

Jesuits for Climate Justice

FOR COP29

PRAYER GUIDE



COP29 PRAYER

God of Life,
we thank you for the beauty
of this planet and our own
interbeing interwoven
with its life sustaining veins
Let us always choose to
celebrate Your goodness
that makes us breathe
and is breathing us within Creation

Living Son of God,
we know your Heart is bleeding
at the sight of this wounded World
Help us recognize wherever we invited in
the powers of death
Convert our ill desires
to Life everlasting
and our greedy hands
to careful loving

Life giving Spirit,
we feel your constant healing effort
flowing through human hearts
Help us hear your call
and find our calling
in the Healing of this world
Give us and the participants of COP 29
Hope, Courage, and Wisdom
in cooperating for the Common Good

Amen.



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About the campaign

Welcome to the COP29 Prayer Guide. This spiritual resource invites you to join in prayer for the 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) taking place in Baku, Azerbaijan, and to reflect deeply on the conference themes through a spiritual lens.

This guide is one component of the broader initiative, *Jesuits for Climate Justice*, serving as your spiritual companion to COP29 where global leaders gather for two weeks of critical climate negotiations. This United Nations conference comes at a crucial moment, as our world faces unprecedented challenges from climate change.

The guide has been compiled by six young Jesuits with a deep commitment to Climate Justice - Xavier de Bénazé SJ, Fabian Moos SJ, Jerome Gué SJ, Joan Morera Perich SJ, Lumnesh Kumar SJ, and Benoit Willemaers SJ - who welcome you to journey with them through the conference themes day by day.

For additional engagement opportunities, visit the campaign website (<https://jesc.eu/jesuits-for-climate-justice/>). This initiative is a collaborative effort between Arrupe Centre (Madagascar), Jesuit European Social Centre (Brussels), Jesuit Missions (UK), Jesuit Centre for Ecology & Development (Malawi) and the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice (Ireland), working together to educate and advocate on vital climate issues before and during COP29.



Enjoy!

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

FOR SUNDAY MASSES

SUNDAY 3RD NOVEMBER



Loving God, you call us to love you with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. As COP29 approaches, help us to see those suffering from climate disasters as our neighbors and guide the delegates to act with love for the most vulnerable. May we care for your creation, protecting it for future generations, and may all decisions be rooted in love for one another and for the earth, which is your gift to us. Let us pray to the Lord

SUNDAY 10TH NOVEMBER



Lord, today in the Gospel you invite us to contemplate your Spirit of Love in the humble gift of a poor widow. Grant us, and grant all the negotiators of COP 29 the grace to be able to slow down and to contemplate the little details of your Creation. May this contemplation give our common humanity the sense of your daily love for us. And may the COP29 negotiators find in this deep source of Love the courage to love each other, even if it means that the more powerful need to lose part of their power. Let us pray to the Lord.

SUNDAY 17TH NOVEMBER



(World Day of the Poor)

God of all Creation, knowing that COP29 has been taking place in Azerbaijan. We pray in communion with all peoples on the Earth that the decisions of the politicians gathered there might benefit all the species you created, and not only private profits. May they be aware of the suffering of poor communities, the devastation of ecosystems and the danger of climate change, and be filled with your mercy to heal the catastrophic legacy we are leaving to future generations. Let us pray to the Lord.

SUNDAY 24TH NOVEMBER



(Feast of Christ the King of the Universe)

From 11th to 22nd of November, COP 29 took place in Baku, Azerbaijan. Let us pray that Christ, Ruler of the kings of the earth, may touch the hearts, minds and hands of the world leaders who have participated in this gathering. May the decisions taken and the decisions made received at the conference lead to substantial change towards global climate justice. And may our own prayers and actions continue to contribute to it. Let us pray to the Lord.

11TH NOVEMBER: OPENING SESSION

LAUDATE DEUM, 60

May those taking part in the Conference be strategists capable of considering the common good and the future of their children, more than the short-term interests of certain countries or businesses. In this way, may they demonstrate the nobility of politics and not its shame. To the powerful, I can only repeat this question: "What would induce anyone, at this stage, to hold on to power, only to be remembered for their inability to take action when it was urgent and necessary to do so?"

"To the powerful, I can only repeat this question: "What would induce anyone, at this stage, to hold on to power, only to be remembered for their inability to take action when it was urgent and necessary to do so?": ... What else can I say?

Today we have the scientific knowledge that gives us a clear picture of the catastrophe we are entering in. We can always look for more details and find more alarmistic results. But do we really need it?

Today we have the technical solutions to solve the problems, to decarbonize our economy, to feed the world respectful of Creation, to decrease our energy consumption, to build circular economies. We can always find more efficient solutions and develop new products. But is R&D the first thing we need?

Today we have the finance we need to tackle the planetary crisis some call "Anthropocene - the geological age of Mankind". There are billions of dollars, euros, pounds and yen out there, perhaps not in the best of places, but we have the financial knowledge to design incentives to help this money to move. Of course it will mean some financial losses for some of the richest persons, businesses and nations. But do we really need more studies on new "green" financial tools?

Today we have the narratives that can feed our common imagination and invite us to embrace a simple and happy way of life. Every one of us can access Indigenous peoples' wisdom. Every one of us can connect with thriving eco-communities, both secular and religious. Everyone can access stories, movies, paintings, and music that support life instead of promoting its destruction. We will have other dreams and some of us will be able to give them flesh in their art. But for now, do we have to wait for more dreams?

No. Or to be more accurate, not as the first priority.

Today what we lack is political courage. We are blocked by powerful people, businesses and countries. They have power and they are afraid to lose it. They can't imagine a world where the more you share power, the more we all gain power. They don't understand the strength of cooperation. So I totally join Pope Francis' direct and strong exhortation to all the "Big people" of our human race: "In conscience, and with an eye to the children who will pay for the harm done by their actions, the question of meaning inevitably arises: "What is the meaning of my life? What is the meaning of my time on this earth? And what is the ultimate meaning of all my work and effort?"

"For the kingdom,
the power, and the
glory are yours,
now and for ever"

AMEN

12TH AND 13TH NOVEMBER: WORLD CLIMATE ACTION SUMMIT

12th November

LAUDATE DEUM 69

I ask everyone to accompany this pilgrimage of reconciliation with the world that is our home and to help make it more beautiful, because that commitment has to do with our personal dignity and highest values. At the same time, I cannot deny that it is necessary to be honest and recognize that the most effective solutions will not come from individual efforts alone, but above all from major political decisions on the national and international level.

The need for political decisions is clear. I really pray from the bottom of my heart, from all my guts, from all my Earth-matrix and all my Spirit-breath that this “World Climate Action Summit” may be what it says it is: an “ACTION” summit.

But as negotiations start today, I'd like to share with you, and with the negotiators, actions that are already being taken and that give me joy: actions that I know from where I speak from, my Jesuit eco-spiritual centre in France. Let me give thanks to the Lord by sharing with you three little but very real actions and sources of hope.

Nine months ago, I received a report from a naturalist NGO that we partner with. The report was based on ground observations of two kinds of animals: bats and grasshoppers. As I was reading the names of the 16 kinds of bats that fly around us at night, and the 27 species of grasshoppers that jump in our pastures, I was deeply moved. This series of names, their extravagance, their diversity, their richness suddenly became a prayer, a song. It became a real litany. And all this because for the past 100 years, as a spiritual centre, we just didn't do anything on the land, we just let it be as a source of contemplation of God. So I pray that ACTION may resonate for us humans as an invitation to NON EXPLOITIVE ACTION. May we let Creation be. May we leave space in our common home for other creatures, our brothers and sisters.

Six months ago, we decided to act strongly on our food system. We switched from a 100% external industrial supplier to a 100% local organic farming cooperative. Six months later we are still working on it. Action is still needed. But action has borne fruits. The food is better, you just have to read the comments of the retreatants. Relationships with local producers are developing. Last week one of our local bakers came to help us because we needed volunteers to replace the kitchen staff for one day. And everyday, when I bring my fork to my mouth I can really bless God for the gift of life through sustainable and sustaining food. So I pray that ACTION may be strongly developed to support agroecology and sustainable food systems around the world. May we all share in God's gift of life everyday by the simple action of eating. Last week, we welcomed volunteers for a one-day “outdoor workshop”, like we do every two weeks. Among the participants, some come through the Jesuit Refugee Service NGO. At the end of the day, we took a moment of silence and we all shared one treasure of the day. One of the refugees just said “It's like being home. There is the land. There are friends. There is the Spirit”. It was so simple. So true. And so powerful. So I pray that ACTION may bring everyone of us Land, Friends and Spirit.

Lord, We desperately need action. We need to walk the talk of ecological conversion. Inside the Church and outside the Church. We really need COP 29 to take action. So we pray to you: Send your Spirit to all the negotiators in Baku. That they may be bold and creative, and that we all join them in acting strongly and quickly. We ask you for this grace full of trust because if we look around us we already see actions taking place, we see people of good will, we see that even if the human heart is sick, it is also capable of receiving your Grace. And your Grace is our Hope. Amen.

13th November

LAUDATE DEUM 44-52

"LD 44. For several decades now, representatives of more than 190 countries have met periodically to address the issue of climate change. [...] LD 52. Today we can continue to state that, "the accords have been poorly implemented, due to lack of suitable mechanisms for oversight, periodic review, and penalties in cases of noncompliance. The principles which they proclaimed still await an efficient and flexible means of practical implementation".

As world leaders gather to share their progress on the implementation of key agreements on climate, we are invited by Pope Francis to realise that more than goodwill and voluntary commitments are necessary. For treaties to turn into widespread actions, they need to be recognised as true obligations by the countries that signed these agreements in the first place. And, as such, they need to be backed by strong mechanisms ensuring compliance, including penalties. Otherwise, their implementation risks being seen as optional, contingent on local political imperatives. This might appear as a pessimistic take on international politics and, in a sense, it is. The urgency of the situation requires serious action to be taken. But it is also a call for a new outlook on international relations, in which states and nations are not placing their understanding of national interest or pride above the common good of all humanity. To tackle the global challenge of climate change, we need a community of nations united by common rules, not just a gathering of states with their interests always in mind.

This is certainly a call for conversion for many leaders and political representatives. Their loyalty is to the people they serve. But they must understand that the wellbeing of their people requires action at a scale that involves all of humanity. Such action will not be only shaped by their own views but by a common understanding on what needs to be done. Such dialogue requires humility, willingness to listen and to compromise. They cannot consider themselves anymore as judges deciding in complete independence what is to be done, held to account by no-one. It is not only a call for leaders. If nations and states are often considered as egotistical in nature, it is because it is assumed that the voters will punish leaders who go against the national interest. Are we, all of us, willing to think about what kind of sacrifices or efforts could be legitimately accepted by our countries? Are we also thinking seriously about how these commitments should be put into practice in an equitable manner inside our country, protecting the poorer and the weaker among us?

Lord, we pray to you:

Send your Spirit to the leaders gathered on this day.

Strengthen their resolve to search for the common good, help them to listen humbly, open their minds to reflect on what they hear and give them the strength to act accordingly. Help them to move away from a limited, partial view of the common good, to fully embrace a vision where all nations, communities, persons are equally important and valuable, in light of your own love for each man and woman.

Amen.

14TH NOVEMBER: FINANCE INVESTMENT AND TRADE

LAUDATO SI', 54

"It is remarkable how weak international political responses have been. The failure of global summits on the environment make it plain that our politics are subject to technology and finance. There are too many special interests, and economic interests easily end up trumping the common good and manipulating information so that their own plans will not be affected. The Aparecida Document urges that "the interests of economic groups which irrationally demolish sources of life should not prevail in dealing with natural resources". The alliance between the economy and technology ends up sidelining anything unrelated to its immediate interests. Consequently the most one can expect is superficial rhetoric, sporadic acts of philanthropy and perfunctory expressions of concern for the environment, whereas any genuine attempt by groups within society to introduce change is viewed as a nuisance based on romantic illusions or an obstacle to be circumvented.

Ecological conversion involves not only current consumption (like reducing heating temperature in winter), but also investments (like insulating homes, changing boilers). Making the right investments today is crucial. Installing a gas-fired boiler, building a coal-fired power plant or drilling an oil well today means committing the future in the wrong direction with no return for a long time to come. Such equipment will have to run for decades to cover depreciation costs, before it can then be replaced by greener equipment.

This is why financial resources should no longer be devoted to fossil fuel projects. It must be used for environmentally-friendly projects, starting now. Insulating buildings where it's cold in winter, installing renewable electricity production plants, converting production processes to eliminate the need for fossil fuels, etc. all require considerable investment, and public and private finance need to be directed towards them.

Finally, and this is what is at stake at the current COP, given the responsibility of industrialised countries for the high level of greenhouse gases (GHG), and given their capacity to mobilise financial resources, they must significantly increase their participation in the international fund to help the countries of the South finance their conversion and, unfortunately now too, cope with the damage caused by climate change.

Lord, help each and every one of us to be mindful of the need to preserve the environment when making decisions that affect the future. May all those with decision-making power in the world of finance really discern and choose the investment projects that will preserve the environment and thus lead our societies to respect Creation.

Lord, inspire the delegates at COP 29 to agree on a sufficiently powerful fund to help finance the ecological transition in disadvantaged countries, in a spirit of responsibility and solidarity.

15TH NOVEMBER: "ENERGY, PEACE, RELIEF AND RECOVERY"

LAUDATO SI' 57 & LAUDATE DEUM 54

It is foreseeable that, once certain resources have been depleted, the scene will be set for new wars, albeit under the guise of noble claims. War always does grave harm to the environment and to the cultural riches of peoples, risks which are magnified when one considers nuclear arms and biological weapons. (...) This Conference can represent a change of direction, showing that everything done since 1992 was in fact serious and worth the effort, or else it will be a great disappointment and jeopardise whatever good has been achieved thus far.

China, the United States, India, the European Union (EU27), Russia and Brazil were the world's largest Greenhouse gas (GHG) emitters in 2023. Together they account for 62.7% of global GHG emissions. We know that oil contributes to climate change and other environmental problems, so why do we still use it? Why don't we just quit already? On a global scale, there are a number of reasons, from fossil fuel companies that, for years, denied the problem to policymakers reluctant to enact the policies needed to force real change. There are still too few alternatives for clean transportation or power sources, or they are too expensive due to lack of investment. Minimising the impact of climate change requires re-making a multi-trillion-dollar industry that lies at the centre of the economy and people's lives. These decisions are particularly difficult for politicians, who tend to focus on policies with immediate, local benefits that voters can see. That's why the pressure of grassroots—non-profit organisations and environmental and social movements—on their governments to call for legal measures that regulate energy sources according to the common interest instead of private profits is a key to change.

If free-markets and economic growth are given more power than laws and international treaties, the consequence is the increase of climate change due to GHG emissions, the destruction of poor communities and ecosystems who can't afford protection from extreme weather conditions or technocratic companies, and a global revolution for the few resources left is guaranteed. Peace is not the absence of war, but the presence of justice. And justice needs to be built with equity—not equality—, providing each person the resources and opportunities needed to reach the minimum to live with dignity. Decreasing consumption, changing our habits to be more healthy and less polluting, and taxing and legislating for the damaging habits of the rich can contribute to this environmental justice, and lead us all to a progressive recovery.

Merciful God,

you provided all creatures with an amazing planet full of biodiversity and possibilities.

Keep us away from the lies of endless growth.

We ask you for the awareness of sharing life with every species,

the learning of times and seasons, the patience of nature

to reasonably use its energy to live and build peace,

not to accumulate and long for possessions, competitions or wars.

May our decisions as humans be a relief to future life on Earth.

Amen.

16TH NOVEMBER: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION, DIGITALISATION

LAUDATO SI 102 & 114

Science and technology are wonderful products of a God-given human creativity. Science and technology are not neutral; from the beginning to the end of a process, various intentions and possibilities are in play and can take on distinct shapes. Nobody is suggesting a return to the Stone Age, but we do need to slow down and look at reality in a different way, to appropriate the positive and sustainable progress which has been made, but also to recover the values and the great goals swept away by our unrestrained delusions of grandeur.

Science and technology offer us powerful solutions to climate change, yet they also pose significant risks. Solar-powered fabric, for example, could charge our phone or laptop using sunlight. Similarly, researchers have found ways to generate electricity from raindrops, with a single drop powering 100 LED bulbs. Yet, technology has its costs: the digital carbon footprint reached 4% of global emissions in 2020, driven by manufacturing and powering devices and data centres, especially for AI.

We live in a time when technology has become woven into every aspect of our lives. For many of us, it is no longer just a luxury but a necessity. Reflecting on the last 20 years, I have been amazed at how my own life has become increasingly dependent on technology—especially in my ministry where I use technology to study the impact of climate change. Yet I have also realised that technology, while useful, can pull us away from deeper connections. It can isolate us from one another and from the natural world, making us more self-centred. The misuse of technology not only leads to digital waste and cyber risks but can alienate us from human relationships and our environment, making us slaves to technology. We must be mindful, balancing our use of technology while nurturing what truly matters: our relationships with God, with others and with creation.

Loving Creator,

Guide us to use the gifts of science and technology with care and responsibility.

May our innovations serve justice, nurture creation, and strengthen our connections to one another.

Help us to protect the earth, honour its balance, and use our knowledge to uplift the vulnerable.

Grant us hearts that seek harmony and wisdom, so we may use technology not to alienate, but to build relationships and foster peace, as we work toward a more compassionate and sustainable world.

Amen.

17TH NOVEMBER: REST DAY

LAUDATO SI', 237

Sunday, like the Jewish Sabbath, is meant to be a day which heals our relationships with God, with ourselves, with others and with the world. Sunday is the day of the Resurrection, the “first day” of the new creation, whose first fruits are the Lord’s risen humanity, the pledge of the final transfiguration of all created reality. It also proclaims “man’s eternal rest in God”. In this way, Christian spirituality incorporates the value of relaxation and festivity. We tend to demean contemplative rest as something unproductive and unnecessary, but this is to do away with the very thing which is most important about work: its meaning.

Today is a day of break at COP. Obviously, participants will still be hard at work, taking stock of earlier days’ work and preparing the next days. Still, this instant of relative calm is the perfect moment to take a step back and enter a more contemplative approach. It is an opportunity to consider how we can enjoy the world which is given to us not in terms of consumption but also in terms of contemplation. We are too accustomed to see the world as a playground for human creativity, as a blank canvas waiting for us. Often with the best of intentions, it can be tempting to look at the world thinking “what can I do with those resources, all this wealth to benefit my community, my family, myself?” We might be awed at times by the sheer beauty of nature but the value of what the earth offers us in our daily environment is so easily reduced to its utility.

Stopping our actions, our work for a little while is vital to take a second look at what is around us. To really see the value of what we have been given. This value is not reducible to its utility. It also stems from its beauty, its diversity, its ability to support life in so many different ways. We know it, intellectually, but it can only sink down to our hearts if we are given the time to absorb it in a contemplative manner. We need to spend time looking, searching for what is beautiful, what is good around us, to keep valuing beauty and goodness.

This is not disconnected from the need to heal our relationship with God. If we do not fully value his gifts, how can we be truly grateful for the world he has given us? And if we are not grateful, how could we respect both the gifts and the giver? There are many reasons to address today’s environmental challenges. At the bare minimum, it might just be self-preservation. But, as Christians, is there any reason more compelling than to preserve the gift we received, not a debased and disfigured version of it?

Lord, we pray to you:

give us the desire and the possibility to stop once in a while during the course of our busy days, to better contemplate and appreciate the many gifts we received from you, in particular the earth that carries and nourishes us.

Help us to grow in gratitude and respect when faced with the beauty and goodness of your creation. Help us as well to share those feelings with those around us.

And on this particular day, inspire and guide all those who are thinking about the days ahead, to align their desires with your own desire for the world.

Amen.

18TH NOVEMBER: "HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, CHILDREN AND YOUTH, HEALTH, EDUCATION"

LAUDATO SI', 210

Environmental education (...) tends now to include a critique of the "myths" of a modernity grounded in a utilitarian mindset (individualism, unlimited progress, competition, consumerism, the unregulated market). It seeks also to restore the various levels of ecological equilibrium, establishing harmony within ourselves, with others, with nature and other living creatures, and with God. Environmental education should facilitate making the leap towards the transcendent which gives ecological ethics its deepest meaning. (...)

Many of us have been profoundly shaped by our upbringing and by the culture of our society, into an unbalanced, consumerist and utilitarian relationship with the environment. The encyclical *Laudato si'*, particularly in chapter 6, invites us to enter into a new culture, one of friendship with the elements of Creation, which requires, among other things, a change in our lifestyles.

By cultivating a taste for joyful sobriety, we will be able to live and bear witness to this other culture, we will be able to pass on another form of education that will train future generations to live with respect for the environment and with joy.

COP 29 is all about climate change and limiting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. With this day on Human Development/Children and Youth/Health/Education, there's the challenge of passing on the skills needed to build a new society, and of accompanying the social upheavals that the transition implies. But at the heart of it all, there is the fundamental issue of education and human dimension, in line with the personal ecological conversion that must be carried out by everyone, big or small, simple consumers or economic and political leaders.

Lord, help us to live and promote a different way of life and society, through our own conversion and through our participation in education. In the upheavals brought about by ecological transition and climate change, help our societies to take care of everyone, so that every one can bring their own contribution.

19TH NOVEMBER: FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND WATER

LAUDATO SI' 29, 31 & 129

"29. Fresh drinking water is an issue of primary importance, since it is indispensable for human life and for supporting terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Greater scarcity of water will lead to an increase in the cost of food and the various products which depend on its use.

31. ...a third of all food produced is discarded, and whenever food is thrown out it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor.

129. ...there is a great variety of small-scale food production systems which feed the greater part of the world's peoples, using a modest amount of land and producing less waste, be it in small agricultural parcels, in orchards and gardens, hunting and wild harvesting or local fishing. Economies of scale, especially in the agricultural sector, end up forcing smallholders to sell their land or to abandon their traditional crops.

Food, water, and agriculture are at the heart of the global crisis we face today. In 2023, approximately 733 million people were hungry, while between 713 and 757 million were undernourished. Ironically, obesity rates are also climbing, highlighting stark inequalities in food access. Water scarcity affects 4 billion people, with 80% of wastewater left untreated, polluting vital resources. The climate crisis worsens this, as 9 out of 10 climate disasters are water-related, leading to intense droughts, floods, and melting glaciers. Small-scale agriculture remains crucial, providing a major share of global food security. While larger farms may be more productive in terms of yields per worker, small-scale, sustainable agriculture with polycultures can produce more food per area. Supporting these systems is essential, as they promote biodiversity and resilience while offering a sustainable alternative to the energy-intensive practices that dominate global agriculture today. Restoring this balance is key to securing our future food and water needs.

The key question we must ask ourselves is: how can we undo growing inequalities? The food and water crisis affects everyone, but it is the poor and vulnerable in developing countries who suffer the most. They also bear the worst of the climate crisis. In my own state in India, we have seen a sharp rise in deaths and health issues due to water contamination, and Bangalore faced one of its worst water crises this summer. These personal experiences make me challenge those who deny climate change. I have seen farmers lose their crops to floods and, in the same year, struggle with parched, cracked soil from drought.

How can we tackle such rapid climate disasters that force the poor into uncertainty? Isn't it time for better global and regional policies to curb greenhouse gas emissions and share resources more equitably? Isn't it our responsibility to stop wasting food and water, to care for farmers' struggles? Shouldn't our elected representatives rise above politics to restore the earth and its resources? And shouldn't business leaders move beyond profit-making to ensure the planet's health for future generations? What good will it be for the rich to gaze upon a barren earth from lifeless Mars?

Dear Father of all,

Give us hearts to care, share, and nurture one another and the earth.

Help us to understand that in sharing, we find profit; in caring, we receive care; and in nurturing, we are nurtured.

May our hearts be attuned to the cries of the earth and the cries of the poor, guiding us to make responsible decisions that foster a healthy and equitable planet. **Amen.**

20TH NOVEMBER: URBANISATION, TRANSPORT, TOURISM

LAUDATO SI', 151

“There is also a need to protect those common areas, visual landmarks and urban landscapes which increase our sense of belonging, of rootedness, of “feeling at home” within a city which includes us and brings us together. It is important that the different parts of a city be well integrated and that those who live there have a sense of the whole, rather than being confined to one neighborhood and failing to see the larger city as space which they share with others. Interventions which affect the urban or rural landscape should take into account how various elements combine to form a whole which is perceived by its inhabitants as a coherent and meaningful framework for their lives. Others will then no longer be seen as strangers, but as part of a “we” which all of us are working to create. For this same reason, in both urban and rural settings, it is helpful to set aside some places which can be preserved and protected from constant changes brought by human intervention.”

Cities will face enormous challenges in the future. Not only will they have to deal with the quickly growing urbanisation, receiving most of climate induced migration. They will also have to adapt to climate change, and to transform its transport and heating and many other systems. Cities are living laboratories of change.

God of Life,

we come from an earthly Garden

and are called to once live in a heavenly City.

We ask you:

Let us reconcile our origin with our destiny

by creating the numerous Garden Cities

you dreamt of when you called us to Life.

Do not allow cold technical rationality to control everything

but let your Wisdom secretly creep into streets and

buildings

like flowers that break open walls of concrete.

Help us create places of belonging

in our cities and landscapes

and give the world leaders gathered at COP 29

the courage to contribute to a positive common future

of us all – us amazingly diverse human beings

united to our non-human brothers and sisters.

Amen.

In this context, I love Pope Francis' insistence on places of belonging which go beyond the immediate neighbourhood, which open up our hearts for strangers and for non-human creatures. Do you know any such places where you have immediately felt “at home” within a city? Where encounters happen naturally, and plants and animals flourish? Isn't there a chance, after decades of separating people from each other and from nature, to transform cities by creating and sustaining such beautiful common places? Places matter, they can contribute to deeper relationships to ourselves, to other humans and creatures, to God; or they can do harm and bring us deeper into the false myth of separation.

21ST NOVEMBER: NATURE & BIODIVERSITY, INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, GENDER EQUALITY, OCEAN & COASTAL ZONES

LAUDATO SI', 146

It is essential to show special care for indigenous communities and their cultural traditions. They are not merely one minority among others, but should be the principal dialogue partners, especially when large projects affecting their land are proposed. For them, land is not a commodity but rather a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values. When they remain on their land, they themselves care for it best.

There is an interrelatedness of all created things.

We may find, on the one hand, a profound and divine life-giving power in all creation, that unites every being in harmony. On the other hand, we may also acknowledge the same patterns in all oppressions: dominion over the rest of species known as *speciesism*, dominion over women known as *patriarchal systems*, dominion over vulnerable ecosystems known as *exploitation and extinctions*, dominion over indigenous peoples known as *ethnocides and cultural destruction*, dominion over the so-called 'country resources' known as *technocratic paradigm*, dominion over threatened habitats like oceans and coastal zones known as *pollution, acidification, climate change...* The common links are ties of dominion—the control of equals and environments as if they have a lower dignity—, despising their same right to live and enjoy God's creation. It seems that our greedy ego is the cause of all dominions, and thus focusing an egoless attention and efforts on the wellbeing of all creatures, instead of private wishes or competitive goals, could be a basic spiritual map for eco-conversion.

The transformation of current 'technified' disharmonies into life-giving harmonies requires contemplation. For instance, when modern industry confronts with indigenous ways of relationship with the Earth, «women's holistic knowledge of forestry, agriculture, food processing, soil and water systems is [nowadays] delegitimised and displaced by reductionist knowledge.

The ecological destruction of nature thus goes hand in hand with the intellectual destruction of indigenous women's [holistic] knowledge and expertise» (Shiva, 1988). Beyond a possible ecofeminist approach, the ecomaternalistic approach (Cheelo Siwila, 2014) integrates our caring, nonviolent and connected sensitivity for the marginalised and oppressed of creation not only as a biological role by gender—to women—, but as a necessary social construct of lifestyle for all humankind. Thus, the relationship women-earth is not from its essence—with the possibility to be also abused—but from a maternal and caring way of being women and men for every 'other'. That's the beginning of a spiritual growth, God's Kingdom in which mutual care will foster new kinds of relationships and lifestyles.

Oh God, Mother of the universe,
you listen to the call of the vulnerable.
We thank you for such an astounding
diversity of shapes and colours, life and
networks, ecosystems and capacities
that you deployed in our cosmos. Give us
the sense and the eye to value each and
every being as our brother and sister.
Grant us the compassion to protect every
weakness, to strengthen all common
good for our common home. **Amen.**

22ND NOVEMBER : CLOSING SESSION

LAUDATO DEUM, 70-71

[...] Yet what is important is something less quantitative: the need to realize that there are no lasting changes without cultural changes, without a maturing of lifestyles and convictions within societies, and there are no cultural changes without personal changes. 71. Efforts by households to reduce pollution and waste, and to consume with prudence, are creating a new culture. [...] Let us realize, then, that even though this does not immediately produce a notable effect from the quantitative standpoint, we are helping to bring about large processes of transformation rising from deep within society.

It is the last scheduled day of the conference, and it is possibly the moment to rejoice for what has been achieved. It is also probably a moment of disappointment as it is unrealistic to expect the COP29 summit to be fully up to the challenges humanity and the world face. Faced with conflicting emotions and thoughts, we must look towards tomorrow and consider our course of action.

Certainly, after ten days of summit, we are more aware than ever that our political leaders are subjected to many sources of influence, many of which are not oriented towards the common good or positive action. If a proper, honest implementation of agreements is to happen, civil society must keep politicians and civil servants accountable. Where do I see my role in keeping that pressure for the years to come, what are my tools, who are my allies ?

But we can also use the new awareness developed over these days to question our lives and practices. How can I better align my life, my practices with my aspirations ? As Pope Francis suggests, our actions, as limited as they might be, are a possible gateway to another culture, another way to relate collectively to the world. Can we initiate a new dynamism in our lives, turn today into a new start? Can we give new meaning to our daily “green” little gestures, turn them into signs of the better world we aspire to?

Lord, we pray to you:

Give us a grateful, optimistic heart, to welcome and integrate any progress that might stem from these days of discussions. Give us also strength and peace of mind, to better tame our fears and anger when faced with disappointment.

Give us finally the desire to change, to search for new ways to simplify our lives, so that the wealth of the world can be better shared among all, for generations to come.

Amen.

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USEFUL LINKS TO EXPLORE



Official Website of COP29

<https://cop29.az/>



Jesuits for Climate Justice

<https://jesc.eu/jesuits-for-climate-justice/>



Ignatian Ecological Exam

<https://www.ecologicaexamen.org/>



EcoJesuit COP29 Homepage

<https://climatejustice.ecojesuit.com/>



UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

<https://unfccc.int/>



World Resources Institute (WRI) COP29 Hub

<https://www.wri.org/un-climate-change-conference-resource-hub>



International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

<https://www.iisd.org/>



UN's The Lazy's Person Guide to Saving the World

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/takeaction/>



A Foolproof Guide to Sustainable Living

<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/home/a32712051/sustainable-living-guide/>



Vatican's Journeying towards care for our Common Home

<https://www.humandevlopment.va/en/news/2020/presentato-in-sala-stampa-il-documento-in-cammino-per-la-cura-de.html>



WaterBear - Tools to do some good

<https://www.waterbear.com/>



Pope Francis's Laudate Deum

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20231004-laudate-deum.html



Wellbeing Economy Alliance

<https://weall.org/>



Campaign co-organised by:



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