

Pastoral Message of the Catholic Church in Thailand

On the Occasion of Human Rights Day

Sunday November 18, 2018

From Climate Justice to Stop Using Plastic

Dear All Christians,

Sunday November 18, 2018 is the Human Rights Celebration Day of the Catholic Church in Thailand for 2018. Pope Francis has also dedicated this same day as the Second World Day of the Poor. Both intentions dedicating this day are similarly important and reflect one another because human rights are what human beings are entitled to for their living with human dignity, safety and happiness. But whenever human life is disturbed, threatened and its humanity is reduced with suffering and difficulties instead of living a normal and happy life, they are pushed more towards poverty and become the poor at the end.

One of the factors causing more poor people in the world, the big home of all humanity throughout this present decade, is the crisis of climate. Pope Francis is very much concerned with this issue and has published his encyclical 'Laudato Si' 3 years ago to warn everyone of natural disasters in various regions resulted from climate change that affects all creatures living on this earth and is caused by activities of each one of us who lives in this materialistic society with technological progress.

Recently, meetings of different continental bishops' conferences around the world in 2018 have jointly issued a statement on climate justice describing that "hearing 'the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor', and awareness that *valuable time is not much left*, we could not allow all these to deteriorate rapidly'. The statement calls for international community at all levels which would take part in a summit of state parties to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), or COP 24 in December 2018 in Poland to implement Paris Agreement signed in 2015 addressing the problem and seriously and urgently respond to this climatic crisis. It is because *'human dignity and rights, particularly of the weakest, must be the center of agenda of the global warming*

conference and the implementation of Paris Agreement. Rights of all human beings must be protected, respected and supported by policies and implementation'

The key message of the statement on climate justice of the worldwide Catholic bishops' conferences in 2018 agrees with urgent proposal of Paris Agreement to end fossil fuel era with collaboration in restricting increase of average global temperature to no more than 2 degrees Celsius from the industrial revolution era, and will limit it from increasing more than 1.5 degree Celsius if possible to prevent danger to the climate before it would not be recovered. In agricultural sector, there is a need to change from monocropping for the benefit of large business or for carbon credit towards eco-agriculture or organic farming to protect the environment and community. In industrial sector, it should turn to renewable energy. Moreover, the statement also calls on all people to change their lifestyle, spirit and thought, and take action to reduce ecological footprint, which is the impacts of human activities with technological advance, especially from overconsumption and increase volume of waste, on the natural ecosystem.

We cannot deny that the cry of the nature continues and is much closer to us. The Catholic Church in Thailand is aware of an urgency to be a part in not increasing the cry of the mother earth and the cry of our suffering brothers and sisters by calling all Christians to take action and be part of the world population who are campaigning to reduce the use of plastic and styro foam, which are the main problem of the world. With behavior on use and throw away of each one, plastic and styro foam that cannot degrade are the factors that destroy natural ecosystem, human being, especially soil and coastal area, and directly affect livelihood and health of the poor.

The call of worldwide bishops who are collaborating with international community to advocate for solution to and building of climate justice and the call of the Catholic Church in Thailand on all people to take action on reducing plastic waste are the same call because all global problems are resulted from ignorance, negligence and lack of concern of each individual, which Pope Francis always warns us. With this reason, I, on behalf of the Catholic Church in

Thailand, **invite all people to take serious action by refusing, reducing and stop using plastic** or if use, we should use and reuse it for several times, as well as turning to materials made from plants or cloth products so that the soil and rivers will gradually recover. Although this is just a single action, but if all collaborate in this action, it is a major responsibility on building justice for climate as appealed by Pope Francis to give this rich heritage to the new generation to come for their existence with human dignity.

May Jesus bless you all who build and maintain justice and peace.



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