.



Psalm 104

The trees of the LORD are well watered,
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.
There the birds make their nests;
the stork has its home in the junipers.
The high mountains belong to the wild goats;
the crags are a refuge for the hyrax.
He made the moon to mark the seasons,
and the sun knows when to go down.
You bring darkness, it becomes night,
and all the beasts of the forest prowl.
The lions roar for their prey
and seek their food from God.
The sun rises, and they steal away;
they return and lie down in their dens.
Then people go out to their work,
to their labor until evening.

Antiphon: O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom
you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

Scripture Reading

Colossians 1, 15-17

He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

A Reflection

[Modified from the reflection by Fr. Andrew Hamilton SJ]

It might seem a little sentimental to refer to the Earth as our Mother. But in the ancient world, the world was often seen as mother and as wet-nurse. These comparisons suggest that our relationship to the earth is personal and we depend on her for our survival. The earth is not simply a thing which can be used and discarded. But we often see her as something that can be dug, burned, cleared, poisoned, sowed, fertilized and changed to achieve our needs and our desires. The earth is treated as our food bowl, meat supply, water tank and rubbish landfill. If the earth does not give us what we want, then we burn her, bulldoze her, spray her with pesticides and almost we declare a war on her. Hence respecting the rhythms and timetables of the earth promotes all forms of life. Being rude with the earth affects the quality of human life and specially that of the poor.

The climate change has told us that if we burn coal and oil in one place, it will affect other places. If we fill one part of the sea with mud, then the water will occupy the soil in another part of the planet. The Coronavirus warns us that human life can be paralyzed by one of the tiniest beings of the earth. We shall take time to look at the wonder of the earth around us and we shall change the ways we treat her. We shall treat the earth as our mother with attention and love.

Our relationship to the earth is personal and we depend on her for our survival.

Father Claret on promotion of the Earth

Father Claret used the elements of nature teaching and learning. His homilies had the examples of animals, plants, stones etc. He compared the trees without root, to the people without Christian doctrines (Aut 287). He learned that the trees laden with fruits, invited him to bear the fruits of good work and not to end up like the fruitless two fig trees in the Gospel (Aut 336). Even in those periods in which climate change was not a discussed, Claret prepared botanical garden with native and foreign plants. He himself planted 400 orange trees by his own hands (Aut 567). He also wrote books on agriculture and botanical garden. The Delights of the Country was a book written by him on the botanical garden (Aut 568). He also prayed in the natural surroundings. In the retreat of October 1859, he resolved to meditate for three hours, as it was done by Jesus in the garden.

The earth is not simply a thing which can be used and discarded.



Intercessory Prayers

Creator God, we thank you for the planet earth. We ask your forgiveness for not being just stewards of the creation. We beseech your guidance for restoring the face of the earth. May we learn to live in harmony with all forms of life.

-For trees, plants, crops, and forests. Let us pray.

Response: Let the earth and all that is in rejoice

-For water, oceans, rivers, streams and ponds. Let us pray. R/-

-For air, wind and weather. Let us pray. R/-

-For sun, clean energy and prevention of global warning.

Let us pray. R/-

-For animals, especially endangered species. Let us pray. R/-

-For all humankind, especially the poor. Let us pray. R/-

-For recycling and moderate personal consumption. Let us pray. R/-

-For proper use and disposal of chemicals. Let us pray. R/-

-For harmony of all forms of life. Let us pray. R/-

Commitments

Climate Literacy: We need to learn about environment to advocate for its conservation. We shall ensure that students across the world receive Climate and environmental literacy.

End Single Use Plastics: Plastic Pollution harms the environmental and human health. Let us give up single use plastics in our homes and institutions.

Plant Trees: We share one environment and we shall save it by planting trees across.

Vote For the Earth: We shall demand from political parties to include environmental cause in their agenda and vote for those who protect environment.

The Great Global Cleanup: The Great Global Cleanup (<https://www.earthday.org/campaign/cleanup/>) is a worldwide campaign to clean up beaches, rivers, lakes and parks. On this Earth Day we can organize it in our own local areas.

Sustainable Fashion: Behind every piece of clothing, there is a stripping of the Earth.

Educate ourselves: to buy less, to give priority to quality over quantity, to choose natural materials, to buy recycled fabrics, to buy secondhand clothing, to purchase ethically produced goods, to purchase goods that are locally produced and learn to repair and use the goods.

Concluding Prayer

Lord, grant us the wisdom to care for the earth and till it. Help us to act now for the good of future generations and all your creatures. Help us to become instruments of a new creation, founded on the covenant of your love. Let there be peace be to our community; Peace be to our land. Peace on earth.
Amen.

