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The Virtues of Integral Ecology and the Environmental Crisis in India

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Abstract: There is an urgent need of an integral ecology in India. We cannot care for the mother earth without caring for the poor. We see in India that the gap between the poor and the richest is widening day by day. The lack of preferential option for the poor has caused this gap. There is no question of ecological justice without doing the social justice in India. Consumerism is an addiction to the accumulation of things which is connected with lack of mercy, solidarity and concern for the marginalized. It is one of the vices against the integral ecology that is seen in India. On the individual level, ecological conversion demands a change of attitude and a change of lifestyle. We need to realize that “being” is more important than

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“having.” If the world is based on having more and more there is no scope for the survival of the earth.

Keywords: Integral ecology, Justice, Solidarity, Common good, option for the poor, Indifference, mercy.

Introduction

This article inquires and reflects on the contributions of a theology of Integral ecology to the current environmental crises in India. Looking at multiple ecological concerns in India, we can assume that we are in an alarming situation. Within the last few years Delhi air-pollution and its consequences have become a major concern. Every Indian is aware that the problem is not confined to Delhi; it is also true with many parts of India though the intensity and the type of concerns may differ from place to place.

Looking at multiple ecological concerns in India, we can assume that we are in an alarming situation. Within the last few years Delhi air-pollution and its consequences have become a major concern.

We all are part of one or other green movements at a personal, communitarian and organizational level. We try to reduce the usage of plastic and, electricity and the wastage of water. We are also taking initiatives in planting more trees and are promoting recycling and waste management. All these steps are very important steps, but they do not deal with the root cause of the environmental crises that we face. We are turning away from challenging the real problems that cause water-air

pollution - the wastes from factories, coal mines, burning paddy residue, pollution from fireworks and pollution from vehicles. Whether it is pollution or deforestation or displacement, the major contributors to these alarming realities are capitalistic individuals or organisation or unwise government policies. Many of our current

environmental initiatives remain as only mouth sweetener which fail to nourish the body.

People first! Who are the people most deeply affected by the multiple ecological crises in India? I am sure that most of us will identify that the poor and the marginalized, including farmers as the worst hit victims of these crises. In the light of the encyclical letter of Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* and the current situation in India, we will examine ways to promote integral ecology by caring for the poor while caring for the nature.

1. Brief Description of the Problem of Ecological Injustices

a. Victims and their sufferings from unjust environmental conditions

The worst affected victims of ecological injustices in India are the poor. They are affected in numerous ways. In India the ecological movement began with the protest of the poor and marginalized, they saw their dwellings, their land, life style and livelihood being threatened (Campos, 2017: 213-225, 218). In India, on one hand development comes by building many factories, dams and many other structures but all these, on the other hand, have lasting consequences in the ecology that directly affects the poor. Clement Campos CSsR (2017), in his article titled, “Laudato Si: An Indian Perspective”, highlights five major environmental concerns.

- a. Rapid depletion of ground water aquifers
- b. The impending or actual death of major rivers through household sewage and industrial effluents
- c. Excessive air-pollution in the major cities of India
- d. Excessive degradation of forest and the associated loss of biodiversity
- e. Unregulated disposal of chemical and toxic waste. (Campos, 2017: 213-225, 214)

Although it affects everyone, the poor are the worst affected ones. The following paragraphs will highlight some of the effects of ecological injustices in India in the form of pollution, water crisis, displacement and the effect of climate changes in India.

Like all the other ecological crises, the poor are the worst hit victims of the air pollution as well. The current air pollution in India, CHG emissions, chemical and oil pollution, etc. have many far-reaching consequences for its people. The main concerns that India is facing are high infant mortality rates and low life expectancy (Chandra, 2015: 3).

According to a study, published in the *Lancet Planetary Journal* nearly 740000 deaths in India can be attributed to abnormal variations in the temperatures due to climate change

According to Philip J. Landrigan, M.D., Professor of Biology at Boston College and the director of the Global Observatory on Pollution and Health, pollution causes 1.67 million premature deaths per year, more than from COVID-19. He warns the Indians that its consequences will be long-lasting without efforts to reduce air pollution in the nation of 1.35 billion people. According to Landrigan's research the current air pollution in India is also having a profound effect on the next generation of Indians. It increases future risk for heart diseases, diabetes, and respiratory disease for today's children when they become adults. He also sees the possibility that it might reduce children's IQ. He also warns that it will be very difficult for India to move forward socially or economically if no solution is found for the problem (BC News, 2022). It should become an eye opener for every Indians because we have started experiencing these side effects in many parts of our country, especially in Delhi.

As we know that India's water crisis is a persistent problem. Although India has 16 per cent of the world's population, the country possesses only four per cent of the world's freshwater resources. India is water-stressed due to changing weather patterns

and repeated droughts. Studies show that about 256 of the 700 districts in India have reported ‘critical’ or ‘over-exploited’ groundwater levels according to the most recent Central Ground Water Board data (from 2017). We can assume that getting water in these places has become more difficult as the water table has dropped. It is saddening reality that the three-fourths of India’s rural families lack access to piped, drinkable water and must rely on unsafe sources and India has become the world’s largest extractor of groundwater, accounting for 25 per cent of the total. Much of the waters sources in India are contaminated and our major rivers are dying because of pollution (Behal, 2021). Here also we find that the poor are the worst affected ones.

According to the reports in 2021, almost 1.4 crore people in India were displaced by environmental disasters (Jain, 2021). It once again underlines that the poor are the most vulnerable group such environmental crises.

According to a study, published in the *Lancet Planetary Journal* nearly 740000 deaths in India can be attributed to abnormal variations in the temperatures due to climate change (The Hindu, 2021).

George Kodithottam S.J. (2021) in his article titled “The Climate Crisis and Its Impact on the Environment and the Marginalized Population in the Indian Subcontinent.”, brings to our attention the humanly-caused ecological crises in India. He adds that the poor are the most affected by calamities or ecological crises. He brings to our attention earthquakes, floods, and other environmental damages that have taken the life of many poor people and have made many homeless and poor (Kodithottam, 2021:110). There is an alarming suicidal rate among the farmers and daily wage earners in India because of the debt caused by the crop failure and related problems.

The majority of Indians depend on agriculture for their living. According to George Kodithottam, Indian agriculture is highly climate-sensitive. Climate variations (floods, droughts, global warming, etc.) make farming very risky. Many of the farmers take loans for preparing the soil but because of the climate change, the crops mostly fail. George notes that farming has become a very risky and a dangerous project now. Studies show that rising temperature and other climate changes have lowered the crop yield which leads to income insecurity. Hence there is an increase of suicide rate among the farmers in India. Over 12000 suicides were reported in the agricultural sector every year since 2013 (Kodithottam, 2021:110). The farmers from different parts of India are affected by different consequences of ecological crises. In some places, crops are destroyed because of drought, in other places destruction comes from heavy rain and flood.

2. Moral/Cultural/Structural Causes of the Environmental Crisis in India

Two scholars Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha classify Indians into three major groups according to their ecological framework. Though it is not a universally accepted classification like the caste system in India; their classification is still persuasive. Their classification is as follows

- a. The omnivores,
- b. The ecosystem peoples
- c. The ecological refugees.

According to them the Omnivores are the beneficiaries of modern development in India. They have purchasing and controlling power. They are only six percent of the population; they enjoy a luxurious life style. Eco-system people are the bulk of poor and cannot obtain new goods in the market. They somehow survive with a bare minimum. Half of the Indian population belong to this group. Ecological refugees are the millions of peasants and tribal people

who have been displaced to make way for new dams, mines and industries (Gadgil and Guha, 1995:3-4). Ecological refugees are victims of the ecological crisis created by the topmost layers of India who have control. This classification makes clearer that the upper layer in this classification causes greater damage to the environment by their greed-based accumulation and capitalistic approach. As a result of their unjust behaviour the poor becomes worst hit victims of the ecological crisis in India.

3. Moral Lens: *Laudato Si'* and Integral Ecology

Integral Ecology is the term popularized by Pope Francis in the encyclical *Laudato Si'* in 2015. It refers to an integrated and holistic approach to political, social, economic, and environmental problems. It addresses current global environmental concerns in a sustainable way. The following insights from *Laudato Si'* develop the concept and the need of Integral Ecology.

Laudato Si' (139) explicitly brings into our attention that we are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with a single crisis that is both social and environmental. The strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and protecting nature at the same time.

The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation. In fact, the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet. (*LS 48*) In future, there must be integral ecology.

The principle of the maximization of profits, frequently isolated from other considerations, reflects a misunderstanding of the very concept of the economy. As long as production is increased, little concern is given to whether it is at the cost of future resources or the health of the environment. As long as the

clearing of a forest increases production, no one calculates the losses entailed in the desertification of the land and; the harm done to biodiversity or the increased pollution. In a word, businesses profit by calculating and paying only a fraction of the costs involved. Yet only when the economic and social costs of using up shared environmental resources are transparent and fully borne by those who incur them, not by other peoples or future generations, can those actions be considered ethical. (LS 195)

4. Some Virtues Promoting the Value of Integral Ecology

Environmental Justice

Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, colour, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. This goal will be achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work (EPA 2014). According to *Laudato Si'*, a true ecological approach always becomes a

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social approach; it calls everyone to integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, in order to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

Laudato Si' (106) stresses that the environmental injustices are based on the false assumption that there is an infinite supply of the earth's goods. Accepting this assumption leads to the planet being

squeezed dry beyond any limit. It is not only an exploitation of the nature but also of the poor.

What I have just pointed out brings to the fore that a key issue underlying the crisis of ecology is the issue of justice and equity. Providing horrifying statistics, Oxfam warned in 2015 that the combined wealth of the richest 1 percent will overtake that of the other 99 percent of people soon unless the current trend of rising inequality is checked (Campos, 2017: 213-225, 221). The social teaching of the Catholic Church is clear on this matter.

“John Paul II summed it up: On the other hand, the earth is ultimately a common heritage, the fruits of which are for the benefit of all . . . This has direct consequences for the problem at hand. It is manifestly unjust that a privileged few should continue to accumulate excess goods, squandering available resources, while masses of people are living in conditions of misery at the very lowest level of subsistence. Today, the dramatic threat of ecological breakdown is teaching us the extent to which greed and selfishness—both individual and collective—are contrary to the order of creation, an order which is characterized by mutual interdependence” (John Paul, 1990:8).

We can find many instances where a few people enjoying of the privileges at the cost of the majority. It is a visible ecological injustice in today’s India

Charity

We know from *Summa Theologiae* that Charity means love of God. Eberhard Schockenhoff, in his paper, “The Theological Virtue of Charity (IIa IIae, qq.23-46)” where the section titled “The Theological Definition: Charity as Friendship with God,” claims that friendship, for Aquinas, is the “most complete realization of ‘love’, which embraces both the desire for a friend as well as the corresponding benevolence and the readiness for

doing good to one.” Taking that understanding further, Schockenhoff applies it to God’s charity saying, “God’s charity is simply a friendship of human beings with God, in the same way that any friendship appears as an outstanding variation of love.” (Schockenhoff, 2002: 244-248, 246). In 1 John (4:20) we read that we cannot love God whom we have not seen unless we love our brothers and sisters who we have seen. Therefore, I consider charity as the foundation for integral ecology.

In the Gospel of Mark (12:30-31) we read about Jesus’ greatest commandments of love - that is to love God with whole heart and mind and to love neighbour as oneself. In other words, loving the neighbour is equal to loving God. In the Gospel of Mathew (25: 40), we hear Jesus saying when we do something good for least of our brothers and sisters, we are doing it for God. The awareness God’s presence in oneself and in others will lead us to love others and help the neediest with whole heart (selflessly). In other words, we can establish a true friendship with God on earth itself, which means we can see God face to face through our friendship on earth. This friendship is possible only through the deepest love which is the first commandment and the example of Christ’s life.

Love is the beginning of true concern for the other which inspires one to effectively seek for other’s good. He also explains that solidarity is the proximate expression of charity to the community which suffer whereas mercy is proximate expression to the individual who suffer.

Daniel Daly’s book titled, *The Structures of Virtue and Vice*, speaks about charity. He notes that love is the beginning of true concern for the other which inspires one to effectively seek for other’s good. He also explains that solidarity is the proximate expression of charity to the community which suffer whereas mercy is proximate expression to the individual who suffer. (Daly, 2021:210-211). Therefore, I consider solidarity and mercy as the essential element

of charity. Pope Francis emphasises more about mercy and solidarity that are at the service of the virtue of Charity. There will be a discussion about mercy and solidarity as the principles that lead to operationalize the virtues.

5. Operationalising Virtues

Some Principles that leading to operationalization of these virtues of environmental justice, charity and care for our common home

1. Option for the Poor

The option for the poor can be understood as an abiding commitment grounded in Scripture and tradition to support social justice by placing oneself firmly (as individuals or as a member of an institution) on the side of the vulnerable and the marginalized (Massaro, 2016:117). The words and deeds of Jesus were deeply connected with this option for the well-being of the least fortunate. The idea of preferential option for the poor is strongly emphasized in the opening sentence of the Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes*. It calls to our attention that the joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties of the (people) of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted should become joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ (*Gaudium Et Spes* no 1). The current environmental crisis invites us to relive firmly the charism of the preferential option for the poor.

2. Notion of Common Good

There are numerous proper goals in life beyond our own private benefits. As responsible people we are called to look for the opportunities to participate and contribute to worthy causes to improve the society. Everyone has the responsibility to promote the common good for the wellbeing of all (Massaro, 2016: 89). The promotion of the common Good is the responsibilities of all to build a just society.

According to David Cloutier, the common good is primarily about relationship. It only secondarily is about material. To be in solidarity means to have common moral cause with others. Solidarity facilitates friendship among the persons who are in solidarity (Daly, 2021:211). Every individual and every society or institution are supposed to promote common Good.

3. Acts of Mercy

Act of mercy can be considered as a suitable way to put into operation the virtues mentioned above. Pope Francis considers “mercy” as a major principle in this world of personal indifference to the poor and suffering. Without mercy there is no charity. In my opinion only a merciful heart can bring about beautiful virtues to support the victims of the ecological injustices.

According to Pope Francis; mercy is that “love which embraces the misery of the human person. Carrying the burden of others and helping them walk. Aquinas says that mercy is being affected by the sorrow and misery of another; as if it were one’s own (Daly, 2021:114). Only when we identify the suffering of others as our own suffering then only, we can really be merciful.

Mercy is a medicine in our age of the virus of indifference (greed, profit-oriented activities, etc.). Church of the Lord, nourishes the preferential love for the weakest (Daly, 2021:114). It is an invitation for all of us to open the eyes of mercy to see the sufferings of poor who are affected by the ecological and other injustices. James Keenan notes that without being merciful to others we cannot think about justice. Mercy leads us to justice. By encountering the other, we are able to be awakened to the call of justice (Keenan, 2010:134). It is a crucial time to be awakened to that call of Justice.

4. Principle of Solidarity

Solidarity is a word that contains multiple meanings. It calls our attention to the fact that people are interdependent. Human interdependence is not only a necessary fact but also a positive value

in our lives (Massaro, 2016:87-88). St. John Paul II repeatedly reminded us that solidarity is a necessary virtue. God not only allows people to depend upon one another, but absolutely wills that human live in the context of intimate as well as large groupings of our neighbours. Our destinies are linked to other people whether they are our friends in nearby or strangers distant from us (Massaro, 2016: 88). Solidarity begins from an inner attitude; when it has fully taken root within a person, it expresses itself through numerous activities that demonstrates a person's commitment to the wellbeing of others (Massaro, 2016: 88).

Pope Francis presents two sides of solidarity. It is a virtue that spontaneously produces actions that serve the poor and the common good. Secondly it consists of habits of solidarity, which need to be practised. It opens a way for structural transformation (Massaro, 2016:115). Therefore, the principle of solidarity a way to promote common good by caring for the weakest.

5. Exemplars: The Beatitudes (Matthew 5: 3 -12)

The beatitudes can be the best examples for practicing the virtues of Charity and environmental justice by the act of mercy, solidarity, option for the poor and so on. The insight from Lucas Chan in his book, *The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes: Biblical Studies and Ethics for Real Life* is a perfect way to approach in following of beatitudes. According to Chan, in the first beatitude, we all are invited to turn our gaze, on 'the poor in spirit' who are the poorest of the poor, economically deprived and socially alienated. Turning to the second macarism, "Blessed are they who mourn," we are actually recognizing those who already are mourning. In this second macarism, Chan considers those who mourn are therefore like "The Lord who is close to the broken-hearted" wanting to respond to "those who are crushed in spirit," as the Psalmist says (Psalm 38:14). It is a

call to have the preferential option for the poor (Chan, 2012: 151-200).

James F. Keenan, S.J, in his article titled, “Grieving in the Upper Room: Vulnerability, Recognition, Conscience and the Holy Spirit” affirms Chan’s insight on the beatitudes as an invitation or us to have the preferential option for the poor. According to Keenan, the third and fourth beatitude also helps us to respond to the poor in spirit in a deeper way. Likewise, the fifth beatitude is a call for us to be merciful because we have cultivated true mourning in order to feel with the other. Affirming Chan’s reflection, Keenan writes that being merciful makes us the other-centered persons with the purity of hearts. This openness will lead us to become peace makers who can respond to the works of justice, peace and wellbeing of poor (Keenan, 2021:9-10). The true understanding of the beatitudes will help us to see and responds to the injustices done to the poor with the eyes of Christ.

6. Evaluation of Ecological Justice in Indian Context

a. Ecological Justice: A Lens through Which to Judge Environmental Injustices in India

In the light of the first two parts of this paper, the environmental injustices in India have the following causes.

- i. The ecological injustices in India which lacks the notion of common good continue to help the rich in the accumulation of wealth and resources. Such injustices have widened the gap between the rich and poor. The six percent of the rich enjoy good and comfortable life at the expense of the basic necessities of the poor.
- ii. Environmental irresponsibility such careless disposal of wastes from factories and households, results many consequences. This is also a failure to promote the common good and care for our common home.
- iii. Corruption and manipulation of government policies that leads to deforestation, unsafe functioning of factories, mining, sand

digging, etc are also contributing to the ecological injustices in India.

iv. Remaining silent and walking away from injustices is an attitude too common in many Indians. A dangerous notion has entered into Indian minds, i.e., “as long as it doesn’t affect me, I don’t bother”.

v. The present model of industrial development in India has given rise to problems of health, economic, water, etc which affect our survival. It has an impact not only on urban area but also on rural areas. It takes an immediate-profit or result based development and ignores the long-lasting dangers.

These are some of the problems that need correcting in order to bring about ecological justice in India, which takes into consideration how they affect the poor. Pope John Paul Second emphasized in one of his homilies that the fruits of the earth supposed to be for the benefit of all. It is a clear injustice that a privileged group (few in number) accumulate excess good and squanders natural resources while the majority of the people are in a misery. The Both the individual and collective greed and selfishness give rise to such ecological breakdown which is contrary to the order of creation, characterized by mutual interdependence (John Paul, 1990:8). Conversion implies a turning away from the injustices mentioned above. The widening gap between the rich and poor are vividly seen in Indian society. We need to promote the values of common good, caring for the common home and preferring option for the poor in a more profound way.

“In an interview in 2008, Bishop Gianfranco Girotto, an official at the Apostolic Penitentiary, spoke about “social sins” and illustrated them with examples. Among those he mentioned were economic injustice, environmental irresponsibility, accumulation of excessive wealth, and genetic experimentation with unforeseen consequences (Campos, 2017: 213-225, 223).”

Consumerism is an addiction to the accumulation of things which is connected with lack of mercy, solidarity and concern for the marginalized. It is one of the vices against the integral ecology that is seen in India.

“It emphasizes the wants and desires of consumers while ignoring the rights and claims of the poor, of future generations and of the rest of the planet and leads us to forget that we are also sisters and brothers to all the other humans on the planet, and called to show a special regard for those on the margin. It is shameful that approximately 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” (LS 50). This is where restitution comes in and the burden is squarely placed on the privileged countries and the elite within each country to restore to the victims of their pride and greed and consumerism that which was rightfully theirs (Campos, 2017: 213-225, 77-78).”

We see in India that the gap between the poor and the richest is widening day by day. The lack of preferential option for the poor has caused this gap. There is an urgent need of an integral ecology in India. We cannot care for the mother earth without caring for the poor. There is no question of ecological justice without doing the social justice in India.

b. A Way Forward to Build a Better Future

This section will deal with the possible individual and structural initiatives towards creating an integral ecology in India.

A Change of Attitude and Lifestyle

On the individual level, ecological conversion demands a change of attitude and a change of lifestyle. We need to realize that “being” is more important than “having.” If the world is based on having more and more there is no scope for the survival of the earth (Campos, 2017: 213-225, 78).

There is a need to identify the problem as my own and need to work for the resolution of this problem. Walking away from the structural vice is like walking away from Omelas- the evil remains unchanged (Daly, 2021:210). I consider the best way by which we can bring about the change is to start changing oneself - the life style and the attitude which blocks the integral ecology. The second way is to bring awareness to others and to challenge the oppressive systems to adapt the attitude and life-style that promotes integral ecology.

Practice of Solidarity

Practice of solidarity is not merely is an instrumental virtue capable of producing good effects but also contains an intrinsic component- the good of being in relation with others. (Daly, 2021:211). According to Pope Francis solidarity opens way for structural transformation (Daly, 2021:210). Therefore, solidarity calls us to share the burdens of the one another. In that sense, sharing the burden of others as my own leads me to the deeper solidarity and in turn will lead to individual and structural transformation. Solidarity is one of the means to promote the common good and ecological justice in India.

Caring for Our Common Home by caring for the Poor

As we have seen earlier the poor are the worst hit victims of ecological crisis. In that sense caring for our common home is also about caring for the poor and the marginalized. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis expands the idea of the option for the poor by connecting it to the principle of the common good which now includes care for the earth. He considers the preferential option for the poor as an “ethical imperative” to promote our participation in the common good. This is an invitation for us to show solidarity and have a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters and to affirm their dignity and wellbeing (Martins, 2018: 410-424,419).

‘The option for the poor’ can be a principle to operationalize care for the common home, common good and integral ecology. I have seen many homes where mothers care for the weakest or sick child more in order to make the child healthy and strong. In that sense the option for the poor is way to make Indian society and world better. It should be noted that on 17th May, 2020 the Pope and the Dicastery for promoting the Integral Human Development announced a seven-year action plan in the light of *Laudato Si*. It is aimed at total sustainability and recommended to be practiced by all the families, organizations and institutions within the church (Daly, 2021:213). Such initiatives can be a model for promoting integral ecology in our own families and smaller communities.

The parable of the Good Samaritan portrays neighbour-love definitively as the practice of mercy. Fratelli Tutti challenges us to be good Samaritans; in a world which is indifferent to respond to the sufferings of others. We reject the prophetic call to be good Samaritans by turning away from the suffering of others (Fratelli tutti 65). We remember why Jesus tells this parable. By the end of the story, we are no longer looking at the neighbour who is wounded but rather at the neighbour who is caring. The scribe therefore answers that the neighbour is the one who shows mercy. In the beginning we think the parable is about whom we should assist. But the end it is really about who we are called to be. We are called to be like the Good Samaritan by becoming a caring neighbour (Keenan 2010: 118-119). Opting to become a good neighbour will be the right step towards integral ecology.

Conclusion

As these pages have argued, there is an urgent need of introducing and establishing integral ecology in India. Looking at the current scenario, we can see the option for the poor as the best way to promote integral ecology in India. As our theology is born out of human experience, so it must address the issues leading to human suffering. Virtues of charity, solidarity, mercy, compassion, and the promotion of the common good, the preferential option for the poor,

the practice of justice and equity must become the pillars of theology in responding to the victims of environmental crises in India. Clement Camposs CSsR writes eloquently of the suffering of the other that invites us to take a prophetic role against the violence and injustices and act with compassion in solidarity with the victims. According to him, our theology, which is born out of human experiences, does not seek primarily to explain evil but find ways in which evil and suffering can be resisted and transformed by our prophetic role as Christian community (Campos, 2017: 213-225, 219). It is a call for liberating the weakest.

It is important for us as a Christian community to reflect on our responsibility and to be more compassionate to the worst-hit victims of injustices that create the environmental crises. We know that romanticizing ecology can pose a danger in achieving integral ecology. *Laudato Si'* warns that our ecological culture should not be reduced to a onetime and partial response to pollution, environmental degradation, and depletion of natural resources by promoting temporary solution which only grab headline. Such romantic ecological initiatives fail to address the real issues related to ecology that unfairly harm the poor. Such an approach would be like building a wall to cover over the real problems. Ecological justice will have no meaning without looking at the justice for the poor. The way forward is focusing on the care for vulnerable people and promoting their common good, which, in turn, will benefit the environment.

There is an urgent need to educate and motivate future generations to practice integral ecology, that is to be aware that the earth has enough resources required for the needs of all human beings. These resource, however, must be shared and not be reserved for the few. Our education should give rise to a generation with compassionate and committed hearts who would understand the multiple struggles of those who are poor because of the unjust behaviour of the few.

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