



ICMICA

MIIC PAX ROMANA

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC MOVEMENT FOR
INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS.

Integral Ecology and the Path towards Climate Justice

REFLECTION FROM ICMICA PAX ROMANA





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Integral Ecology
and the Path
towards Climate
Justice

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INTRODUCTION

The growing threats imposed by global warming and environmental degradation are of deep concern to the entire world and call for urgent and sustainable solutions. Climate change is viewed to be the top complex issue that the world has to address. The Kyoto Protocol of 1992 and the Paris Agreement set a target to reduce and maintain global warming at 1.5 Degrees Celsius, which requires sustainable solutions such as the reduction of fossil fuel use, ecological restoration (to increase carbon sinks), and ecological conversion. To call for global action, the Holy Father Pope Francis, on 24th May 2015, released the encyclical *Laudato Si* "Care for our Common Home" which advocated the end of consumerism and unsustainable development patterns.

ICMICA Pax Romana, being a lay catholic intellectual movement engrained in the teaching of the Catholic Church and the Holy Scriptures, is propelled by the Call of the Holy Father to undertake actions. He is also concerned with the suffering of vulnerable people and the growing inequality happening in the world as a result of climate injustice. With this perspective, a webinar was organized "Integral ecology and the paths towards climate justice" with the aim to spark global conversation among Catholic Professionals on the issue of climate change and climate governance, raise awareness of the members on different treaties and resolutions of the last Conference of Parties (COP27), and identify possible actions and guide the preparation for the upcoming COP28. The event saw the participation of around 74 people across the world.

The webinar was also organized with the specific objectives:

- To offer a space for common reflection and debate where members share experiences and good practices, seeking a greater local commitment with other churches, organizations, religions, and civil society in general on the burning issues that affect our world. ICMICA Pax Romana, being an international association uses such a platform and representation to better articulate the work of the organization. The webinar offers several recommendations that constitute a plan of action that will guide the strategic directions and orientation for the activities of the organization.
- To support the work and the formation of an organized international thematic or interdisciplinary working group on climate change (a specialized secretariat as per the statute of ICMICA Pax Romana)
- To support the representation of Pax Romana at international organizations (United Nations and many others) with information and data.



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INTEGRAL ECOLOGY AND THE PATHS TOWARD CLIMATE JUSTICE

1. Integral ecology and paths towards climate Justice, opening remarks

Pax Romana has organized this reflection to bring up-to-date the challenges facing humanity on integral ecology and just transitions across the globe. Today, we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Pope Francis, **encyclical letter Laudato Si' on Care for Our common** "Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political, and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day."

Chapter 1, paragraph 23: "Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production, and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it."

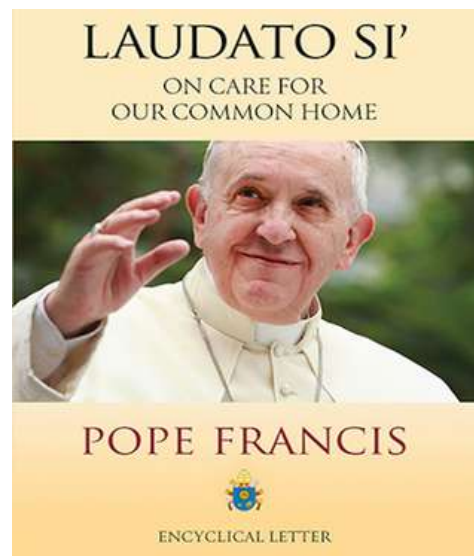
Chapter 1, paragraph 24: "If present trends continue, this century may well witness extraordinary climate change and unprecedented destruction of ecosystems, with serious consequences for all of us. A rise in the sea level, for example, can create extremely serious situations, if we consider that a quarter of the world's population lives on the coast or nearby and that the majority of our megacities are situated in coastal areas."

Chapter 1, paragraph 26: "There is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example, substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy."

Therefore, this webinar helps us reflect on the current situation, what is being done, and strategies to help work toward sustainable development.



Dr. Reginald Nalugala



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2. The earth is our common home and we are all brothers and sisters (EG183)

When in 2015, I presented my master's degree at the Pontifical University of Salamanca, which was on "Responsibility as a transversal element of the Catholic Social Teachings (CST)", I pointed, in its conclusion, to three shortcomings, three issues that are present but not yet sufficiently systematized: globalization, intergenerational solidarity, and the ecological crisis. Today I must say that the pontificate of Francis has made a great step forward in the Church's reflection on these issues and in particular the third on ecology.

The CST had already dealt briefly with these issues, for example, Pope Paul VI in his message to the United Nations Conference in Stockholm in 1972, when stated that "man and his natural environment are inseparable"; as did John Paul II who used the expression "ecological awareness" in his Message for the World Day of Peace in 1990, or twenty years later in 2010 when Benedict XVI referred to "climate change which threatens the right to life, to food, to health, to development".

These are not new issues in terms of the novelty of the way in which they have been dealt with, they have gone from being a discursive addition to being the center of the discourse. There is a remarkable coincidence that has to do with the publication of "Laudato Si" in 2015. The care for creation as a concern of the Church coincided in time with the presentation by the United Nations Council, and its approval, of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

José Ramón Ibeas Larrañaga

I would like to begin this contribution with a reference to the Synod of the Amazon, focused, in its own words, on the "biological heart" of a land that has been mistreated to the extreme.

As REPAM says: "a land consumed by the production of palm oil, sugar, grains for export and livestock, ... all references to a model of consumption that has as a consequence, the consumption of the heart, life". This idea has its reference in the text of *Laudato Si* "The rhythm of consumption, waste, and alteration of the environment has exceeded the possibilities of the planet, in such a way that the current lifestyle, because it is unsustainable, can only end in catastrophes (remember Lima), as in fact is already happening in various regions" (LS 161).

Faced with this reality, the Pan-Amazonian Synod launched a call to conversion in its twofold dimension: individual and social. In other words, to personal and community responsibility, starting from listening to the cry of the earth. We remember here the people, slaves in Egypt, whose cry to God was heard. Well, today it is the whole earth that cries out and this cry must be heard in an evangelical key, and we must work to bring together the different religions and cultures that share our planet in this listening.

"Laudato Si" insists on the centrality of conversion, and in its no. 217 it affirms that "ecological conversion implies letting all the consequences of their encounter with Jesus Christ flow out in the reactions of the world around them. Living the vocation to be protectors of God's work is an essential part of a virtuous existence, not an optional or secondary aspect of the Christian experience".

This call to integral ecology is embedded in the idea of the common good, of respect for the dignity and rights of human beings and communities which are constituted in the general interest above the particular. Solidarity, equity, the option for the poor, for women, and for the earth as a common home are the pillars on which to build a new era. Quoting the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Amazone (QA) we can add "A personal and communal conversion commits us to relate harmoniously to the creative work of God, which is the common home; a conversion that promotes the construction of structures in harmony with the care of creation; a pastoral conversion based on synodality, which recognizes the interrelation of all creation." (QA no. 9)

Goodness and gratuitousness must be the foundation of this interrelationship between human beings and creation. This contrasts with a certain tradition and its interpretation of Genesis chapter 1, verse 28: "thirsting

Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that creeps upon the earth".

Over the years, from this quotation, theology has emphasized the verbs "subdue" and "command", with a perspective of ownership of use, of the primacy of man over nature, which has led to a renunciation of the explicit dimension of goodness and gift that underlies the biblical text in its original sense.

In the text that narrates the Creation, an expression is repeated according to which, as God contemplates what is created and on each of the days that sustain the act of creation, it is affirmed: "and God saw that it was good". The logic of gift, of a God who creates gratuitously, and the goodness of this same God in the service of people are at the heart of the creaturely decision. From here we need, especially in the West, to break the molds inherited in our classical theology, which are rooted in a certain dualism for which there is good versus evil, body versus soul, man versus the rest of creatures, in order to build a theology of the incarnation in which everything created is related to the promise of salvation.

Pope Francis' proposal, as a doctrinal synthesis of his Encyclicals, Exhortations, and Messages, is eschatological. We need to change in order to save ourselves. The sciences, from their logic and knowledge, insist on this same idea from an immanent perspective and will tell us that we have to fight against climate change in order to survive and for the earth to endure.



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From this idea, I would like to highlight the quasi-Trinitarian perspective of Francis' theological proposal in which, starting from the anthropology he developed in (*Evangelii Gaudium*) and continuing with the need to care for the Common Home in (*Laudato SÍ*), he places us before the responsibility towards the other, understood in its globality (*Fratelli Tutti*).

This idea is taken up in this issue, number 16 of LS, in which the Argentinean Pope insists on "the intimate relationship between the poor and the fragility of the planet, the conviction that everything in the world is connected, the critique of the new paradigm and the forms of power that derive from technology, the invitation to look for other ways of understanding the economy and progress, the value of each creature, the human sense of ecology, the need for sincere and honest debates, the serious responsibility of international and local politics, the throwaway culture and the proposal of a new way of life".

This is the ecosystem and the space of responsibility that Francis proposes to society in general and to the members of a movement like Pax Romana in particular. That is why I would like to end this necessarily brief intervention with three proposals in line with what has historically been our activity as a movement, especially at this time when we are facing a global crisis, which goes beyond the economic, which is not only ecological but has an anthropological dimension in that it also includes the political and economic, in short, the human from both an ethical perspective and from theological reflection, from faith.

Our activity, I insist that as a movement, must be situated in the continuous support of those actions that promote the care of our common home. It is not easy to make global proposals when we see on television natural catastrophes such as those in Turkey and Peru, wars such as the one in Ukraine and those that have been ravaging Africa for years, or when entire peoples are forced to move and leave their land under pressure from governments that have little or no respect for human rights, as in some parts of Asia. It is for this reason that, in addition to the enunciation of general principles, it is necessary to reflect from the local level, in a balance that allows for the coexistence of local spaces, national or regional movements, as well as international spaces.

In conclusion, I would like to insist on the Trinitarian scheme that I proposed a moment ago and on which we must reflect in order to understand the dimension of the proposed theological framework that can be summarised in Pope Francis' statement: "There are not two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but a single and complex socio-environmental crisis" (Ls139). (Ls139)



Firstly, a wounded world. It is men and women who suffer as a result of an economy that kills, that discards. A society in crisis which, as stated in the second chapter of the EG, generates exclusion, which displaces people from their central place and puts money in their place. A situation which, referring to the year 2013, in the midst of the economic crisis, leads the Pope to affirm that it must move consciences and also the Church. Bergoglio says: "I see the Church as a field hospital after a battle. And we have to start with the most elementary things... to be merciful, to take care of people, and accompany them like the Good Samaritan who washes, cleans, and consoles his own people. neighbor. This is pure Gospel" (Interview granted to the Observatory Romano on 19 September 2013).

Secondly: A world that is our common home. A home that must be cared for because it is suffering from climate change (LS 23-26); losing biodiversity (32-42); growing pollution (20-22) and also water pollution (27-31), a good that is exploited without taking into account that it is a scarce resource. In this line, the Pope's message is linked to the five principles of the Sustainable Development Goals promoted by the United Nations: people, planet, shared prosperity, peace and harmony.



And the third element is to do it from the inn. Pope Francis asks us in "Fratelli Tutti" (No. 66) to look at the model of the Good Samaritan, a model for "society to set out in pursuit of the common good and, on the basis of this goal, to rebuild again and again its political and social order, its fabric of relationships, its human project. The existence of each one of us is linked to that of others; life is not a passing time, but a time of encounter".

This will be possible with a vision that allows us to glimpse, beyond the differences, the shared spaces that allow us, in a globalized world, to find the paths that make us grow as human beings, that lead us to discover paths of mercy and love towards others, as the Samaritan shows in his relationship with the one who did not belong to his people, but who was wounded. He took charge of the situation, he took charge of it and he took care of it because he reacted to human suffering.

But he did it thanks to the innkeeper because the Samaritan could not do it alone. Yes, it is true that the central character of the parable is the Samaritan who helps, takes the wounded man to the inn, stays with him, and pays the expenses, but it is no less true that the parable ends with a request from him that we can take as a call that the Gospel makes to all of us as Christians and members of Pax Romana: "The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper and said to him: Take care of him, and whatever you spend extra I will pay you back on my return" (Lk 10, 35).

We are therefore the innkeepers whom the Good Samaritan, Christ, asks us to exercise mercy, which takes the form of caring for the common home, putting the discarded, the poor at the center of our efforts, in short, making our heart a field hospital. How to build an inn is, from this theological proposal, the evangelical challenge to the Pax Romana of the 21st century.



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José Ramón Ibeas Larrañaga

3. Integral ecology, why is it an important issue for us Christians?

What is integral ecology?

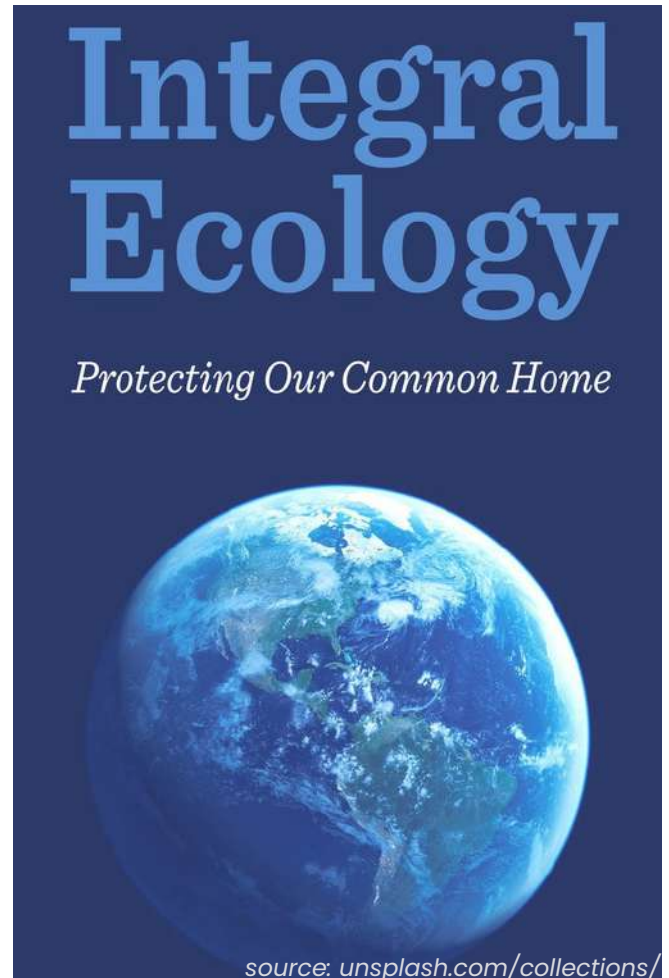
I would like to address not so much a conceptual definition, but the practical implications of this fundamental contribution of Francis to global debate and action for a global transition to socio-ecological sustainability. To my mind, this is the most relevant register for a lay network of Catholic intellectuals and professionals, rather than abstract theological and philosophical disquisitions (which, moreover, I would not venture into, as they would be far from my area of expertise). And I would like to approach this discussion by contrasting the concept of integral ecology with the concept that has dominated our cultural imagination and our political thinking on socio-environmental issues for the last four decades: sustainable development.

Let's do it "the old-fashioned way", i.e. by doing a Google search instead of asking Chat GPT.

If we search for "integral ecology" on Google and filter to see only images ... we find lots of greenery, hands with seedlings, planet Earth, and the face of Pope Francis.

Now, if we compare with the search results for "sustainable development"... we will notice that the results are extremely similar. Should we conclude, then, that integral ecology is another name for sustainable development; that the two are one and the same?

Google searches would seem to suggest so. However, I will argue here that the two are fundamentally different in several key respects. And I will draw on an excellent article published in the Guardian in June 2015: "The Pope or the UN: who will be the first to save the world?", which, like us, contrasts Francis' integral ecology with sustainable development, embodied in its current global institutional avatar: the UN SDGs, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015, the same year that Laudato si was published.



The authors begin by suggesting that "The encyclical is visionary. It is bold, uncompromising and radical, while the SDGs would be "rigid, unadventurous" and "anchored in a conventional mindset"; "unlike the encyclical, the SDGs lack freshness and do not promote a paradigm shift". And this difference is not merely one of tone, style, or emphasis; nor is it merely one of degree within a continuum. It is a substantial difference in the implications that flow from the two concepts.

The authors give three justifications to support this judgment:

a. Comprehensiveness vs. holism:

Both concepts, holistic ecology, and sustainable development (as a novelty of the SDGs as opposed to their predecessors, the MDGs), recognize and are inclusive of multiple socio-environmental dimensions of the current crisis. But the SDGs accumulate goals (17) and targets (169!) in an aggregate (wish list) manner, while Laudato si identifies patterns, underlining the systemic nature of the problem. "To seek only a technical remedy to every environmental problem that arises is to separate what is in fact interconnected and to mask the real and deeper problems of the global system". "Any claim to care for and improve the world presupposes profound changes in "lifestyles, patterns of production and consumption, the consolidated power structures that govern society today" (LS §5). "A strategy for real change requires a rethinking of the totality of processes, for it is not enough to include superficial ecological considerations as long as the underlying logic of the current culture is not questioned" (LS §197).

This is what makes the encyclical much more than a document on "the environment": "It is a profound critique of the deep logic of our political economy. It is a far more sophisticated paradigm than the one underpinning the SDGs, and this is largely why the encyclical feels cohesive, fresh, and relevant, while the SDGs feel incoherent, clumsy, and 20 years out of date".



Dr. Adrian Beling



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b. Growth and consumption

"The SDGs are an ode to consumption-led economic growth. Everything they aim to eradicate - from poverty to violence - can be tackled with GDP growth, they tell us. They want at least 7% annual GDP growth in the least developed countries and higher levels of economic productivity across the board. In fact, a whole goal, number eight, is dedicated to this."

At this historic point in the debate, this is unusual: the problematic nature of GDP growth as a measure of human progress is widely acknowledged, but the SDGs go ahead as if this is not even an issue.

"The Pope, by contrast, addresses the irrationality of endless GDP growth and consumption head-on, and does so from the understanding - absent among economists - that the economy and the environment are part of the same system; that endless extraction of one to feed the endless growth of the other is not only a physical impossibility but ultimately counterproductive and immoral. Solutions such as emissions trading and renewable energy will not be enough. We have to tackle the core of the problem, which is an economic model based on ever-increasing consumption."



"What is lacking is an ethic, a culture and a spirituality that really constrain and contain [the individual] in lucid self-denial" (LS §105).

"It becomes indispensable to create a normative system that includes insurmountable limits and ensures the protection of ecosystems before the new forms of power derived from the techno-economic paradigm end up sweeping away not only politics but also freedom and justice" (LS §53). (LS §53)

c. Cause and effects

The SDGs frame the problems of global poverty and inequality as simply existing as if they had no cause. "Each country is primarily responsible for its own development outcomes," the document insists. Colonialism, slavery, plunder of resources, debt, structural adjustment, and financial crises apparently have nothing to do with it.

Unlike the SDGs, the Pope dares to identify culprits. He does not do so rudely, but he is uncompromising in his condemnation of the key forces at work. He points the finger at the transnational corporations that profit from the pollution of poor countries. It criticizes the external debt system, which has become a tool of rich countries' control over poor countries. It warns that the over-powerful financial sector has eroded the sovereignty of nation-states and "tends to prevail over the political sphere".

This is an important step because without naming the forces that cause human suffering and environmental destruction, it is impossible to address them effectively. This is a hard truth that the SDGs simply refuse to accept. Due to corporate influence at all stages of the drafting process and the perceived need not to offend anyone, the SDGs are unable to name what needs to be named.

Dr. Adrian Beling

The SDGs send a clear signal that a status quo approach to the global economy is the only possible and desirable path, with a little weeding around the edges to make life more bearable for the poor and lessen the worst environmental impacts to some extent.

But this is no time for incremental reforms to business as usual. To use the metaphor coined by the famous German climatologist Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, the Titanic is on a collision course and we are still preoccupied with rearranging the chairs on deck, while trying to consult more passengers about it. Pope Francis has taken up the challenge that our timid technocrats have shied away from. His encyclical *Laudato Si* is a clear, urgent and morally compelling call to build the new economy and the new culture we so desperately need.

What are we doing with the integral ecology of *Laudato Si*? Judging by the Google images, one would say that we are rather pouring "new wine into old wineskins".

An integral ecology is not adding a "green" tinge to a pietistic and/or merely activist spirituality; an "add-on" to what we usually do. An authentic ecological spirituality must lead to a critical review of what we do, not only as individuals within a social and techno-economic system but as a community that inhabits and reproduces that system but can also transform it. This is, in my view, the fruit of a genuine **ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION**

I end with one more quote from Fr. Francis, Apostolic Exhortation "Dear Amazonia", §105:

True solutions can never be found by diluting boldness, by hiding from concrete demands or by seeking blame outside. On the contrary, the way out is found by "overflowing", transcending the dialectic that limits the vision in order to be able to recognize a greater gift that God is offering.

4. What is climate change ?



Climate events that are traumatic for humans and ecosystems are so varied that climate-related risks are constantly on the agenda. (Prof Placide, 2023). It is long-term changes in the earth's climate including changes in temperature, precipitation patterns, and weather events that are primarily caused by human activities such as burning fuels, deforestation, and other land use changes. Carbon balance had toppled from 280ppm in the pre-industrial era to 415ppm today due to human activities. (Prof Hemanthi, 2023).

Climate and Weather: climate is defined as the average state of the atmosphere resulting from the succession of different weather conditions. It is also the set of atmospheric and meteorological conditions and meteorological conditions of a given geographical region for a given period of time. (Normally a series of 30 years). It differs from meteorology, which refers to the study of the weather in the short term and in specific areas.

Climate change: the climate of a place or region changes if, over a long period of time (usually decades or more), there is a statistically significant variation in measurements of either the mean state or the variability of climate for that location or region.

Anthropogenic climate change: According to the dictionary Environment and Sustainable Development, Climate change refers to slow variations in characteristics of the climate in a given place over time; warming, cooling.

Refers to long-term changes in temperature, precipitation patterns, and weather events, that are primarily caused by human activities, such as fossil fuels, deforestation, and other land-use changes.

Climate variability: precipitation variability refers to the degree to which rainfall amounts vary within a region or over time. An increase in rainfall variability can increase the precipitation can increase the likelihood of water-related hazards such as droughts Increased variability of precipitation can increase the likelihood of water-related hazards such as droughts, drying up of water bodies, or flooding. Fluctuations in the rainfall regime can have important implications for food security food security, natural resource-based livelihoods, and human security (Warner and Afifi, 2014). Precipitation variability refers to the degree to which rainfall amounts vary within a region or over time.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the "reference" on climate change shows the following findings:

- Climate change is already happening
- Human is the main cause
- It will last
- Its speed is alarming
- Extreme weather events are increasing
- It is urgent to stop the advance of global warming.



Prof. Placide CLEDJO

Causes and Consequences of Anthropogenic Climate Change

This variation may be due to natural or human factors.

Some forms of air pollution resulting from human activities threaten to change climates significantly, leading to global warming.

Anthropogenic climate change is attributed to the emission of greenhouse gas and can lead to significant damage; rising sea levels, changes in precipitation patterns, and an increase in extreme weather events: drought, floods, cyclones, storms, hurricanes, heatwaves, destabilization of forests, threats to freshwater resources agricultural difficulties, increase in food and water crises and water crises, particularly in developing countries threatening the livelihoods due to floods and floods and forest fires.

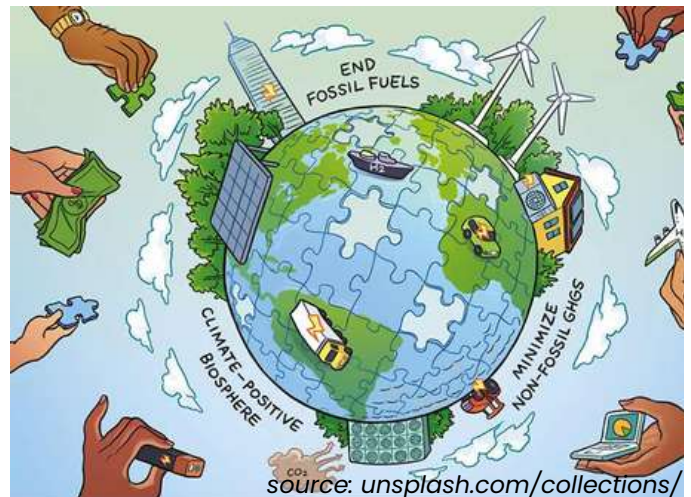
Why is the planet warming up?

The rapid global warming of the last 100 years is mainly due to human activity, including: the consumption of fossil fuels (coal, oil, natural gas) in unprecedented proportions, causing the release of "greenhouse gases" (GHG) into the atmosphere, widespread deforestation (trees contain a lot of carbon and release CO₂ when they are burned), changes in agricultural practices and land use (agriculture emits other GHGs: CH₄ and NO₂).

The planet is getting warmer, what does that mean?

Scientists are certain of the rise of temperatures, heat waves, the rise of sea level, melting of the ice, and ocean acidification, but less obvious about regional variations such as changes in rainfall patterns, and changes in extreme events.

China is the world's largest emitter with 7 billion tonnes of CO₂, followed by the US (5.4 billion), India, and Russia. France ranks 17th with 350 million tonnes. Sub-Saharan African developing countries account for about 2% of global emissions.



Main sources of GHG emissions

- Industries (29%)
- Residential, commercial, and public buildings (18%)
- Transports (15%)
- Electricity generation (13%)
- Agriculture and livestock (7%)

Measures to combat climate change

Mitigation and Developed Countries

Climate change mitigation, according to the IPCC, is "human intervention to reduce sources or enhance sinks of greenhouse gases". Adaptation and mitigation of climate change must be complementary. This is what the European Union states in its Green Paper of 2007.

In 2018, the Global Commission on Adaptation, comprising 17 countries, was established. One year later, it published its first report on measures to cope with expected extreme weather conditions.

The European Union, in its 2009 White Paper, laid the foundations for a Europe-wide adaptation strategy.

In 2011, France adopted the first National Climate Change Adaptation Plan (PNACC) for 5 years. Following the Paris Agreement, in 2015, France reassessed its national plan. It created the PNACC-2 which runs until 2022.

Prof. Placide CLEDJO

5. Ecological mitigations to combat climate change

What are the actions to be taken to combat this disaster?

We need to reduce greenhouse emissions and increase carbon sinks, adopt nature-based solutions which is an ecosystem-based approach, and offer a cost-effective and sustainable way to address the challenges of climate change while also providing a range of co-benefits for people and the planet.

- **Wetland restoration**

Wetlands such as marshes are important carbon sinks and help to reduce the impact of extreme weather events (floods and storms).

Soil management: sustainable agricultural practices such as conservation tillage and cover cropping can improve soil health and increase carbon sequestration.

- **Green infrastructure**

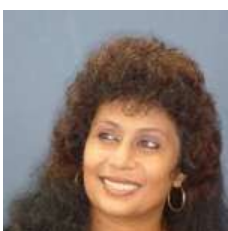
Using natural features such as green roofs, urban forests, and permeable pavements can help reduce the urban heat island effects mitigate flooding and improve air quality.

There is enough resource to sustain people's need but not enough resources for their greed.

- **Recommendations**

Adopt Sustainable development that focuses on the 3Ps (People, Planet, and Profit/Prosperity).

Sustainable development is an inclusive economic growth model operating within the safe limits of natural resources



Prof. Hemanthi Ranasinghe

The Sustainable Development Goals and the 3Ps

- Prosperity: SDGs 7,8,9 11
- People, dignity, and justice: SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 16.
- Planet: SDGs 6, 12, 13, 14, 15.

At a global level: ensure implementation of international laws and conventions.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro and the treaties that follow the Kyoto Protocol are the Paris Agreement (2015); 197 countries ratified this agreement to maintain global temperature rise at 1.5Degrees Celsius not increasing to 2 degrees from the pre-industrial era.

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in which countries pledged to mitigate and adapt to climate change (both unconditionally and conditionally). They aimed at achieving carbon net-zero status by 2050, 2060

At a country or national level: ensure effective implementation policies, regulations, and enforcement.

Nationally, signatory countries adopted their policies strategies, and action plans according to the global commitments.

As an organization: we can put in place an environmentally sound system

At the individual level: we should lead an eco-friendly lifestyle, be change agents to promote eco-friendly culture in society, and be activists to safeguard the environment when decisions and actions are taken to harm the environment.

Laudato Si: the call from the Holy Father Pope Francis for urgent action to address the growing threat of climate change which he describes as a global problem with grave implications for the natural world and for human society.

6. Climate change and the vulnerable Groups

a. Manifestations and implications of climate change on the vulnerable groups

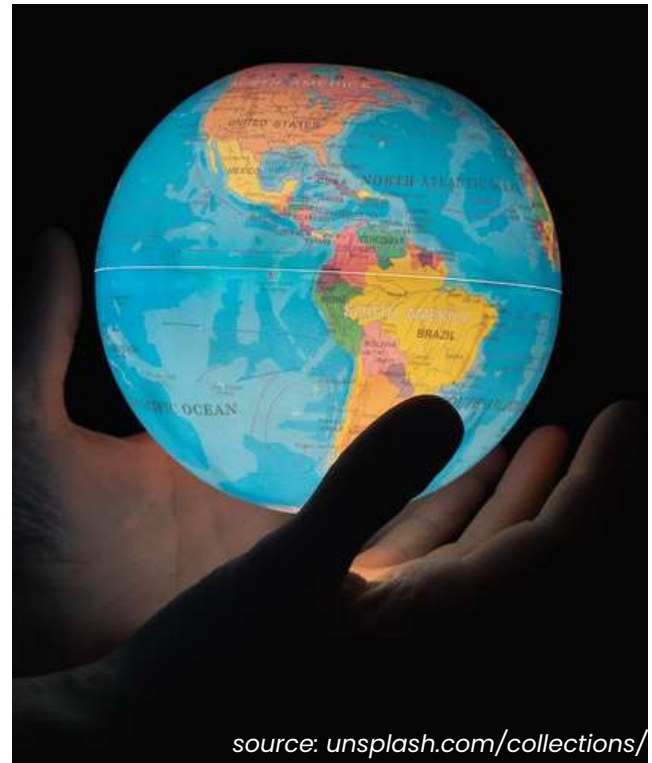
The African continent is characterized by very different climatic regimes, ranging from very arid to very wet, and highly variable and unpredictable conditions.

Climate change manifests in the form of flooded paved roads causing traffic congestion, frequency of breakdowns for mopeds; risk of infection; Threatened living conditions; etc.

Water resources: depletion of ERs, modification of hydrological regimes of rivers/water bodies; filling of rivers and water bodies and consequences on water supply and activities that depend on it (watering animals, fishing, etc.);

Agricultural production: more vulnerable food crops (significant drop in yields and consequent impact on food security), even cotton is negatively impacted by climate change (lower yields, reduction in sown area);

Pastoral activities: decline in the biomass necessary for feeding herds, reduction in watering areas (filling in/ disappearance of water points used by herds).

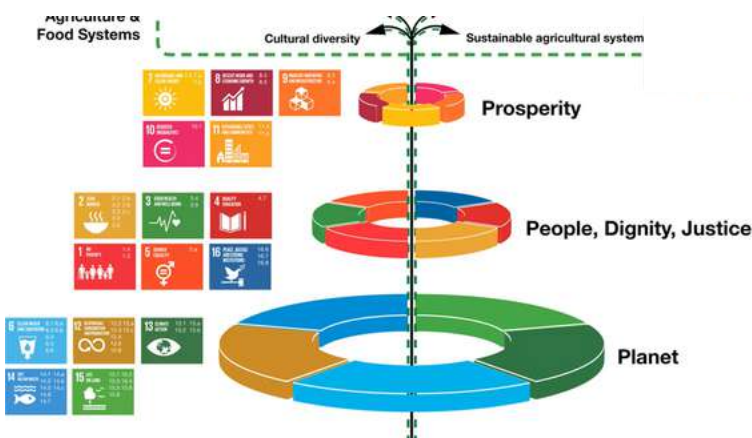


source: unsplash.com/collections/

b. Measures to combat climate change – recommendations of Groundswell

The Groundswell report is a stark reminder of the human cost of climate change, particularly for the poorest, who are least responsible for it.

- Reduce global GHG emissions and make every effort to meet the temperature increase limitation targets as per the Paris Agreement;
- Integrate internal climate migration into forward planning for green, resilient, and inclusive development;
- Prepare for each phase of the migration dynamic so that internal climate migration, used as an adaptation strategy, produces positive development outcomes;
- Invest in a better understanding of the drivers of internal climate migration to inform well-targeted policies



Energy



source: unsplash.com/collections/

Renewable energy

- Gradually end the use of fossil fuels
- Diversification of supply sources and choice of renewable energy
- Training in new renewable energy technologies.
 - To support the rational use of energy
 - Promote incentives for the use of renewable energy in households.
- Efficient public transport system in large cities.
- SMART buildings.

Health

- Creation of a preventive warning system of health risks.
- Ensure the availability of drinking water to rural populations.
- Prohibit the emission of non-standard smoke in built-up areas, etc.

Ecosystem

- Ensure the application of the legal framework/ law on the environment
- Sanction uncontrolled deforestation and encourage reforestation
- Ban the import of plastic bags (to avoid flooding)
- Fight against the pollution of rivers and water bodies which contribute to the degradation of ecosystems and the proliferation of invasive species (water hyacinths, water lettuce, algae, duckweed).

Water

- Improve knowledge of surface and groundwater resources.
- Implement sustainable water resources management strategies.
- Integrate water resource efficiency into school education.
- Encourage water reuse to preserve resources in vulnerable areas.

For the agriculture sector

- Diversify the economy away from agricultural dependence.
- Encourage the adoption of cereals that are resistant to climate variability
- Develop the use of weather forecasting as an adaptation tool.
- Revitalize weather warning systems
- Limit excessive use of fertilizers
- Promoting natural fertilizers
- Combat food insecurity
- Restrict vegetation fires, which emit polluting gases into the air.
- Repeated and staggered seeding
- Crop rotation
- Crop association
- Re-adaptation of the agricultural calendar
- Diversification of income-generating activities



source: wikimedia.org/wiki/pedia



Professor Placide CLEDJO

7. Goals and Challenges in Global Climate Governance

There are three major crises that threaten the future of the planet:

- Climate crisis: the most challenging for humanity
- Biodiversity crisis: with species and ecosystem services being lost
- Resources crisis: while our ecological footprint goes beyond nature's capacity to renew them.

We are not just under climate crisis; we are faced with other crises such as the peace crisis, which was caused by the war in Ukraine and in many parts of the world is threatening humanity.

In 2022, there were 03 conferences: 50 years celebration of the Stockholm Conference, COP 27 and the 50 years of Club of Rome, "The limit of Growth".

The 50 years celebration of Stockholm:

The 1st conference that took place in Stockholm in 1972 led to the creation of UNEP (United Nations Environment Programmes). UNEP was created to look at the future of the environment and humanity for the few decades to come.

From 1972 to now:

Only a tenth of hundreds of global targets in the areas of environment and sustainable development agreed upon by countries have been achieved or made significant programs.

Natural resource use has more than tripled since 1970 and continues to grow. The use of these resources and their benefits are unevenly distributed across countries and regions. The poorest half of the global population owns just 2% of total global wealth, while the richest 10% own 76% of the wealth. We have an unethical world where the poorest who are half of the global population contributed 10% of greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming, however, they bear the consequence of climate change more than the richest who are 10% of the global population and are emitting more than half of total carbon emissions during 1990-2015.

A person born today could live in a 4Degree Celsius warmer world that is several degrees warmer than today, in which 16% of species would be at risk of extinction, and exposure to heat waves can be up to seven times that of a person born in 1960.

Humans have altered 75% of the planet's land surface impacted 60% of ocean areas and destroyed directly or indirectly 85% of wetlands.

The amount of natural resources extracted by humans globally each year has tripled since 1970, high-income countries have consumed most of these resources with carbon dioxide consumption footprints that are more than 13 times the level of low-income countries.

The funding gap for sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) globally has been estimated at 2.3 billion by the Organizations for Economic Cooperation Development (OECD).



Currently, no country is giving its citizens what they need without transgressing planetary biophysical limits. The poor communities of color are often most affected by heat waves due to the urban heat island effect. In Pakistan, for every 5 degrees Celsius in temperature rise, the number of stillbirths and premature deliveries increases by about 5%. For poor women and those who work outdoors, the problem is worse. On May 15, 2020, part of Delhi India reached 49.2 Degrees Celsius.

Climate change has aggravated drought. "I had 400 acres of wheat and now it is all desert" Ahmed Abdullah, a Syrian farmer on October 2010.



The 27th Conferences of Parties – COP 27

COP 27 took place in Sharm El Sheikh Egypt from 6th to 18th November 2022 with the participation of 35,000 People. It is a Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It was Africa COP with a focus to pay attention to the most vulnerable countries.

Antonio Guterez, the Secretary General of the United Nations was quite clear on the message:

"We are a highway to climate heel with our foot on the accelerator"

"Either we close climate solidarity pact or a collective suicide pact."



source: [wikimedia.org/wiki/](https://www.wikimedia.org/wiki/)

COP 27 focused on the loss and damages fund which will be used to rebuild the areas after a climate event such as a hurricane or flood. COP 27 gave limited contributions to civil society as they could only walk within the UN premises.

After 30 years of discussion, the mechanism to support vulnerable countries is finally in place. This was discussed in 2013, and 2019 but it is now the funding is available with a set of financing modalities to provide relief to countries that have destruction related to climate change.

Sharm El Sheikh implementation plan approves a set of financing modalities for loss and damage including the creation of a fund for transition and financing options mosaic for public and private.

About the setbacks, there is a setback in mitigation. There is no progression regarding Glasgow to reducing the peak of emissions before 2025, a more ambitious goal by all countries to end the use of fossil fuels.

Another challenge is climate financing, the financing due to developing countries to enable them to adapt to climate change and reduce emissions should only materialize in 2023 and there is no guarantee that developed countries will be willing to increase their contributions.

The Parties failed in fulfilling the commitment assumed in Glasgow to double funding for adaptation by 2025 based on 2019 levels. An amount of 10 billion USD from developed countries is supposed to be given to developing countries.



source: [wikimedia.org/wikipedia](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:COP28_UAE_Logo)

What to expect from COP28?

We need to reinforce the fight for

- gradual or permanent elimination of all fossil fuels
- increase ambition and keep the target of 1.5 Degrees Celsius alive
- concretization of climate financing

The challenges are now:

- Stop fossil fuels
- Pay climate debt by the use of cheap energy
- Ensure financing as per the Paris Agreement target
- Ensure higher civil society participation
- Ensure more equitable decisions
- We need to move from goals to actions.

The increase of 1.5 degrees Celsius from the pre-industrial era is possible only if we reduce the use of fossil fuels.



Prof. Francisco Ferreira

Closing words

At the end of this Webinar, I would like to thank, on behalf of ICMICA-MIIC, Pax Romana, our guests for the care they have taken in preparing their papers and the way they have presented them, revealing to us their different points of view, which allow us to enlarge the horizons in the debate of this theme so important for our lives and for the future of all Creation.

We would like to thank all the participants and those who made the translations, which allowed us to reach everyone.

Some underlines from our guests:

"We live in a broken world. There are men and women who suffer as a result of an economy that kills, that discards".

"A world that is our common home. A home that must be cared for because it is undergoing climate change, losing biodiversity, growing in pollution."

An Ecological Conversion is not about adding a "green" tonality to an activist spirituality; An authentic ecological spirituality must lead to a critical revision of what we do, not only as individuals but as a community that inhabits and reproduces that system but can also transform it.

Many suggestions and recommendations were made for what should be done, in different areas, especially in the production and use of Energy, in the prevention of Health, in the preservation of Ecosystems, in Water management, and in the improvement of the use of processes in Agriculture.

It is very important to have a personal commitment to adopt a green mindset.

To lead an environmentally friendly lifestyle. Be a change agent to promote an environmentally friendly culture in society, and be an activist to safeguard the environment when decisions and actions are taken to harm it.



source: unsplash.com/collections/

There are many challenges on the horizon:

We need to have a gradual and permanent elimination of all fossil fuels, increase ambition and keep the 1,5° C, concretize de climate financing, have a higher civil society participation, for more equitable decisions, and move from goals to action, with participation from each of us, at all levels, local, regional and global, maintaining optimism.

“We see, hear and read We can't ignore it”

This is the beginning of a poem by a Portuguese poet, Sophia de Mello Breyner, which reminds us of everything we have seen, heard, and read during this Webinar, and therefore can't ignore.

Antonio Jose Paulino, ICMICA Vice President from Europe

CONCLUSION

The world is faced with more complex and urgent issues such as climate change and environmental destruction which are inequitably affecting the poor and vulnerable groups. To ensure climate justice and integral ecology, everyone has a role to play from the global, to national to the local level. Pax Romana in different countries and communities is not spared in this fight. The call for action by the Holy Father is touching all the levels of structure of the movement and the Church; the Lay Professionals have a big role to play especially in intellectual endeavors such as advocacy. God entrusted to his children the mission of 'co-creation'; everyone thus has the responsibility to protect the environment and restore and repair the destroyed ecosystem. This was a rich discussion and reflection. The thematic group on the environment is grateful to all participants and calls all the members to join them for concrete action.

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR
YOUR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION!**



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ICMICA MIIC PAX ROMANA

Rev. Father Luis Maria
Ana Maria Bidegain
Olive Maria HAJAMIHARISOA
ICMICA Council Members

Date: May 29,2023

INTEGRAL ECOLOGY AND THE PATHS TOWARD CLIMATE JUSTICE

International Catholic Movement for Intellectual
and Cultural Affairs
PAX ROMANA

Prepared by:

Ana Maria Bidegain
Olive Maria HAJAMIHARISOA



source: unsplash.com/collections/

APPENDIX: PROFILE OF THE PANELISTS



Dr. Reginald Nalugala

PhD tutor in Social Transformation and governance specialization leader at Tangaza University Nairobi, Kenya. He holds PhD. in International Development from OCMS, Oxford, UK, and Masters in Development Studies from the Institute of Development Studies, The Hague, Erasmus University the Netherlands.



Ramon Ibeas

He is a Theologian and holds Masters in Social Doctrine of the Church from the Pontifical University of Salamanca. He is Secretary General of Caritas Diocesana de Vitoria and a Chairman of the Governing Board of Berjantzi and executive member of Lanagro. Both social insertion companies. Member of the Basque Federation of Pax Romana and former vice-president for Europe.



Dr. Adrián E. Beling

Dr. Beling is the Canada Research Chair in Transition to Sustainability at The King's University (Edmonton, Alberta) and Assistant Professor of Sociology and Environmental Studies at The King's University (Edmonton, AB).

Dr. Beling holds a PhD in Sociology from the Humboldt University of Berlin and from the Alberto Hurtado University, in Chile, as well as an M.A. in Global Studies. Moreover, he has a track record of academic entrepreneurship: In 2014, he co-founded the academic blog and journal Alternautas, hosted by the library of the University of Warwick and devoted to making Latin-American socio-environmental thinking available to a non-Spanish speaking audience.



Prof. Placide CLEDJO

Senior Professor of Climatology and Environmental Geosciences
Director of the Doctoral School Spaces, Cultures, and Development
University of Abomey-Calavi.



Prof. Hemanthi Ranasinghe

Senior Professor in Forestry and Environmental Sciences at the
University of Sri Jayewardenepura

She is a Trainer, Consultant, and Researcher in Environment
Assessment and Management.

BSc Hons in Biological Sciences (University of Kelaniya)

MSc in Forestry (University of Sri Jayewardenepura)

Ph.D. in Environmental Sciences and Forestry (University of Wales,
Bangor, United States). She is a Chartered Environmental Professional
at the Institute of Environmental Professionals Sri Lanka.



Prof. Francisco Ferreira

Francisco Ferreira is an Associate Professor at the Department of
Environmental Sciences and Engineering of the NOVA School of Science
and Technology (FCT NOVA) [Portugal] and a researcher at CENSE
(Research Center for Environment and Sustainability). He has a
significant set of publications in the areas of air quality, climate change,
and sustainable development. He was President of Quercus from 1996
to 2001 and Vice-President between 2007 and 2011. He was a member of
the National Water Council and the National Council for Environment
and Sustainable Development. He is currently the President of "ZERO -
Associação Sistema Terrestre Sustentável", a non-governmental
environmental organization of national scope.



Integral Ecology and the Path towards Climate Justice

REFLECTION FROM ICMICA PAX ROMANA