***Food –***

***a sustainable future!***

**(November 22 home AIAF)**

*Reader 1*: 2014 has been declared the International Year of Family Farming. The General Assembly of the United Nations decided this at the end of last year, under pressure from 360 non-government organisations from more than 60 countries.

There is a vast movement of public opinion against the amassing of land by the multi-national agriculture industry, and against the difficulty for small farmers and agricultural producers to obtain reasonable prices for maintaining their productive resources (earth, water, quality seed, equipment).

Family Farming is the keystone in the struggle against hunger and poverty, and knowing that the farming population in developing countries comprises between 50% and 80% of the total population, it is obviously crucial to talk about investing in farming at a family level.

*Leader*:

We begin our prayer by witnessing our faith.

Father, we believe that you have created the earth for everyone, and that you made us from the earth

 — and we believe that, because you have created it, you have given us the gift of taking care of it and sharing it without possessiveness or domination.

We believe, Jesus, that by your Incarnation you assumed our earth, its history and its hopes, and that you made us brothers and sisters, members of God’s family

 — and we believe that because of your Incarnation we are all called to be at the service of life and of all that is necessary to care for it, and, in solidarity, to the sustainable use of resources.

We believe, Spirit of Love, that you are the breath of the living God, that you make the earth fruitful and build communion

 — and we believe, because of your life-giving presence in our history, that every person of goodwill can guarantee the integrity of our Common Home, and commit themselves to promote a political and economic ethic that encourages inclusion, the supreme duty of providing food, and just marketing.

*Leader:* Let us listen to some short passages from “Brazil’s Letter to Rural Labourers” from the Third National Congress of Landless Rural Workers, so that we have their image before our eyes and their voices in our hearts. (Projection of images of Family Farming)

*Reader 2 :*

To those who ask, “Who are these who work on the land?” say,

We are sons and daughters of the earth,

men, women and children who struggle and dream that everyone can have part of the earth.

Many have no more right to land because of the power of the conglomerates,

because of the sordid power of money.

We are men and women of peace.

Ours are the human hands that make the earth fruitful.

We are those who learned the task of sowing seed long years ago.

The winds and the seasons have taught us

the time to plant and the time to harvest.

We are those who know the flowers and fruit.

We are witnesses to the powerful cycle of Life.

That is why we are pertinacious.

So, say to those who question us:

In the countries where vast areas of land lie idle,

We are those who do not want to accept conglomerates...

We are seeking other ways today to make productive the land they have conquered:

we are seeking to make production by families, cooperatives and associations appreciated,

the social sharing of the goods we produce.

Let us effectively re-invent politics to combat poverty,

hunger, misery and unemployment,

to produce the food that is lacking to millions of people today.

*Leader:* 50 years ago, Pope John XXIII, in *Pacem in Terris*, called on “all men of goodwill”, believers and non-believers alike, to rediscover the fundamental value of peace, found only through full respect for the universal, inviolable and inalienable rights and duties of the individual. In spite of the time that has passed, his message is just as relevant today:

*Reader 1:* “Every human being has the right to live, the right to bodily integrity and to sufficient means necessary for a dignified way of life, particularly food… It is useless to admit that a man has a right to the necessities of life, unless we do all in our power to supply him with means sufficient for his livelihood. *(cf. nos. 11 and 32, Vatican English edition)*

**SONG:**

- [http://www.rscjinternational.org/content/view/118/35/lang,c](http://www.rscjinternational.org/content/view/118/35/lang%2Cc)

*🎜Ofrenda Fecunda (Cecilia Rivero)* (*A fruitful Offering*)

- <http://vimeo.com/16442800> . *“All I Can.”*

*Leader:* **DO YOU KNOW...**

* that 870 million people suffer chronic hunger? Among children, it is estimated that 171 million minors suffer chronic malnutrition, about 104 million are underweight, and about 55 million suffer from acute malnutrition.

*All:* ***Open our eyes, Lord, and do not allow us to forget this in the life-choices we make.***

* that the food-price crisis, the energy and environmental crises, have shown us the limitations of our predominant agricultural policy, governed by the multi-nationalised agricultural industry?

***Open our eyes, Lord, and grant that we do not cease to proclaim your Kingdom of justice, peace and fraternity.***

* that farming takes place in over 38.5% of the world’s surface, and cultivation provides more than 84% of the world’s food?

***Open our eyes, Lord, we will sing your glory by respecting the order of your creation and by taking care of the environment and its resources.***

* that 43% of the world’s active population work in the farming sector, and that this percentage rises to 53% in developing countries?

***Open our eyes, Lord, and make us promoters of a “culture of encounter and solidarity”.***

* that more than two-thirds of the 1,400 million people who live in situations of extreme poverty live in rural parts of developing countries, and that 1,500 million people worldwide live by Family Farming?

***Open our eyes, Lord, and rekindle our commitment to work for justice, so that all may live with dignity.***

* that Family Farming supplies 75% of agricultural production, and accounts for 80% of the demands of internal markets?

***Open our eyes, Lord, and make us sensitive to promoting sustainable development of family farming systems.***

*Leader:*“May God give you dew from heaven and the richness of the earth, and abundance of grain and wine” (Gn 27:28). In the Old Testament there is a recurrent theme about the earth belonging to God, and about man who is called to sow and harvest in abundance, and to share justly with the poor and the stranger.

🕮**FROM THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY 8:7-11**

The Lord your God is bringing you into a fertile country:

A land of streams and springs, of waters that well up from the deep in valleys and hills,

a land of wheat and barley, of vines, of figs, of pomegranates, a land of olives, of oil, of honey;

a land where you will eat bread without stint, where nothing will be lacking,

a land where the stones are iron and where the hills may be quarried for copper.

You will eat and have all you want,

and you will bless the Lord your God for the fertile land which he will give you.

Be careful not to forget the Lord your God by neglecting his commandments, customs and laws which I am laying down for you today.

*(Time of silence and contemplation)*

*Reader 2:*

“Peace, true peace, which is more than an interval between two massacres, *true* peace – is this peace possible when 15% of the world’s population possesses 80% of all human riches? Last year, there were 60 million more people on our poor earth, 60 million tonnes less grain: do you think this can continue? Two-thirds of humanity are hungry. In a few years it will be three quarters. What do you want to do about it? We cannot allow three-quarters of the human species to be destroyed while allowing the remainder what they need to live on.

If a great impetus of love does not immediately – immediately! – smite the human conscience, universal human hunger will hasten the end of the world.

So repeat ceaselessly to those who are responsible for your future: *Less armed tanks and more ploughs! For everyone. Less bombs and more bread! For everyone.*

Share with others in order to be loved. Disarm in order to be able to love. Share with others in order to be loved: these, and the grace of God, are the conditions for our very survival. Otherwise, our Babylons will one day crumble, and what is left of the human race will return to its ancient caves.

But everything will be saved if you know how to love. Not for one day only, and fleetingly, but for a long time, intensely… every day – and for ever. Do not be discouraged, never, ever, give up. ...

You can applaud or denounce, admire or be angry, but never be neutral, indifferent, passive or resigned. Make of your lives something that matters...

All seeds of love that are sown will, sooner or later, burst into flower...” (*Raoul Follereau*)

**PRAYER:**

*All together:*

Lord Jesus, we desire to share your love for all creation. Grant us wisdom and the ability to use the earth without destroying it, so that we can leave to those who come after us a place for living that is in good condition.

Help us to work for the dignity of every human being, and give us the daring to work strenuously for the best conditions of life for rural families, and for a just distribution of land.

Help us, Lord, to work for the personal and community growth of our brothers and sisters of the countryside, and so to achieve a world that is more just, human and fraternal.

Because this is the only way in which the world can sing your glory. Because “the glory of God is man truly alive”. Amen.

**SONG:** http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qq7qZrXYtvk

*🎜Imagine (Jhon Lennon)*

Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace...

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will be as one

Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world...

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will live as one

*Leader:* The story in Mk 6, called the “multiplication”, presents two economies, two different ways of administration. That of man, living by what he *has*, or buys, and that of God, who lives and makes others live by what he *gives* as a perfectly free gift. The disciples are called to make a passing-over, as Jesus did; a passing-over from the economy of *possession*, which produces hunger and death, to that of *gift* which generates wellbeing and life.

🕮**FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARK, 6: 35-43**

By now it was getting very late, and his disciples came up to him and said, 'This is a lonely place and it is getting very late; so send them away, and they can go to the farms and villages round about, to buy themselves something to eat.' He replied, 'Give them something to eat yourselves.' They answered, 'Are we to go and spend two hundred denarii on bread for them to eat?' He asked, 'How many loaves have you? Go and see.' And when they had found out they said, 'Five, and two fish.' Then he ordered them to get all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass, and they sat down on the ground in squares of hundreds and fifties. Then he took the five loaves and the two fish, raised his eyes to [heaven](http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=5593) and said the blessing; then he broke the loaves and began handing them to his disciples to distribute among the people. He also shared out the two fish among them all. They all ate as much as they wanted. They collected twelve basketfuls of scraps of bread and pieces of fish.

*(Time of silence and contemplation)*

*Reader 1:*

 The first key is to return to the Word to identify a different economy, the divine economy, which is God’s way of interpreting reality. It is also his way of being in history, where and as he wills. For us, it is a way of contemplating experience so as to have the same mind that was in Christ Jesus.

This economy gets ever wider. It is not confined to the edges of human drama and of creation, but touches life’s mysterious and secret moments of playfulness and joy where love is exchanged; all those individual instances of the many loves hidden in creation and in our ordinary lives. This is the economy described in Psalm 104, the lavishness of a God who makes monsters to play with (vv. 25 and 26). A God who gives wine to human beings to rejoice their hearts and for their celebrations. It is the economy of a God who offers us oil to make our faces shine. This is a God who robes himself with light, who stretches out the heavens like a tent, who makes the clouds his chariot and walks on the wings of the winds which are his messengers.

From God’s economy we learn to love justice. If we do not grow to love it, our choices will be very weak and moralistic. If we are scandalised by abundance, by lavishness, by this illogical logic, it will be difficult to foster a longing for a different world.

We must encourage ourselves to love this economy so that we are not repelled by the incomprehensible situation of human poverty and the lack of sense which life often has in this post-modern world of human struggle. Before we put justice into practice, we have to love it. If the poor scandalise us, God too will scandalise us. Human precariousness shows us a parallel (very similar to the divine) where weakness lives alongside abundance, celebration alongside sorrow, faith alongside precariousness. Long feasts and intensive fasting are woven together. The God who makes sea monsters to play with is also the God who watches day and night over his people, who goes in and out with them, who protects them, cares for them, as we sing in Psalm 121 (vv.3-8). The God who does not know how to count is also the God who knows the number of hairs on our heads, and who maintains the delicate balance of nature to include the smallest sparrow (cf. Lk 12: 6-7). He is the God who takes secret care of the seed in the heart of the earth (cf. Jn 12:24). He is the God who is angry when he sees how the rich treat the poor. He is the God who identifies with the people in their precarious life-situations. He decides to be within time; and his being is eternal.

With Jesus, God’s economy breaks into a highly structured and hierarchical world. This helps our faith: nothing is impossible with God. If he can break into that calculating society, why not believe that it is possible to write a different story?

 (*Sr. Antonietta Potente)*

*We pray some verses of* **PSALM 103** *as a kind of echo.*

Bless the Lord, my soul, \*
Lord God, how great you are!
Clothed in majesty and splendour, \*
wrapped in light as in a robe.

You founded the earth on its base, \*
to stand firm for ever and ever.
You wrapped it with the ocean, like a cloak, \*
the waters stood higher than the mountains.

At your threat they took to flight, \*
At the voice of your thunder, they fled.
They rose over the mountains and flowed down \*
to the place which you had appointed…

From your dwelling you water the hills, \*
earth drinks its fill of your gift.
You make grass grow for the cattle \*
and the plants to serve man’s needs,

 that he may bring forth bread from the earth\*
and wine, to cheer man’s heart;
oil to make his face shine \*
and bread, to strengthen man’s heart. …

You made the moon to mark the months \*
the sun knows the time for its setting.
when you spread the darkness, it is night \*
and all the beasts of the forest creep forth...

 at the rising of the sun they steal away \*
and go to rest in their dens.
man goes forth to his work, \*
to labour till evening falls.

How many are your works, o Lord †
in wisdom you have made them all, \*
the earth is full of your riches.

There is the sea, vast and wide…\*
the ships are moving there,

and the monsters you made to play with.

All of these look to you \*
to give them their food in due time.
You give it, they gather it up\*
you open your hand, they have their fill.

You hide your face, they are dismayed, †
you take back your spirit, they die \*
returning to the dust from which they came.
You send forth your spirit, they are created, \*
and you renew the face of the earth.

May the glory of the Lord last for ever; \*
may the Lord rejoice in his works.

I will sing to the Lord all my life, \*
make music to my God while I live.
May my thoughts be pleasing to him; \*
I find my joy in the Lord.

Let sinners vanish from the earth †
and the wicked exist no more. \*
Bless the Lord, my soul!

*Leader:* We accompany the words of the next song with a gesture of “sowing” - as a commitment to support our present, in hope, and, in practical charity, as a prayer of intercession that the future fruits will yield a hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold.

 *(The gesture : some seeds are planted in a pot while we are singing)*

**SONG:**

**-** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VA8FTuLIphw>

*🎜Il mondo che vorrei (Laura Pausini)* (The world I want)

**-** <http://vimeo.com/33600585> . *“Solidarity for Ever”*

*Or read this poem by Dom Pedro Casaldáliga*

**«WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT?»**

... So that God may reveal himself now as God,

we have to go forward bringing the Kingdom, in a different sense

from any other kingdom; and it is time

for this wolfish world to become human.

What has happened to the great estates, watchman?

What has happened to hope, my friends?

It is night and the poor are wakeful

and the Lord of all the earth has ordered

the opening of all furrows and granaries

because the era of profit-making is already over.

