

SoMi – Bulletin – JVID

Claretian Missionaries



In the present edition of SoMi Bulletin 8, we celebrate with gratitude to God and Pope Francis the 10th Anniversary of the Encyclical Letter of Laudato Si. On May 24, the solemnity of Pentecost in 2015, Pope Francis put into the public arena the document “Laudato Si, on Care for Our Common Home,” where the core of his teachings is on ecological conversion to live integral ecology, its principles, and practical applications. Integral ecology recognizes the interconnectedness and interdependence between human beings, the earth-universe, and God.

In the encyclical document, Pope Francis pointed out faith, social, economic, political, and environmental issues are not separate problems but are the many dimensions of one overarching crisis. The flora and fauna, the heavens and seas, and all human beings are not objects to be used and controlled but are wondrous reflections of the divine; they are God's creations and are gifts to be protected, loved, and shared.

It was the first papal encyclical on the environment; however, it came out of a long theological tradition that sees the natural world as a form of divine revelation. Laudato Si' shows a pastoral heart with a clear awareness of the suffering of people and the world; it invites us to listen to the cry of the poor and the cry of our mother earth. It guides to an alternate development model, a new ethic based on justice and solidarity.

With Laudato Si', according to Deane-Drummond, “Pope Francis appealed to the world in a way that was incredibly ambitious, and, consequently, the encyclical had an astonishing influence on the world of science. The encyclical even influenced the U.N. Climate Change Conference that was held several months later, and the resulting Paris Agreement (September 2015) may not have happened if he hadn't released it then.”

Eight years later, on St. Francis of Assisi's feast day, Pope Francis released a follow-up document, “Laudate Deum” (Praise God), ahead of the U.N. Climate Change Conference in the United Arab

Emirates. The exhortation presented an even stronger critique of global inaction and indifference to climate change.

Pope Francis invited us, in a very beautiful and spiritual way, to ecological conversion, to proclaim and live the Gospel of creation, and to respond with a new heart and mind to God's called in this new century.

The hope is that new Pope Leo XIV will give continuity to what was started by his predecessor, as he already repeatedly has mentioned the same themes of climate change, exploitation of the poor and of Earth's resources, and the importance of protecting the planet.



Message from Major Superior of JVID:

Solidarity and Mission: Set Afire with Gospel Courage

As we journey through another season of grace and commitment, I extend heartfelt greetings to each of you, who, as readers or as agents of transformation, embody the spirit of *Solidarity and Mission* (SoMi) in diverse, challenging, and grace-filled contexts. The first quarter of 2025 has already seen many Claretian SoMi initiatives offering us rich experiences of interreligious dialogue, ecological conversion, social justice advocacy, and transformative community engagement. Each one was a reminder that our mission is not only about doing, but about *being present* where God's people need us most.

We embrace this year as a Jubilee Year, which is a time of renewal, reconciliation, and rediscovery of our mission in light of hope. Pope Francis has invited the Church to live this Jubilee under the theme "Pilgrims of Hope". In our SoMi initiatives, we are indeed pilgrims, walking with the poor, the displaced, the wounded Earth, and with our brothers and sisters of other faiths. Our journey is one of compassion, dialogue, and deep listening, all of which are signs of hope in our fragmented world. In this background, I am very happy about the Claretian commitment to ecological conversion, universal fraternity, and the building of communities rooted in justice, peace, and the care of the common home.

I invite each of you, dear sisters, brothers, collaborators, and partners, to deepen your commitment to SoMi as an expression of our Jubilee journey. Let us walk together as pilgrims of hope, with eyes fixed on Christ, hearts open to others, and hands ready to serve.

A special word of thanks to Fr. Everest Dias, CMF (SoMi Coordinator), Fr. Efrain Vasquez Mamani, CMF (Editor of this bulletin), and the entire SoMi team for their tireless dedication. Their labor and prophetism sow seeds of transformation far beyond what we can immediately see.

Let us move forward with courage, with communion, and with vision. May the fire of the Gospel continue to animate our hearts and hands.

Fr. Joseph Jeyaseelan, CMF
Major Superior
Claretian Missionaries – Sri Lanka & South Sudan



Message from Prefect of Apostolate and SoMi Coordinator:

Dear brothers and sisters in Mission. Warm greetings of peace, solidarity, and hope!

As we journey together in our shared commitment to the Gospel and the world, I wish to share with you a brief but heartfelt reflection on our recent efforts and future direction in the light of Solidarity and Mission (SoMi). Our vision continues to be inspired by the call “to act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8) and all creation,” particularly in our commitment to Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation (QC 6, CC 46).

1. Responding to the Triple Planetary Crisis. Our planet is currently facing a threefold ecological emergency: climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. As SoMi collaborators, we cannot remain indifferent. In our communities, formation houses, schools, and missions, we are called to intensify our response to this crisis. Through education, lifestyle transformation, and community-based action, we continue to raise awareness and inspire action for ecological conversion (cf. MS 8). Tree-planting campaigns, sustainable agriculture, waste reduction initiatives, and eco-spirituality workshops have been taking root across our provinces as signs of hope and seeds of resilience.

2. Protecting Oceans and Marine Life Inspired by the Nice Conference in France. The recent Nice Conference on Ocean and Marine Protection strongly reminded us that “the health of the ocean is the health of humanity.” As a missionary body connected to coastal and island communities, we are urged to promote the protection of our oceans, rivers, and marine ecosystems. In collaboration with local authorities, fisherfolk, and youth groups, we are beginning new projects that combine awareness, advocacy, and direct action to protect marine biodiversity and reduce ocean pollution.

3. Advocacy for Justice, Peace, and Truth in Sri Lanka. Amidst ongoing social, political, religious, and economic challenges in Sri Lanka, our SoMi team is becoming more deeply engaged in advocacy for justice, peace, and truth. We are forming networks of collaboration with local human rights groups, interreligious bodies, and youth activists to raise a collective voice against injustice and corruption. At the same time, we support our mission in the peripheries, trauma healing, truth-telling initiatives, and reconciliation among divided communities.

4. Our Focus on Self-Sustainability and Laudato Si Goals as a Congregation. In a world facing inequality, ecological crises, and global instability, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Laudato Si Goals (LSG) offer a moral and spiritual call to uphold human dignity and protect creation. As a faith-based community, these goals align with our Gospel mission of justice, peace, and care for the earth. Self-sustainability is central to this mission. By fostering spiritual, economic, and ecological self-reliance, we reduce dependency and affirm dignity. Let us embrace the SDGs not as secular aims, but as pathways to Kingdom values, which are clearly designed too in LSGs. May we build a culture of sustainability that brings life to all and leaves no one behind.

As a SoMi family, we continue our dialogue and cooperation with the United Nations and Mission Procure Offices and JPIC in general-level sharing of information and resources and joining campaigns that connect local concerns to global commitments.

A heartfelt thanks to you all, especially to the members of the SoMi team in the St. Joseph Vaz Independent Delegation, Sri Lanka, and South Sudan.

Fr. Everest Dias, CMF,
JVID – Prefect of Apostolate & SoMi Coordinator

Reporting Recent Developments

Ecological Awareness Programs at Weekend Apostolate Places of Claret Nivas Community.

In different apostolate places, the claretian students organized Ecological Awareness Programs, which are narrated as follows:



Nilambe Substation

On 13 April, at the **Nilambe** substation, Bros. Damian and Kiresiyan had the ecological awareness session. "It was fruitful with the participation of many parishioners and children. People came up with good suggestions to contribute to the care of our common home—the Earth. The practical activity starts from the church compound." (Bro. Damian)



Hanthana Substation

On 06 April, at the **Hanthana** substation, Bros. Davin and Pio organized the ecological awareness program. "Our environment is facing a severe crisis due to many harmful activities against nature. In this context, it is our responsibility to raise awareness about the importance of saving our Mother Earth. To promote this, we organized an awareness program on ecology in the spiritual sphere at Hanthana, where the children actively participated. Teachers and young students also contributed by performing various activities to raise awareness. As part of our journey along the Synodal Path, we listened to the children's

ideas on how to protect nature. Additionally, we shared valuable insights on how we can all contribute to saving the environment. At the end of the program, we, along with the children, made a resolution to protect nature. It was an enriching experience for all of us. Let's work together to protect our beloved Mother Earth!" (Bro. Davin)

Miss Anthony Dass Florina, Catechism Class principal of Hanthana community, shared the experience: "The environmental awareness program was a truly enlightening experience for our children and teachers. The children learned about the importance of protecting nature from pollution and how small actions, like reducing waste and conserving water, can make a big difference... We would like to thank our brothers involved in making this program a success, as it has equipped us with the knowledge to make a positive impact on our planet. Together, we are determined to do our part in preserving Mother Earth."

On the 6th of April 2025, Bros. Theophile and Fleming had the privilege of conducting an ecological awareness program for the Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity (Mother Teresa Sisters) at **Daya Nivasa**, Kandy. The session primarily focused on the importance of nature, the reality of climate change, and especially the urgent need to protect water resources. The interaction was enriching for both sides. The sisters expressed their gratitude and happiness for the insights they received.

On 3 May, at **Sacred Heart Parish** (Katugastota), Bros. Richard Zaamba and Joel Amatre conducted the



Sacred Heart Parish (Katugastota)



Daya Nivasa - Kandy

ecological awareness program, “To draw human activities that lead to environmental pollution.” The Sunday school children were asked to draw pictures that illustrate the human ways of contamination of the environment at home, in the school, and outside. The result of the activity demonstrated that the children are quite aware of this question.

Celebrating “Laudato Si” 10 Years of Anniversary.



Planting Tree. On 26 June, our newly ordained priests (8 of them) planted a tree together in the parish compound. This symbolic act was done as a commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the LS document. Fr. Merinraj had mentioned the intention of prayer for ecological conversion while indicating the 10th-year anniversary of LS in his first Holy Mass. It was a great awareness for the people of God to thank and praise God for the gift of LS and to work for its objective as all 8 priests planted a tree.

Ecological Eucharist. In celebration of the 10th anniversary of the encyclical *Laudato Si’* and

during *Laudato Si’* Week (May 24–31), the JPIC General Secretariat invited each organism and its communities to organize a special Creation-focused Mass. In the same line, the SoMi team of JVID, according to its local plan, was convoked to join the different activities. Claret Nivas Community held the Eco-Eucharist on June 05 because the previous week Kandy was blessed with continuous rain, which did not allow them to have a celebration in the garden.



Global Online Celebration. On 29 May, as part of our LS Week Plan, the local communities have been invited to follow the online International Celebration of the 10th Anniversary of *Laudato Si* organized by the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Commission of the International Unions of Superiors General (UISG/USG), religious sector partners of the *Laudato Si’* Action Platform, with contributions from the *Laudato Si’* Action Platform team and the *Laudato Si’* Movement. The main theme of the gathering

was “*Raising Hope for a Reconciled Creation: Celebrating 10 Years of Laudato Si.*”

The online gathering was an opportunity for prayerful celebration, listening, and journeying together with hope into this new chapter for the church and our world. It was a moment to reflect with gratitude on all that *Laudato Si’* has inspired and to renew our commitment to caring for our common home. Claret Nivas Community took part in it.

Mission Procure

General Mission Procure organized the training program for the Mission Procurator, Economes, and SoMi members. The first online training took place on the 6th of March 2025. The theme was "The Concept of the Integration of Human Development," given by Gabriel Ponce CMF (GMP). The second online training took place on the 3rd of June on "The Concept of Developing Projects to Attain Sustainable Development Goals", given by Claudia (Assistant GMP.) The third training on "Organizing NGOs in major organisms from project activities" by Fr. Lord Winner CMF

The Mission Procurator of JVID and a few of the team members and Fr. Donal Christy, CMF, took part in the first two trainings. These trainings are encouraging the members of our congregation to perceive more knowledge in the field of Mission Procure as well as SoMi-related matters.

- The former General Mission Procurator, Fr. Lord Winner, visited Curia on the 6th and 7th of June. Fr. Everest, MP of JVID, convened a short meeting with him for more clarification and help for an effective and efficient project-related activity. Fr. Lord Winner, on his way back to India from Rome, had a program for an international group in Bolawalana. His advice helped the MP of JVID.



- The General Prefect of Economy, Fr. Manuel Tamargo, visited our Mission Procure on 9 June 2025. He appreciated her for organizing the office and for all the project-oriented activities. He advised us to increase the local income through local donor agencies and wished us all the best.
- From 12 to 13 of June, Fr. Everest, Mission Procurator, visits the study help program in Thevakiramam, Aligambe, and animates the teachers. There are 9 teachers, and 181 students benefit directly and indirectly from this project.
- On 26 and 27 April, in Pambaimadu parish, the Claretian Mission Sunday was celebrated.
- On May 12th and 13th, MP visits the Chinabay Parish to animate the team and to meet the parish council members to study the possibility of starting sewing classes for the women in Codebay, a substation, and to study the situation of preschool education by the parish priest. The preschool celebrated Mother's Day.
- The parish priest, together with parishioners, organized a Dansal (almsgiving) according to the Buddhist religious tradition. Since it was Vesak Day, the Buddhist and Catholic people had a good interaction through the celebration. It was a sign for coexistence during Vesak.
- From 9 to 13 of June, Fr. Donal Christy and Fr. Jenis attended a project management training workshop in Bangalore organized by the Claretians. The council's discernment to send two of our brothers for better learning. Fr. Donal Christy prepares himself to go to Kodok, Malakal, South Sudan.
- Ms. Bibiana Joohyun, the secretary of a donor agency, and Rev. Fr. Michael Parker, from South Korea, had a meeting with the mission procurator, Fr. Everest Dias, on 14th of May 2025 in Curia. Fr. Michael Parker had helped a Claretian project of a Study Help Program in Jaffna Diocese for the last three years. She wanted to thank MP for the collaboration in the mission as the project came to an end in May 2025. We thank Fr. Michael Parker and her secretary for their service.





Easter Attack Commemoration. On 21st of April, in remembrance of the Easter Sunday victims, titled "We are still awake until JUSTICE is done," the 6th year commemoration took place with a march from Kottahena to Kochchikade Church. Religious leaders, representatives, the international community, and UN diplomats were present. Ten Claretians were represented in this historical event, including three priests, Frs. Joy, Steevan, and Everest, and seven theologians from the Claret Nivas

formation house. Thanks to the CN community on behalf of the SoMi team. Let us continue to raise advocacy as a community in all possible ways.

Human Rights Program. On 1st May, Fr. Everest Dias, CMF, recently participated in a program organized by renowned human rights activist Mr. Ruki Fernando in Colombo. The session focused on advocacy and follow-up after the visit to Geneva and brought together around 14 participants, including lawyers and fellow human rights defenders. The gathering served as a valuable platform for deepening the understanding and commitment to the role of activism in the promotion and protection of human rights in our respective contexts. Fr. Everest's involvement reflects our continued dedication to justice, peace, and the dignity of all.



Other Eco-Awareness Initiatives: On 18th of June, the St. Claret Center community distributed plants freely, from the home garden, to the parents and relatives of Fr. Vinoraj CMF, who is a newly ordained priest and works in Germany. This act is to encourage the people of God to plant more trees on earth for eco-green purposes. The community still has palm trees free of charge.



Claretian Transforming Education. On 9th of May 2025, Claretian educators from around the world gathered virtually for the latest session of Claretian Conversations, addressing the theme "Claretian Educators Responding to Global Challenges." The initiative, organized by the Claretian Team at the United Nations, reaffirmed the Congregation's deep commitment to transformative, faith-based education in light of today's global realities.

Fr. Mathew Vattamattam, CMF, Superior General, opened the session with a compelling call to reimagine education not only as the transmission of knowledge but as the formation of prophetic citizens rooted in compassion, justice, and service. Panelists from all Claretian conferences - ECLA, ASCLA East and West, ACLA, and MICLA - reflected on inclusive education, ecological awareness, digital equity, and student leadership. <https://www.claret.org/claretian-educators-respond-to-global-challenges-in-transforming-education/>

Claretians Participate in UN Ocean Conference 3. Claretian Missionaries took part in the 3rd UN Ocean Conference (UNOC3), held from June 9th to 13th in Nice, France, to promote urgent and unified

action for ocean sustainability under the theme “Our Ocean, Our Future: United for Urgent Action.” Rohan Dominic, CMF, and Vincent, CMF (Independent Delegation of Kolkata), represented Fondazione PROCLADE Internazionale-Onlus among global delegates, including UN Member States and civil society actors.



During the conference, Claretians contributed to the creation of the Faith for the Ocean network, uniting faith-based organizations in marine advocacy. The coalition launched The Faith for the Ocean Declaration at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Nice, securing endorsements from over 100 organizations and 550 individuals. The declaration called for renewed awareness of the ocean’s vital role in climate stability and biodiversity.

On June 11th, PROCLADE co-sponsored a side event titled “The Multifaith Call to Action for Ocean Flourishing,” where Vincent Anesthasiar spoke about the need to protect artisanal fishers and promote sustainable fishing. The Claretians also presented a policy brief, Blue Life for Blue Future, and actively joined various panels and assemblies under the Faith for the Ocean banner.

After UNOC3, the Claretians called for local action to implement the Nice Ocean Action Plan: influencing policy, integrating ocean literacy into education and formation, advocating small-scale fishers’ rights, and encouraging plastic reduction and sustainable consumption.

The Claretian presence highlighted the spiritual and ethical dimensions of ocean care, reinforcing that protecting the ocean - a source of life for billions - is a shared moral responsibility.

<https://www.claret.org/claretians-participate-in-un-ocean-conference-3/>

Words of gratitude to the JVID Council Members.

Our congregational SoMi Guidelines N. 66 states: *“Major Superior and his council hold primary responsibility for promoting and animating Solidarity and Mission within their respective Major Organism. They are tasked to encourage Claretians, communities, and positions to actively live out the SOMI aspects of our faith and vocation.”* Dear brothers, you animated and accompanied our Delegation in its commitment with SoMi. As SoMi team, we thank you for all the missionary service that you carried out. You did good job!



Upcoming Activities



Season of Creation 2025

(September 01 to October 04)

Peace with Creation

