

THE STRUGGLE FOR WATER, THE THIRST FOR JUSTICE

Freshwater is the most important resource for humanity and is present in all its social, economic, and environmental activities. It is the prerequisite for life on our planet, a factor influencing social and technological development, and a possible source of well-being, misery, cooperation, or conflict.



Therefore, to ensure water supply, vulnerable water systems must be protected, the impact of disasters such as floods and droughts must be reduced, access to water and its services must be guaranteed, and to manage water resources appropriately and equitably.

UNESCO seeks to ensure that countries manage their water resources sustainably through the Intergovernmental Hydrological Program, its leadership in the United Nations World Water Development Report, UNESCO Water Centers, and Chairs worldwide.

For this reason, to accelerate efforts to address water challenges, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the 2018-2028 period as the International Decade for Action «Water for Sustainable Development» which began on 22 March 2018, World Water Day and will end on the same date in 2028.



The Decade aims to place greater emphasis on sustainable development and integrated water resources management to achieve social, economic, and environmental objectives in the implementation and promotion of related programs and projects, as well as fostering cooperation and partnerships at the levels to contribute to the achievement of internationally agreed water goals and targets, including those set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

DATA ON ACCESS TO WATER

- **25% of the world's population does not have access to safe water services, according to 2020 data. The recent crises (COVID-19, Ukraine, Climate Change, etc.) have surely worsened the situation.**
- **At the current rate, we do not meet SDG6 of the 2030 Agenda: Less than eight years remain to achieve the water and sanitation targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. The United Nations has already said that to achieve them, the current rate of progress must be quadrupled.**
- **Freshwater management remains unsustainable: Human consumption is not always respected as a priority over other uses. Only 12% of available freshwater is estimated to be used for domestic consumption (drinking, cooking, or hygiene), 69% for agriculture and 19% for industry.**
- **Women and girls continue to bear the brunt of this injustice: They estimate that women and girls in some regions of Africa spend 200 million hours a day getting water (not always clean, safe, or enough), preventing them from accessing other rights such as education, work, or health.**
- **The fragmentation of rivers, caused by the establishment of any barriers, such as hydroelectric dams, and the consequent loss of connectivity is considered one of the greatest threats to the conservation of river systems worldwide.**
- **The artificial intervention in the fluvial channels prevents the fundamental ecohydrological processes in the fluvial systems affecting the hydrological regimes, of sediments and of temperature, the morphology of the channel, the cycle of nutrients, interactions with flood plains.**
- **In the case of Latin America, the connectivity of the Andes - Amazon, facilitated by rivers, supports many natural and human systems in the Amazon. For example, rivers of Andean origin contribute about half of the annual flow of the main Amazon channel and export large amounts of sediment, organic matter, and nutrients to lowlands.**

Data taken from "Water for All" and Datos tomados de "Agua para todas" y <https://www.cepal.org/>



FROM THE WORD

Psalm 104

"You bring forth fountains in the valleys, which flow through the ravines, so that the beasts of the field are watered, and the wild asses quench their thirst. At its side, the birds of the sky inhabit, and they sing their song in its frond. From your halls you water the mountains, the earth is drenched with your fruitful action. You sprout grass for cattle and vegetables for man's cultivation."

God invites us as humanity to walk in paths of dignity. Creation is the presence and manifestation of this generous God, Father of all and for all.

The effort for a dignified life based on access to water has a special meaning for us as a Claretian family since we have had the opportunity to work for this irreplaceable good in many places where we are present, joining the efforts of the communities to learn together to manage, care for and defend it.

We know that without water, life is not possible, and it is also our task to defend everyone's access to it in the face of large transnational economic groups that often have illegitimate and corrupt ties with government institutions and authorities monopolize large reserves and sources of water, turning it into merchandise, what is ultimately to turn human life and dignity into merchandise.

May your liberating word continue to encourage us to make an impact in our parishes and missionary areas of the care and management of water recognized as a common good and not as a resource to generate profits, at the expense of the lives of our brothers and sisters!

FROM EXPERIENCE AS A WORD



Since 2017 in Honduras, based on sad experiences of abusive exploitation of rivers and basins, in which there have been harmful consequences for nature and rural communities in the affected areas, the population, in defense of the river Jilamito, has established a resistance camp to prevent the construction of a hydroelectric dam for the exploitation of the river.

Several civil institutions, including the Claretian Missionaries, have joined in defending the river, the communities that depend on it to survive and maintain their way of life.



Our Honduran brothers have seen how their rivers have been concessioned in processes of evident corruption without considering the damage to the communities that are leaving them without access to water, neither for human consumption nor for their subsistence economic activities, and how this false idea of progress has forced thousands of people to leave their land to survive, using the police as a tool of violent coercion against peaceful and protest.

In the last 15 years, Honduras has suffered a literal process of "plundering" its lands, with 30% of its concession to mining and practically all its rivers, from the criminalization and murder of its leaders.

It is important to consider that according to the NGO "Global Witness," in Honduras, more than 120 people were killed from 2010 to 2017 for opposing dam projects, becoming for that year the most dangerous country in the world for environmental activism.

The Camp Worthy for the Defense of the Jilamito River is constituted for us, as humanity, as a believing community, and as a Claretian family in a symbol of resistance for life, of the same life that despite the unequal struggle is not allowed to be crushed neither easily nor hard, where many little ones united and convinced of what this struggle means to continue to embrace their land, their river; putting themselves at risk, giving their time, their effort, sharing their bread, celebrating their faith, making Kingdom right there, in a land that is already sacred creation.



Says Casaldáliga:

Damn all the fences!

**Cursed all the private property
that deprive us to live and to love!**

**Damn all the laws,
rigged by a few hands
to protect fences and oxen
and make the Earth a slave
and slaves the humans!**

**Another is our land, men, all of us!
The human free earth, brothers!**