



Asian Journal of Religious Studies

“The Lord is truly among us.”

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Editorial

Caring for Mother Earth

Just days after President Donald Trump announced his decision to pull the United States out of the Paris Agreement on combating climate change, Pope Francis issued a reminder about the universal need to care for the Earth.

The Pontiff tweeted on June 5, 2017 : “We must never forget that the natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone.” The Pope referred to World Environment Day, which is celebrated on June 5, as a way of sensitizing people to the need to live in harmony with nature, in order to ensure sustainable development and the future of humanity.

“Connecting people to nature” is the motto chosen by the United Nations for this year’s day with a view to a more friendly and constructive relationship between humans and the environment. The purpose is to encourage us to “go outside and go into nature to appreciate its beauty and reflect on how we are an integral part and how much we depend on it.”

Trump dealt a major blow to the international effort to protect the environment with his announcement on June 1, 2017 that the U.S. will withdraw from the 2015 accord. Under the terms of the deal, U.S. cannot officially withdraw until November 2019. When it does, the U.S. will join Syria and Nicaragua as the only other countries outside the agreement to combat climate change.

Bishop Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo, head of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, described the move as “a huge slap in the face.” Barely a week ago, the U.S. president met with Pope Francis for the first time and promised to read the pontiff’s 184-page encyclical on climate change. Francis gifted Trump a copy of his 2015 encyclical, “Laudato Si,” which makes the case that climate change is inherently a moral and spiritual issue that disproportionately affects the poor and the marginalized.

The encyclical outlines Francis’ staunch belief that the environmental crisis facing the world is caused by human activity, and that the world’s leaders must act swiftly to confront what he called a “global problem with grave implications.”

“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.”

“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,” Francis said in the encyclical.

May we learn to take care of mother earth so that we can hand it over to our posterity tenderly and carefully. We need to remind ourselves that the earth is sacred and we are part of it. We are called to shepherd and not conquer it!

Kuruvilla Pandikattu SJ
The Editor