



**APPEAL FOR A MEANINGFUL SEASON OF CREATION 2020:  
JUBILEE FOR THE EARTH**

Your Eminence, Beatitude, Grace and Excellency,  
Esteemed Heads of religious Congregations,  
Esteemed Priests,  
Esteemed Teachers and those responsible for Educational institutions

Greetings of peace, solidarity and hope!

These are trying times and we yearn for remission. The COVID-19 pandemic is currently affecting Asia and the rest of the world: joint efforts suggest that it will be overcome in a few years. But in the long term, the greatest challenge facing humankind in the 21st century is human-made climate change and the associated ecological crisis. The well-being of many future generations in Asia and worldwide depends on coping with them.

This year, the Catholic Church fully participates in the ecumenical Season of Creation, following the invitation by Pope Francis. This special season, which the Holy Father describes as a “season of increased prayer and effort on behalf of our common home”, begins on 1st September, the Word Day of Prayer for the Care for Creation and ends on 4th October, the Feast Day of Saint Francis of Assisi. The theme for 2020 is Jubilee for the Earth: New Rhythms, New Hope. We in Asia hope to witness the Spirit renewing the face of earth as we consider the integral relationship between rest for the earth and our ways of living – ecological, economic, social and political. Through action in our families, parishes, schools, youth organisations, dioceses that is rooted in prayer, we seek to heal and renew our relationship with our common home.

We find inspiration in the *Laudato Si'* encyclical's call to undergo an “ecological conversion” and in the Word of God – Leviticus 25: 10-12 tells us that the Jubilee Year is a time of reprieve; its more familiar aspects being the setting free of slaves, the settling of debts and the restoration of property and ownership rights. Of note however, is that the Jubilee Year stipulated a time of rest for the land i.e. the earth, during which no sowing or reaping would take place. The land would have to lie fallow every fiftieth year, in addition to the Sabbath Year that took place every seventh year. The proclamation of the Jubilee Year by Yahweh highlights the intimate connection between the earth and its inhabitants, an intertwining that has been present since the time of creation.

Over the centuries, the Catholic Church has celebrated Jubilee Years as a time of conversion and finding new ways for personal and social lifestyles and for the receipt of graces. The former Superior General of the Society of Jesus, The Very Reverend Adolfo Nicolás SJ, aptly explained that the Jubilee is a blessed time to be grateful for – and since not everyone is blessed in the same measure, this blessing ought to be passed on to the earth, the poor, and to others. We may have overlooked our connection with our common home over the last decades. Certainly, the on-going COVID-19 pandemic has us focused, and rightly so, on the cry of the poor. Yet, in harkening to the marginalised and the less fortunate, we cannot neglect that this very cry of the poor is the cry of the earth too, as Pope Francis has made explicit in *Laudato Si'* (49).

I therefore appeal to all the Bishops, religious, priests, those responsible for educational institutions, and families of Asia to make the Season of Creation meaningful in your own dioceses, Congregations, schools, parishes or homes, and invite other groups to participate as well. The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences is offering various suggestions and resources for 2020. These can be availed from the Season of Creation website: <https://seasonofcreation.org>. We hope that soon we may have another link as well prepared by the Office of Human Development of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences and the Commission for Ecology of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India.

It is hoped that these suggestions serve as springboard in deepening our care for creation, and give the earth a reprieve from the onslaught of exploitation.

With my blessing and the affirmation of the availability of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences during this Season of Creation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a small cross symbol followed by a stylized cursive name.

✠ **Charles Maung Cardinal Bo, SDB**  
Archbishop of Yangon  
President, Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences  
22 August 2020