

Information sheet Cry of Creation

Is there a link between the topic of peace and the topic of the environment? According to studies carried out by Colin Kelley and his collaborators, “it is shown that the drought of 2007-2010 contributed to the conflict in Syria”, as observations and models suggest that global warming “has increased the likelihood of severe and persistent droughts in this region”. Furthermore, “human influence on the climate system is implicated in the current Syrian conflict”. As for the specific case of Syria, the climate problem deeply penetrates the socio-political balance of vast areas of the planet, as reported by the World Bank in its *Ground-swell study: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration*, 2018, in which it is clearly stated that, by 2050, more than 140 million people - due to environmental stresses such as drought, soil degradation, flooding, rising sea levels or air quality - will be forced to abandon their lands, causing the destabilization of the countries in which they live and increasing the probability of cross-border flows. One of the hottest spots will be sub-Saharan Africa, an important area of migration already for years.

Closely related to these dynamics, we should mention the “war among the poor” that is unleashed because of these migratory flows, which generate unprecedented cohabitation among peoples. If in Italy the issue of immigration has raised heated debates, it must be said that our situation is not the only one that has generated division. The theme is global. Recently we participated as a Global Catholic Climate Movement at the summit of the Global Divest-Invest Financing the Future, which was held in Cape Town from 10 to 11 September. On that occasion, along with a coalition of various religious institutions, it was announced that economic resources from the energy derived from fossil fuels would be transferred to that produced by renewables.

In the Encyclical Letter “Laudato Si” Pope Francis has opened our eyes to the meaning of “integral ecology”. It has helped us look at the ecological problem in its entirety, at its consequences, at its connections with society, economy, politics, culture, and spirituality. No longer just “global warming”, or “pollution”, or even more so, “ecological crisis”.

As an example, we can mention the concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere, which is measured in parts per million (ppm). From the core samples taken in the polar ice caps, which reach depths of 2500 - 3000 meters, we can reconstruct the history of our atmosphere, through the chemical analysis of these blocks of ice. These analyses tell us that, throughout its history, concentrations of CO₂ in the earth's atmosphere have fluctuated between 180 and 280 ppm, based on the alternation of volcanic eras. Since the nineteenth century there has been a surge in this value, which shows us from direct measurements that in recent years it has exceeded the 400 ppm threshold. Presently, we are rapidly and dangerously approaching the 415 ppm threshold, beyond which some changes to the biosphere will be, in fact, irreversible.

The concentration of CO₂ is just one of many indicators that can help us understand how bad off our planet is. It's a bit like when you measure a fever. It is an indicator, but the solution is not “only” in bringing down the fever, but in reducing the causes together with overall effects.

This is why we are thinking of the Amazon fires with the consequent reduction of oxygen for the planet, the destruction of biodiversity and animal and floral species, as well as the threat to many indigenous peoples. Unfortunately it is not an isolated phenomenon if we also consider the rain forest fires in Angola and the Congo - in a critical area for the advancement of desertification and the forced migration of environmental refugees – or to those perhaps even more shocking of the regions of Krasnoyarsk, Buryatia and Jacuzia in Siberia that are being affected even more suddenly, due to melting of the permafrost and the subsequent release of additional CO₂.

“If we are truly concerned to develop an ecology capable of remedying the damage we have done - says Pope Francis - no branch of the sciences and no form of wisdom can be left out, and that includes religion and the language particular to it” (LS 63).

The Global Catholic Climate Movement, through global paths and initiatives (including the international program “Live *Laudato Si*”), seeks to give voice to these instances that arise from *Laudato Si*, in each of the three dimensions of life:

1. In the personal and internal dimension, through prayer “in” and “for” Creation, rediscovering the richness of being children of a single Creator, who asks us to “cultivate and care for” our Common Home;
2. In the community dimension, through the choice of sustainable lifestyles and relationships not based on interest;
3. In the global dimension, raising our voices with governments and international summits to obtain policies more attentive to the environment and to the people who live on the planet.

Antonio Caschetto

(Program coordinator *Laudato Si* Assisi - Global Catholic Climate Movement)