**Opting for Integral Ecology**

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Humanity is at risk because of a virus... (it, humanity, has had and has the experience of being confined - in one’s own home and Religious Life in their communities), and this humanity is challenged by the planetary crisis, generating much reflection.

In this time of pandemic, our economic and social processes, have been greatly affected and under enormous stress, they are very resilient in terms of their relationship with the environment. It is very likely that overcoming this crisis, the urgency of the reactivation of the economy and social normalization implies the "re-establishment" of mechanisms and processes that affect in a more worrisome way, the environmental sustainability of the planet, making it recover and quickly overcome the pace in which our ecosystems are affected and everything that generates the drunkenness of the environment. *(Joaquín Benítez Maal - Venezuela).*

For this reason, more than ever, it is urgent to have this 6th key interpretation, to help:

- Promote the recognition of the sacredness of created beings and the mutual interdependence between all creatures.

Everything is interconnected, in relationship, intertwined with one another At the same time each of us makes a difference through what we perceive as “reality".

- Promote personal, social and ecological harmony in defense of life, people, the environment and cultures.

A single cause that helps us to cross the coordinates of our territorial and institutional/congregational boundaries.

- To deepen the ecological conversion that reconciles, strengthens in communion (which implies a deep interior conversion, and we want this conversion to happen) and respectfully places us before natural ecosystems, bringing about care for life and our common home.

Reflect the 4 conversions of the Final Document of the Synod for the Amazon (pastoral-cultural-ecological-synodal) and the 4 dreams of the Exhortation of QA (socio-cultural-ecological-ecclesial).

And remembering how a look captures the providential, in the height of this time in which coronavirus is overwhelming us, we celebrate:

- The five years of the encyclical "Laudato Si".

- The opening of the "year" of Laudato Si, adding the proposal of the Dicastery of Integral Human Development, to promote the experience of the seven objectives for 7 years... And that they be transformed for Religious Life into a true programmatic line, to include in our life’s projects: the cry of the earth, the cry of the poor, the revision of the economy, simple/austere lifestyles, education and ecological spirituality, community commitment and active participation in the causes common to all of us.

- World Environment Day (last June 5th).

And this memory, helps us as Religious Life, to feel as pilgrims of our "Common Home" and to have care for it (care without appropriation).

To save our Common Home we need, as Pope Francis says, "a revolution from below”, so that there is no place for superiors and those who dominate. Integral Ecology comes to question our styles of government and activities.

Therefore, we must strengthen our work in networking, think collectively from the paradigm of “synodality”, knowing that any choice, even the smallest, makes a difference and united in Religious Life, we can collaborate to reverse the path that leads to the destruction of our Common Home (which is ultimately our own destruction).

How can we re-imagine the future of Religious Life from the contribution of Latin America and the Caribbean?

Four "initial" strokes... (and future brushstrokes to follow building together):

1. *Corazonar –*  love - our domestic scenarios, so that they blossom as itinerates that encourage us to reconcile ourselves with creation and asks the question: what can we do in our "religious houses" to live the process of conversion that Laudato Si raises ... And something else ... Turn our religious houses into places, which imply restoring bonds and becoming aware that our residential complex is a theological place.

2. “Laudatofy” (term created by the Permanent Deacon, Alirio Cáseres), times and places, which imply recovering the capacity of praise, learning to take care of ourselves in a healthy way, that we are always connected in our daily life by the cause of the poor and by caring for our Common Home.

3. Wholistic vision (which helps us to look at the whole and not a part) and invites us to review our lifestyles, our mental models and spirituality (a spirituality with knowledge and cordiality, processed with eco-sensitive intelligence, which adds to an experience of overwhelming admiration, where everything is an epiphany of mystery and not just the words I pray... ). So that you are invited to a transformative and contemplative, unique experience that avoids duality (not a divided religious life). You feel part of a whole.

Enter into a spirituality "from below" that marks a way of being: and my heart begins to celebrate, pray, where my feet stand = (paraphrasing L. Boff: Because my head thinks where my feet are stepping), avoiding being victims of a disembodied religiosity. Create room for new communities born from life, from contemplative silence, from a reality that unites us to all creation.

4. Recovering the sense of what it means to be "managers" and never owners (not to retain, not to appropriate, “without possessing"). "

Our vow of poverty can be translated today, in a vow of solidarity, in support of the just causes that prevent exploitation and protect our environment... A solidarity that "makes us uncomfortable"... Constant review of our lifestyles.

And I end with the words of Sister Josefina Castillo, (who was Secretary General of CLAR):

Let us begin by straightening out and healing the environment of our own hearts in order to care for the environment of another with attitudes of respect, welcome, solidarity, especially with the most fragile. Heal the heart, so that it heals our social environment.