



FABC

FEDERATION OF ASIAN BISHOPS' CONFERENCES

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**FABC Pastoral Letter
To the Local Churches in Asia on the Care of Creation:
A Call to Ecological Conversion**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Peace and blessings to you all.

We write to you, as shepherds of the Church in Asia, a land of rich cultures, ancient traditions, and deep faith. In this cradle of human and spiritual diversity, the Word of God continues to offer hope to many facing trials and challenges.

Today, we reflect on the urgency of responding to the ecological crisis in our time. On the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, a prophetic call for humanity to rediscover its relationship with creation, God, and one another, we renew our commitment to care for our common home. This message is further deepened by Pope Francis' *Laudate Deum*, which calls for decisive action to safeguard the earth for future generations.

As we continue to celebrate the Jubilee of Hope 2025, we are inspired by the words of St. Paul to the Romans, that "...afflictions produce endurance, and endurance proven character, and proven character hope. And hope does not disappoint..." (Rom 5:5). Christian hope calls us to engage actively in the restoration of creation and the healing of the wounds of our world. This letter is an invitation to recognize the ecological sufferings of our time—not as reasons to despair but as an invitation to endurance, action, and hope rooted in Christ.

I. The Afflictions of Our Common Home

Across Asia, we see creation groaning under the weight of human indifference, abuse, and exploitation. The consequences are already visible and scientifically attested:

- *Deforestation and Biodiversity Loss:* The rainforests of Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Myanmar and the Philippines are being devastated, displacing indigenous

communities and threatening biodiversity. These forests, vital for the survival of the planet, are under immense pressure from illegal logging, agricultural expansion, and mining.

- *Rising Sea Levels and Coastal Displacement:* Warming in the Pacific Ocean has intensified typhoons, flooding, and rising sea levels which are threatening the existence of entire villages in countries like the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Vietnam. Coastal communities face increasing displacement, with millions vulnerable to the impacts of climate-induced migration.
- *Water Security:* The melting of glaciers in the Himalayas and drying rivers in South and Central Asia are endangering the water supply for millions. These changes exacerbate conflicts over water resources, particularly in river basins shared by multiple nations.
- *Air Pollution and Health Impacts:* Cities across Asia, such as Beijing and Shanghai, Dhaka, Delhi, Karachi, Jakarta, Manila and Bangkok, are suffocating under hazardous levels of air pollution. This air pollution significantly contributes to respiratory diseases, especially among children and the elderly, and reduces overall quality of life.
- *Stronger and More Frequent Extreme Weather Events:* The warming of the Pacific Ocean is precipitating frequent and ever-intensified typhoons that have disastrous effects on the Southeast Asian countries facing the Pacific Ocean, especially the Philippines. These effects are felt all the way through South Asia (e.g., India, Pakistan, Bangladesh) and East Asia (e.g., China, Taiwan, Japan), leading to devastation, displacement and economic hardship. These powerful storms are a reminder that our inaction on climate change will only deepen the suffering of our most vulnerable brothers and sisters
- *Agricultural Crises and Food Security:* Droughts, floods, and unpredictable weather patterns are wreaking havoc on agriculture, reducing crop yields and threatening food security. Climate change is particularly devastating for rural populations that rely on farming for their livelihood.

These ecological tragedies affect Asia's poorest and most vulnerable communities—coastal families whose homes are washed away, farmers who can no longer grow crops, and children who suffer from polluted air and water. Political leaders, government policymakers, and decision-makers, especially the lay Catholics among them, must be reminded: the choices you make today will be judged by the generations to come. Will you leave behind a planet scarred by exploitation, or a home that reflects the beauty of God's creation?

In this time of the Jubilee, these afflictions call us to repentance, conversion, and a deeper commitment to our shared responsibility, as stewards of God's creation.

II. Signs of Hope: The Spirit at Work

Despite these challenges, we see signs of hope that the Holy Spirit is alive and active in our world:

- *Community Resilience:* Grassroots movements, such as the reforestation efforts and the rehabilitation of mangroves in many parts of Asia, show the resilience of local communities.

These efforts sustain biodiversity and the livelihoods of indigenous peoples, who are at the forefront of climate action.

- *Ecological Ministries and Education:* Across Asia, dioceses have embraced ecological ministries, from green audits of parishes to renewable energy projects, integrating creation care into parish life and Catholic education. These efforts inspire others to follow.
- *Youth Engagement:* Young people in our dioceses are rising as champions of integral ecology, heeding Pope Francis' call in *Laudate Deum* to act with urgency for the future of the planet. Their commitment offers hope for the future of creation and challenges us all to act with greater responsibility.
- *Interfaith and Civil Society Collaboration:* The urgency of climate justice transcends religious boundaries. It is a crucial starting point for ecumenical and interreligious dialogues, as well as partnerships with civil society and all people of good will. As Christians, we must walk alongside our neighbour-religions in this shared advocacy for the care of our common home.
- *A Mission for Basic Ecclesial Communities:* The transformation of Basic Ecclesial Communities into Basic Human Communities can help nurture a wider human fraternity and a shared sense of stewardship for creation, bridging faith-based efforts with global sustainability goals.
- *The Church's Commitment in the Jubilee Year:* As part of the Jubilee Year of Hope 2025, the Church is incorporating Care for Creation as an essential theme, urging dioceses and parishes to strengthen ecological initiatives and promote sustainable lifestyles as an expression of faith.

These signs of hope remind us that suffering is not the end. As Pope Francis emphasizes, the love of God, poured out through the Holy Spirit, inspires us to participate boldly in the mission of renewing creation (cf. Romans 5:5).

III. Our Call to Action

Hope compels us to action. As local Churches in Asia, we must rise to meet this moment with courage and determination. We must address the ecological crisis through four critical dimensions: mitigation, adaptation, legislation and finance.

a. Mitigation: Bridging the Gap

We must advocate for stronger climate commitments, such as the Paris Agreement, and work to bridge the gap between national climate targets and the scientifically necessary 1.5°C global goal. Preserving Asia's rainforests, coral reefs and rivers must be a priority. Governments, businesses, and communities must work together to ensure these ecosystems thrive, with indigenous peoples leading the way. As stated in our FABC 50 Bangkok Document which echoes *Laudato Si'*, we must acknowledge that "the environment is on loan to each generation, and we are responsible for the way we leave it for those who follow" (BD, 104). We owe it to future generations to protect this shared heritage.

b. Adaptation and Loss and Damage: Standing with the Vulnerable

The poor are the first and hardest hit by climate change. We must amplify their voices and demand accountability from governments and industries. Funding for adaptation and loss and damage must be accelerated, particularly for vulnerable countries and communities in Asia. The FABC 50 Bangkok Document reminds us that intergenerational solidarity is not an option but a question of justice (BD, 104).

c. National and International Legislation in Defence of Ecology

We must actively lobby for the creation of environmental laws with well-defined implementing rules on solid, liquid, and gaseous-waste management, regulations on mining, and the protection of watersheds, and make it possible for communities and small nations to demand accountability from national and multinational corporations that are proven to be abusive and destructive of the environment.

d. Finance

Climate financing rooted in justice is essential. Polluters must pay their fair share, and wealthier nations must fulfil their commitments to fund climate action. In this Jubilee Year, we must also advocate for debt relief, recognizing that debt traps prevent many nations from effectively addressing the climate crisis.

Beyond debt relief, however, what is truly needed is a comprehensive review of the entire system of international loaning—one that prioritizes the well-being of debtor countries rather than perpetuating cycles of dependence and financial subjugation. Economic justice demands that financial institutions and lending nations rethink unfair structures that constrain climate action and sustainable development in the Global South.

IV. Participation in COP 30: A Call for Active Engagement

As we seek to deepen our commitment to ecological conversion and global solidarity, we also encourage all local Churches in Asia to participate actively in the upcoming COP 30, which will take place in Belem, Brazil, in 2025. This Conference offers an essential platform for nations and communities to come together and renew their commitment to climate action. We call on our dioceses to contribute by raising awareness, supporting climate advocacy, and engaging with decision-makers to push for ambitious and equitable climate solutions. Let us ensure that the voices of the most vulnerable are heard and that the call for justice resonates strongly, especially in the context of our shared Christian responsibility to care for the earth and all its inhabitants.

V. The Season of Creation: A Time of Spiritual and Ecological Renewal

As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of *Laudato Si'* and the Jubilee Year of Hope 2025, we also invite all local Churches in Asia to sustain the celebration of the Season of Creation, from September 1 (Feast of the Act of Creation in many Oriental Churches) to October 4 (Memorial of St. Francis of Assisi, Patron Saint of Ecology). This special time is an opportunity to deepen our spiritual and ecological renewal by:

- a. Educating our communities about ecological responsibility.
- b. Promoting simpler, more sustainable lifestyles.

- c. Nurturing a spirituality of creation that deepens our relationship with God, humanity, and the cosmos.

We must not let fear or apathy paralyze us. Instead, let us walk the Pilgrimage of Hope together, responding with faith and courage. We trust that Christ walks with us, renewing the face of the earth through our collective efforts.

Conclusion

Let this Lenten Season be an occasion for us to examine our consciences and humbly admit our sins against God's creation. Let it be an opportunity for us to respond to God's call to ecological conversion.

As we continue our journey towards becoming a missionary synodal Church, let us entrust ourselves to Mary, our Blessed Mother, who journeys with us as we care for God's creation. May her intercession inspire us to act with courage, wisdom, and compassion for the sake of our common home.

Yours faithfully in Christ,



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