



Camillian Disaster Service International
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**DO WE WANT TO KEEP
THIS WORLD?**

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CROSSOVER is the quarterly news bulletin of the Camillian Disaster Service International. The name **CROSSOVER** was inspired by the gospel of Mark (Mk. 4,35-41) when Jesus invited his disciples to cross over to the other side of the lake, and then a massive storm battered their boat that it almost sank. Fear had overshadowed them; Jesus rose from sleep and calmed the sea. St. Camillus himself had crossed over the confines of the hospitals when he learned about the plague-stricken people, and the victims of floods, war, and pestilence. The enormous strength and enduring compassion of the Camillians are displayed during these difficult historical moments.

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KEEPING CREATION A SACRED AND HEALTHY PLACE FOR EVERYONE

Any experience of adverse or abnormal atmospherical conditions is often associated with climate change, whether meteorological (extreme temperature), hydrological (flood) or climatological (drought). No matter how complicated the dynamics of these conditions are, the fault always lies in climate change. But who provoked climate change? Atmospheric changes are expected, however, changing it fast, intense, frequent and prolonged, is unexpected.

The World Meteorological Organization has confirmed that 2023 was the warmest ten-year period on record, with the global average near-surface temperature at 1.45 °Celsius above the pre-industrial baseline. (WMO Report 2023). Climate change impacts are cascading and compounding. In the Horn of Africa, droughts in 2020–2022 have surpassed the devastating droughts of 2016–2017, with an estimated 26 million people facing acute food insecurity. Australia experienced its worst-ever wildfire season that destroyed 24 million hectares of land; a third of Bangladesh was underwater due to a cyclone. (EM-DAT, 2024)

“The climate crisis is the biggest challenge of our generation. The cost of climate action may seem high, but **the cost of inaction is much higher.**” (C. Saulo, WMO).

Climate change has directly impacted over 3.39 billion people or 44 % of the global population in 2020, causing deaths to over 472,000 people. 2023 has recorded a total of 399 disasters related to natural events causing 86,473 fatalities and 93.1 million people impacted. The economic losses amounted to US\$202.7 billion. Top among these climate-related disasters were droughts (1.4 billion + affected), floods (1.2 billion + affected) and tropical cyclones (501 million + affected) between 2000 and 2020. The impact is heavily hitting the countries with low levels of human development. They don't have access to early warning systems, evacuation plans and finances to support needed changes. (Donatti C, et.al., 2024, EM-DAT 2023).

Looking at these reports on the current status of the global climate crises raises the fear of being immune to and indifferent to real facts, that these will remain statistics, forgetting the truth that there are human faces and environmental imprints behind these numbers.

“We know the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now.” (Rom. 8:22). Creation groans because we see in the world more contradictions and tensions than just and lasting progress. It groans because of our selfishness and unsustainable and destructive actions that cause climate crises, biodiversity loss and human suffering, as well as Creation's suffering. The current progress of society involves exploitation and dominance. Scientific discovery has been used to destroy millions of lives, and the progress of the liberal world keeps more people marginalized living in misery. We must not forget that we are brothers/sisters to and in solidarity with all that has life.



Monitoring visit in Baringo (Kenya), August 2024

The growing concern about human responsibilities towards creation opens our eyes to an aspect of sin but also obliges us to ask where our history is taking us. "The fundamental criterion for an ecological ethic is not individualistic or commercial. It is deeply spiritual. For, the root of the environmental crisis lies in human greed and selfishness. What is asked of us is not greater technological skill, but deeper repentance for our wrongful and wasteful ways. What is demanded is a sense of sacrifice, which comes with cost but also brings about fulfillment." (His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew)

The words of the Patriarch open the path towards overcoming the climate crisis, and thus liberating the whole of Creation and redirecting it to its final destiny - "fullness of life." The path is the transformation of our whole being, that is, "the glory that will be revealed and given to us." (Rom. 8,18). This transformation demands ecological conversion. It has to begin from **"our home"** towards **"our common home."** "Our home" is where the spirit or breath of God resides in us and propels us to complete transformation of our lifestyle to our relationship with others and to our environment.

Humanity has certainly engaged and developed this world with aggressiveness and violence using a science driven by the will to conquer nature and subject her to his or her desires and wants. "However, Creation teaches us that hope is present in waiting, in the expectation of a better future. [...] To hope does not mean to remain still and silent, but to groan, to cry out and actively strive for a new life in the midst of difficulties. Creation and all of us are called to worship the Creator, working together for a dynamic future based on hope and action. Only when we work together with Creation can the firstfruits of hope spring forth. As in childbirth, we go through a period of intense pain, but new life emerges." (SOC 2024)

The hope is not in vain because nature itself is providing us with feasible and cost-effective solutions. To be able to see and discover these solutions, we need to stop seeing nature as our servant but as St. Francis of Assisi had seen it - as our brothers and sisters. Science has offered us nature-based solutions, actions that aim to restore, protect and manage nature to help people adapt to climate change. These solutions can address climate change impacts because they can provide climate mitigation, biodiversity and human- wellbeing benefits in areas where resources to address societal challenges are limited. (Donatti C, et.al., 2024)



Aris Miranda, MI
CADIS Director

THE AETAS (AYTAS): THE REAL VANGUARDS OF OUR COMMON HOME

The history and traditions of an endangered indigenous population in the Philippines

The Aetas are considered to be the aborigines of the Philippines, the earliest inhabitants preceding the Austronesian migrations. Their physical characteristics are that they are dark skinned, with dark kinky hair (finely curled) small in height or stature as compared to the other Filipinos. They are the indigenous people living in the provinces of Tarlac, Pampanga, Bataan and Zambales surrounding Mt Pinatubo.

They are nomads, hunters, community gatherers. Mobile as they are, they travel in groups and stay all together in a safe place after sunset to spend the night.

As a community they practice BAYANIHAN, a system of community activity whereby they help each other by working as a team in moving a thatch house to another area, building a house, working together in planting and harvesting crops and other community endeavors. Their harvest is also shared with the other families.

The Aetas live a simple life and care for their environment, their ancestral land and the forest. They thrive on the available resources of the forest for their food. The males are the ones who go hunting while the females are the ones responsible for gathering edible fruits. They have retained the old ways of farming passed on to them by their forefathers, though slowly they are shifting to modern ways of farming.

They know the forests so well that they can survive for days thriving only on the available forest resources for water to drink and food to eat. They know by heart how to navigate in the wilderness as passed on to them by their ancestors, their elders. They know which plant /fruit is edible, where to source potable drinking water to avoid water borne diseases as well as medicinal plants to treat and cure illnesses affecting their body. Before the eruption of Mt Pinatubo in June 1991, their food and livelihood were very much dependent on the forest.

They live with the wild prey, like baboy damo (wild pig), deers' meat, fishes in the river, rice and other sources of carbohydrates, fruits, vegetables, and drinking water from the natural streams and springs.

Salt to them is very important and is traded for whatever they have from the forest that are edible like bananas, sweet potatoes, taro, and vegetables.

The Aetas living in the different provinces speak different dialects - Ayta sambal-Zambales, Ayta magbukon-Bataan, Ayta mag-indi, mag ansti-Pampanga and Tarlac. They came originally from one tribe. They are all related considering that they practice inter marriages from among the Ayta families located in the different provinces surrounding Mt Pinatubo volcano.

Mt Pinatubo is a sacred place to the Aetas. At the summit of the volcano can be found a big stone that they call gayang believed to be the abode of their god Apo Mallari and the resting place of the souls of the Aetas who pass on.

They have their own cultural dances such as:

TALEK (tailpi) a dance accompanied by the playing of a guitar which they call gitaran baytan in their native language (dance of wellness).

PAMIPARAMAG (courtship dance) is a folk dance from Palauig Zambales. While dancing, the boy makes eye-catching seductive movements enticing the girl. When she smiles while dancing with the boy, it's a sign of her willingness to become his wife and to spend her life with him. The absence of a smile on her face while dancing means that she is rejecting the boy.

BINABAYANI is a war dance that shows the courage, heroism of the tribe in protecting the community from invaders.

With the eruption of the volcano there was a shift from natural food to processed foods which at first they refused to eat because they say it's poison to their body and will make them sick. And they were further displaced to live outside the endangered zone for their protection in settlements.



They use to live on the lowlands, the plains before being driven up to the mountains by invaders who colonized the country for over 100 years to escape from their invaders.

The Aetas live a natural simple way of life that conforms to natural cycle of events in life. They fully accept the realities of life and death.

In some of my tour of duties at the Tarlac Provincial Hospital in the mid-seventies an Aeta family lost a child and the father accepted calmly the loss, stoically saying: "It's a natural event and the loss can be replaced by another birth of a baby in the family." He didn't blame God or any deity or their circumstance in life. They have faith and courage to accept natural events, occurrences in life.



In another occasion at the ER of the same hospital, an Aeta adult male was shot while climbing a coconut tree and was hit by a bullet in the head, although bleeding there was no whining or even an expression of pain in his face. He was calm while being wheeled inside to the ER from the ambulance ... very high tolerance of pain.

They are clannish. When one member of the family is brought to a hospital for treatment, every member of the tribe goes down from the mountain bringing along with them food supplies, clothing and whatever they have to lay their backs on to rest or sleep, cooking wares and stays under the trees at the back of the hospital grounds until the patient is discharged to go back to their place of abode.



The Ayta children who are interested to attend school persevere to walk hours, wade water streams, cross dry river beds during summer, deep and strong currents during the rainy season so as to gain knowledge and be able to have better economic opportunities. Although there are those who dropped out of school and get married at a very young age which aggravates their economic marginalization.

When Mt Pinatubo erupted they lost their forest which aggravated their poor living condition. They have proven their resiliency in life, that despite their dire situation they survived by slowly adapting to the culture of the "Unat" a term used to describe the low landers whose hair are straight.

They learnt to eat processed food, and lost their fear for western biomedical technology. When HADFAFI health workers in collaboration with the Rural Health Unit of the municipality of Capas conducted vaccination activities for the prevention of communicable diseases the workers are threatened with bolos for fear that their child will get ill rather than be free of the disease. After persistent health education activities they in time accepted the vaccination process.

After some decades of formal education, some members of the Aeta tribe were able to cross into the mainstream of modern society graduating with college, university diploma degrees and empowered by participating actively in government political, academic, health care and other development fields of endeavor.

With their immersion to lowland culture, some have embraced Catholicism as their religion and other religious denominations existing where they are located as well without necessarily losing their innate cultural and traditional heritage. This also influenced their intermarriage with non Aetas which resulted in the reduction of the pure native Aeta population.

Though the Aetas are considered minorities, they are considered the great vanguards and stewards of our "common home" or environment. This is one of the great discoveries of the Camillian Disaster Service International (CADIS) when it engaged with them with a project on food security, social enterprise development, climate change mitigation and sustainable management of forest resources from 2016 up to the present. One of the salient programs in this project is the assistance given to the different communities living around Mt. Pinatubo to officially claim their ancestral domain status. This will pave the way for better organizing their methods and practices of caring for our common home, one of the last frontiers of the Philippine natural biodiversity.

HOW BLUE WAS THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC SKY

This short article is about the CADIS Benin-Togo project on Central African land. Indeed, the Central African Republic (CAR) has emerged from a long war, which left behind a lot of social breakdown. CADIS Benin-Togo wants to commit to rebuilding a resilient community, especially to give hope to Central African youth.

By the way, this article presents an image that refers to the happy time that immediately followed a first rapture before the difficulties of living together arose.

Living together

The polyphonic conversation of living together is only a dune of sand that scatters in an unpredictable order, facing a devastating wind. Living together then seems to follow three stages: The first stage is the impression, i.e. the observation of social facts followed by a series of encounters (traditional festivals, marriage, rituals, distribution of land), in the course of which we explore with wild joy the second stage, i.e. the perfection of the social being. This is the unexpected adequation of society to our desires. This is the sweetness of the beginning, the proper time of idyll. This happy time takes its identity from what it later stands in opposition to, what I call the fallout, the third stage. This is the long trail of suffering, wounds, anxieties, distresses, resentments, despair, embarrassments and traps when mineral resources become more precious than human resources and living ceaselessly under the threat of tearing apart. Finally, beyond these three stages, at each moment of the tearing, we discover in the other our own self or ourselves in the others. These images spoke to me, but instead of the meeting of our individualities and what we brought to each other.

Choosing life amid social division

Today, according to investigations by UN missions, there is an alarming increase in violence in the CAR (Central African Republic). A Jean Paul II Hospital nursing student in Bossemptélé asserts, "When the violence escalated, we made the difficult decision to choose life in the midst of this chaos, taking refuge under cloud shadows since we believe that the sky can turn blue again." Despite the risks, these young people remained firmly determined to stay and preserve the presence of living together in Bossemptélé.

My awakening to what social breakdown can produce inspired me to offer these young people courses on microbiology, hematology, and traumatology. Indeed, their educational journey has been one of resilience in a context of fear and despair. Young people in the Central African Republic do not need teachers but agents of community resilience. The tear is gaping.

The motif of the tear is inseparable from that of the "cloud"—the "clouds" that, pushed by the wind, cross the sky. The tear refers to pictorial images of the landscape, the sky, and the clouds, as well as their symbolic or metaphorical meaning.

The blue of the Central African sky

According to an ancient and structuring metaphor in the visual register, it is from the veil of the "clouds" that a "high clarity" emerges. This image of the veil giving birth to hope provides a drop of grace through the tear. The tear allows us to glimpse the blue of the Central African sky in the corner of the veil. In fact, the praise of tearing apart metaphorically testifies to the daily adventure in which all of us (the Camillian confreres, the students, and the UN missions) find ourselves to build resilience, an island out of a violent world. These psychosocial interventions have brought to each of us the essentials of life, namely, what encourages us from the unspeakable, as the poet has said, to find our language. The language understood by the Camillian missionaries in the CAR is that of charity. This language teaches, celebrates, and nourishes the people. Indeed, it teaches students about nursing, celebrates life at the bedside of the sick, and nourishes the people at the heart of the Eucharist. These three aspects of the Camillian mission, both prophetic and poetic, in the Church in Bossemptélé were providentially carried out by Pope Francis' visit to the CAR.

Pope Francis' visit to the CAR.

The Holy Father's first Apostolic Journey to "Africa, Land of Hope," can be summed up in three major events in the Universal Church. The first is the teaching he gave to Christians and Muslims, demonstrating that peace is possible. This event allowed the Central Africans to start to hope again. The second event was his surprise visit to the pediatric hospital in Bangui, which lacks "everything," as the Pope said on the plane from Bangui back to Rome. There, the Pope celebrated life in the beds of hospitalized children. In a last highly symbolic gesture, Pope Francis officially inaugurated the Jubilee of Mercy in the Central African Republic on Sunday, November 29, 2015, in the Cathedral of Bangui, the capital of this poor country that has suffered so much politico-religious violence. This opening of the Holy Door to the Cathedral of Bangui, the capital of the spiritual "periphery", comes to restore the life of Christ to all the Central African people.

"God bless Africa." With this tweet of December 1, 2015, Pope Francis paid tribute, after his visit, to the very dear and beautiful country, where the fields bloom with hope, the clouds dissipate, and the tearing makes us realize that the Central African sky is also blue.

"TO HOPE AND ACT WITH CREATION": WHY ALL OF US SHOULD JOIN THE SEASON OF CREATION

Extract from "Celebration Guide: Season of Creation"

Download it here: <https://seasonofcreation.org/resources/>



TO HOPE AND ACT WITH CREATION

SEASON OF CREATION 2024

The firstfruits of hope (Rom 8:19-25)

The Season of Creation is the annual Christian celebration to pray and respond together to the cry of Creation: the ecumenical family around the world unites to listen and care for our common home, the Oikos of God. Amid the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, many are beginning to despair and suffer from eco-anxiety. As people of faith we are called to lift the hope inspired by our faith, the hope of the resurrection. This is not a hope without action but one embodied in concrete actions of prayer and preaching, service and solidarity.

The season's "Celebration" begins September 1, the Feast of Creation, and ends October 4, the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology beloved by many Christian denominations. This year we will unite around the theme "To hope and act with Creation" with the symbol "The firstfruits of hope", inspired by Romans 8:19-25.

Creation is groaning in the pains of childbirth (Romans 8:22)

This biblical image pictures the Earth as a mother, groaning as in childbirth. The times we live in show that we are not relating to the Earth as a gift from our Creator, but rather as a resource to be used. Saint Francis of Assisi understood this when he referred to the Earth as our sister and our mother in his Cantic of Creatures. How can Mother Earth look after us if we do not

look after her? Creation is groaning because of our selfishness and the unsustainable actions that harm her. Along with our Sister, Mother Earth, creatures of all kinds, including humans, cry out because of the consequences of our destructive actions causing climate crisis, loss of biodiversity, and human suffering as well as Creation's suffering. And yet, there is hope and the expectation for a better future. To hope in a biblical context does not mean to stand still and quiet, but rather groaning, crying, and actively striving for new life amidst the struggles. Just as in childbirth, we go through a period of intense pain, but new life is coming forth.

Creation is standing on tiptoe waiting for the children of God to be revealed (Romans 8:19)

Creation and all of us are called to worship the Creator, working together for a future of active hope and action. Only when we work together with Creation can the firstfruits of hope be born. Pauline theology reminds us that both Creation and humanity are conceived from the beginning in Christ and, therefore, are entrusted to each other.

Creation is standing on tiptoe waiting for the manifestation of the children of God! The children of God are those who stretch up their hands towards the Creator, recognizing themselves as humble creatures, to praise and respect God, and at the same time to love, respect, care for, and learn from God's gift of Creation. Creation is not given to humanity to use and abuse,

rather, humanity is created as part of Creation. More than a common home, Creation is also a cosmic family that calls us to act responsibly. This is how the children of God have an intrinsic vocation and an important role to play in the manifestation of the kingdom of justice (cf. Romans 8:19).

Firstfruits of hope (Romans 8:23-25)

Hope is an instrument enabling us to overcome the natural law of decay. Hope is given to us by God as a protection and guard against futility. Only through hope we may realize the gift of freedom in fullness. Freedom to act not only to achieve enjoyment and prosperity but to reach the stage in which we are free and responsible. Freedom and responsibility enable us to make the world a better place.

We act for a better future because we know Christ has overcome the death caused by our sins. There is a lot of pain on Earth because of our shortcomings.

Our structural and ecological sins inflict pain on Earth and all creatures, including ourselves. We know that we have caused a lot of damage to Creation, and to the world we are living in because of our negligence, because of ignorance, but as well, in many cases, because of our unrelenting wish to satisfy unrealistic selfish dreams (cf. Romans 8:22).

There's a phrase commonly attributed to Saint Augustine that says: "Hope has two beautiful daughters; their names are Anger and Courage. Anger at the way things are, and Courage to see that they do not remain as they are." As we witness the cries and sufferings of Earth and all creatures, let holy anger move us toward the courage to be hopeful and active for justice. We believe that the incarnation of God's Son offers guidance enabling us to face the troubling world.

God is with us in efforts to respond to the challenges of the world we are living in (cf. Romans 8:23). There are different forms of hope. However, hope is not merely optimism. It is not a utopian illusion. It is not waiting for a magical miracle. Hope is trust that our action makes sense, even if the results of this action are not immediately seen (cf. Romans 8:24). Hope doesn't act alone. Earlier in his letter to the Romans, Paul the apostle explains the close relationship of hope as a growth process: "endurance produces character, and character produces hope" (Romans 5:4). Patience and endurance are close associates of hope. These are qualities that lead to hope.

We know how much bold action to restrain the climate and ecological crises is urgent, and we also know that ecological conversion is a slow process as humans are stubborn to change their minds, their hearts, and their ways of living.

Sometimes we don't know what our actions should look like. As we journey in life, everyday we get new ideas and inspirations to find a better balance between the urgency and the slow rhythm of long-lasting change. We might not fully comprehend all that is happening, we might not understand the ways of God, but we are called to trust and follow with concrete and sustained actions, following the example of Christ, the redeemer of the whole cosmos (cf. Romans 8:25).

In some languages, the translation of the Pauline passage expresses that hope is not a passive waiting but rather an active hope (cf. Romans 8:20-21).

There is much we can learn from other cultures and countries on how to hope and act together with Creation. The Portuguese verb "esperançar", as well as the Spanish "esperanzar", express well that hope must be understood as an active verb to avoid falling into the trap of superficial positivity. In French, there are also two different ways to speak about this notion: "espoir", which evokes the attitude of waiting, and "espérance" which expresses the active hope in the light of God. The same nuance appears in the Arabic language which distinguishes between "amal" and "raja", showing how there is much more to reflect about what we mean when we speak about "hope".

The Season of Creation is a time to renew our relationship with our Creator and all Creation through celebration, conversion, and commitment. It is an annual ecumenical season where we pray and act together as a Christian family for our common home. We are called to engage in the Season of Creation starting early in the year so that we can build a year-long process of preparation for the celebration that takes place later in the year.



Laudato Si' week celebration with CTF Philippines

SAVING THE AMAZON IS PROMOTING AND DEFENDING HEALTH OF OUR PLANET

Father Junior Moreira, MI
Provincial Councilor of the Camillian Province of Brazil

On 5 September, Brazil celebrates Amazon Day, an important date to remember the urgent need to conserve this biome, which is essential in the fight against climate change and vital for the people living there and for the entire planet. Amazonia corresponds to approximately 61.9% of Brazilian territory and covers the states of Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Pará, Roraima, Rondônia and Tocantins, as well as parts of Maranhão and Mato Grosso. This vast biome also extends into neighbouring countries: 11.4% of the Amazon is in Peru, 8.4% in Bolivia, 6% in Colombia, 5.6% in Venezuela, 2.5% in Guyana, 1.7% in Suriname and 1% in French Guiana.

The Amazon is an important source of biodiversity in terms of fauna, with about 400 mammals and 1,300 birds in the entire region. It also has about 40,000 different plant species and the Amazonian rivers constitute the largest river basin on the planet. The entire Amazon Rainforest represents one-third of the world's tropical forests and contains more than half of the planet's

biodiversity. It plays an essential role in maintaining ecological services, such as ensuring soil quality, freshwater reserves and protecting biodiversity. The Amazon region concentrates 20 percent of the planet's freshwater.

In Brazil, there are some 817,963 indigenous people divided into 256 ethnic societies speaking 274 different languages. Only 13.8% of the country's land is reserved for indigenous peoples. The Amazon hosts most of these lands (424 areas covering 115,344,445 hectares) and the people who depend on the forest to perpetuate their way of life and culture. The long accumulated experience of indigenous peoples in using forest resources is a valuable source of information for modern science and technology. The forests of the Amazon serve as large stores of carbon, which is stored in plant tissue. When the forest is cut down and burnt, this carbon is released into the atmosphere, contributing to the increase in the earth's temperature due to the greenhouse effect (0.7°C in the last century). The effects associated with the continuous increase in emissions of CO² (9 billion tonnes per year) and other gases into the atmosphere are climate change, altered functioning of ecosystems, loss of biodiversity and natural resources, economic and social damage to local and regional populations, impact on soil fertility and hydrological cycles, increase in extreme weather events and deaths and respiratory diseases in people and animals, etc.

Deforestation in the Amazon releases 200 million tonnes of carbon per year (2.2% of the total global flux). On the other hand, the Amazon stores the equivalent of a decade of global carbon emissions in its forests.

Environmental truths and myths about the Amazon

There are many unknown truths about the Amazon rainforest that have failed to awaken the world's awareness of its real importance and the care it deserves, such as: 1) it has the greatest biodiversity on the planet, home to thousands of animal and plant species, both catalogued and unknown 2) it has more than five thousand species for medicinal use; 3) it has a gene bank with more than two million micro-organisms; 4) its mineral potential has not yet been fully determined; 5) being the world's largest river basin, it has a water potential capable of generating 100 gigawatts of electricity, among others.





Camillian Mission at the mouth of the Amazon

On the other hand, there are some myths about the Amazon region, such as: 1) it is considered the lung of the world. This is a misconception that has been propagated continuously since Professor Harald Sioli stated in a lecture that Amazonia could be seen as an inverted lung, i.e. capable of absorbing carbon dioxide rather than producing oxygen. The Amazon does not even produce 20 percent of the world's oxygen; it is the algae that do most of this work - they throw almost 55 percent of all the oxygen produced on the planet into the atmosphere; 2) the exuberance of the forest, which leads many to think of the richness of the soil and thus the ability to produce economic resources continuously and for a long time. This is not true, as the soil is extremely fragile if deprived of natural vegetation; 3) the inaccurate perception that the forest is rich in wood products. In reality, the amount of wood that can be extracted for economic purposes is about six cubic metres per hectare; and 4) US Senator Albert Gore's claim that the rainforest is destroyed at the speed of one football field per second does not correspond to reality, even though deforestation and burning rates remain high.

Therefore, 5 September, which should be a day of celebration, is a time of great concern because the Amazon biome is in an existential crisis, marked by the constant threat of deforestation, experiencing one of the most intense droughts in its history and a record number of fires. Amazonian rivers are at their lowest levels in history due to a combination of high temperatures, below-average rainfall and an arid year. All this has led to pessimistic forecasts for the coming months in the Amazon, with the Brazilian Geological Survey (SGB) predicting that all rivers in the Amazon basin are likely to fall below their historical lows by 2024.

In addition, the drought has fuelled another disastrous fire season in the Amazon. According to the National Institute for Space Research, last August, the biome experienced its most devastating month since 2005, with 38,266 fire outbreaks in a single month. Deforestation and fires have already eliminated 20 percent of the original biome, compromising the climate regulation process and causing changes in precipitation patterns in distant regions, which exchange moisture with the forest through the atmosphere.

Furthermore, when fossil fuels are burned, greenhouse gases, especially CO₂, are emitted into the atmosphere, and the loss of forests reduces carbon sink capacity, contributing to global warming and extreme climate change. Since 2007, reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have warned of an increase in extreme events such as heavy rain and flooding, including southern Brazil experiencing extreme flooding in April and May 2024. During the floods in Rio Grande do Sul, 183 people died, 27 are still missing and more than 200,000 people were left homeless in a scenario where more than 400 cities were affected. In this scenario, it is urgent to take measures to halt the advance of deforestation and fires in the Amazon and promote the sustainable use of natural resources. Furthermore, it is necessary to invest in inspections, monitoring, environmental education and economic incentives for forest conservation. He also invites us, as Camillian religious, to organise and structure CADIS Brasil, so that we can participate more effectively in actions to prevent and assist natural disasters, which will also be increasingly frequent in the Brazilian Amazon. Only in this way will it be possible to guarantee the survival of the Amazon and the benefits it offers Brazil and the world.

UPCOMING EVENT



CADIS
CAMILIAN DISASTER SERVICE
INTERNATIONAL

Reaffirming our Commitment
and Harnessing our Interventions
in Building eCon-Resilient
Vulnerable Communities



9TH CADIS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
CAMILIAN PASTORAL CARE CENTER BANGKOK, THAILAND
NOVEMBER 3 - 9, 2024



**Thanks to your support, we have brought relief
to their lives and will continue to do so together.**

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