

## **Section 70: Spirituality of the Heart, A missionary spirituality of intercessory prayer.**

In his Apostolic Letter 'Evangelii Gaudium' ('The Joy of the Gospel') Pope Francis writes: "*In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. Mt 28:19). Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus*" (EG 120). That doesn't mean that every baptized person should get involved in missionary projects. One more way of being a missionary is by doing good to other people or to the earth through prayers of intercession.

The Pope speaks about "*the missionary power of intercessory prayer*" (EG 281). "*Intercession is a way of penetrating the Father's heart and discovering new dimensions which can shed light on concrete situations and change them. We may say that God's heart is touched by our intercession*" (EG 283).

In fact, before we start praying for someone, God is already present with that person in a caring way, states the Pope. Prayer of intercession is "*a spiritual gaze born of deep faith which acknowledges what God is doing in the lives of others*" (EG 282). "*What our intercession achieves is that God's power, his love and his faithfulness are shown ever more clearly in the midst of the people*" (EG 283) .

However, we are also called to combine our prayer with some form of real care, as far as possible. We shouldn't forget, says the Pope, "*that the ultimate criterion on which our lives will be judged is what we have done for others. Prayer is most precious, for it nourishes a daily commitment to love. Our worship becomes pleasing to God when we devote ourselves to living generously, and allow God's gift, granted in prayer, to be shown in our concern for our brothers and sisters*" (Gaudete et Exultate 104).

As a conclusion of his extensive reflections in "Laudato Si" on the care of creation as our common home, the Pope invites us to support our practical concern for the earth by praying for the protection of its life and beauty. He proposes two prayers: one can be shared with every believer in God the Creator; the other one is a Christian prayer, inspired by the Gospel. Here, I present the first prayer for your time of reflection. A part of the Christian prayer you may find in section 25 of this Online Course.

## REFLECTION

### “A PRAYER FOR OUR EARTH”

*“All-powerful God,  
you are present in the whole universe  
and in the smallest of your creatures.  
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.*

*Pour out upon us the power of your love,  
that we may protect life and beauty.*

*Fill us with peace,  
that we may live as brothers and sisters,  
harming no one.*

*O God of the poor, help us to rescue  
the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,  
so precious in your eyes.*

*Bring healing to our lives,  
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,  
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.  
Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain  
at the expense of the poor and the earth.*

*Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,  
to be filled with awe and contemplation,  
to recognize that we are profoundly  
united with every creature  
as we journey towards your infinite light.*

*We thank you for being with us each day.  
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle  
for justice, love and peace.”*

(Pope Francis, *Laudato Si* n. 246)