

International Solidarity Days - June 2021

June 5—World Environment Day



The theme for *World Environment Day 2021* is “Reimagine, Recreate, and Restore” with a focus on stabilizing the earth’s eco-systems. Human activity and climate change are devastating Earth. Every 3 seconds, a soccer field-sized patch of forest is lost. Half of the world’s wetlands have been destroyed over the last century. We have already lost over 50% of Earth’s coral reefs and the teeming diversity of life that they support. It is predicted that by 2050, over 90% of the coral reefs will be gone. Ecosystem restoration means preventing, halting, and reversing this damage – to go from exploiting nature to healing it. It means bringing back

plants and animals from the brink of extinction. But it also includes the many small actions everyone can take, every day: growing trees, greening our cities, rewilding our gardens or cleaning up trash alongside rivers and coasts. Restoring ecosystems carries substantial benefits for people. For every dollar invested in restoration, at least seven to thirty dollars in returns for society can be expected. Restoration also creates jobs in rural areas where they are most needed. Some countries have already invested in restoration as part of their strategies to bounce back from COVID-19. Others are turning to restoration to help them adapt to a climate that is already changing. Every action to restore ecosystems is crucial to the overall effort. We can all do something to help reimagine, recreate, and restore ecosystems– for example by planting trees, cleaning up riverbanks, or simply giving nature space to recover. For more information search *Ecosystem Restoration Playbook* for practical information.

Holy One, we lift our voices to you in praise for the wonders of creation and the richness of Earth’s diverse ecosystems that help to maintain the balance of life. Inspire us all to take action to reimagine, recreate and restore ecosystems. Bless our efforts to live in harmony with nature and with one another. Open our hearts and our eyes to all the small and large ways that we can each contribute to this transformative effort on behalf of our planet.

June 8—World Oceans Day

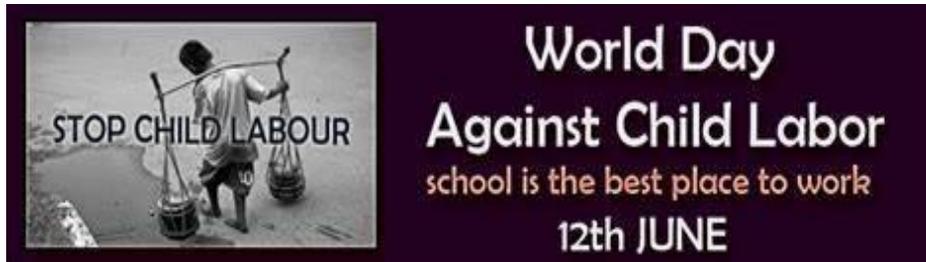


This year’s theme for World Oceans Day is *One Ocean, One Climate, One Future*. Oceans cover about two thirds of the earth’s surface. They connect us all, no matter where we live. The ocean is a crucial part of our ecosystems. It produces more than half of the oxygen we breath and absorbs large amounts of carbon, approximately 50 times more than our atmosphere. The ocean also helps to regulate the earth’s climate by transporting heat from the equator to the poles. Not only does it do all of this to sustain life on land, but it is home to more than 80% of life on earth. It is incredibly biologically diverse. However, despite its importance, the ocean faces threats, like overfishing, pollution, and warming waters and acidification due to climate change.

Human activity contributes to all these threats. Every species in the ocean plays a role in keeping the sea balanced and healthy. Unfortunately, the seas are suffering species loss at an alarming rate. Scientific innovation and ecological consciousness must work together to protect oceans and ensure sustainable use of marine resources. We will either “swim or sink” together—one ocean, one climate, one future.

Creator of life, we thank you for the oceans which sustain all life on Earth. As we confront our human role in the present climate crisis, inspire us to take action to protect Earth's oceans. Inspire us to live in new ways that promote harmony with nature. As our personal and collective consciousness grows, help us to insist that our governments also take significant action to protect the world's oceans.

June 12—World Day Against Child Labor



The term “child labor” refers to the employment of children in any work that deprives them from receiving adequate education, and that is dangerous or harmful. World Day Against Child

Labor 2021 will focus on global efforts to end child labor. This year, the international community stands at a midway point - four years from the last Global Conference on Child Labor in Argentina, and four years to go to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target set to end child labor by 2025. Individuals, corporations, and governments are urged to “act now to end child labor.” Because of the COVID 19 pandemic and the resultant economic crisis that many families face, child labor has increased, effectively wiping out many of the gains of recent years. For the first time in over 2 decades, it is estimated that this year will see an increase in child labor globally. Every child needs a peaceful and safe childhood, as well as educational opportunities in order to live as a fully contributing member of society. Education, protection, and love are essential in teaching the values of harmony, integrity, equality and unity to children. The children of today carry the hopes of families, communities, countries, and the world into the future. For the sake of our global survival, we must commit ourselves to developing each child’s full potential.

God, we beg you to protect children from the exploitation of child labor. Help us to consciously make decisions that support the elimination of child labor, by supporting a living wage for adult workers. Bless all children with safety and security so that they may grow and learn and develop their full potential. May they all contribute to a future full of hope.

June 17—World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought



World Day to Combat Desertification and drought (WDCDD) will be celebrated worldwide on the 17th of June. This year’s theme is “Restoration, Land, Recovery: We Build Back Better With Healthy Land.” The global focus of this day will be to take active steps to restore degraded land into healthy land. These efforts bring economic resilience, create jobs, raise incomes, increase food security, and improve biodiversity. By lessening the impact of climate change,

these actions also support a green recovery from the COVID 19 pandemic. Nearly three quarters of the Earth’s ice-free land has been altered by humans to meet an ever-growing demand for food, raw materials, highways and homes. Fixing damaged ecosystems mitigates against climate change and bolsters nature’s defenses against disasters and extreme weather events such as wildfires, droughts, floods, and sand and dust storms. Restoring natural landscapes also reduces close contact between wildlife and human settlements, creating a natural buffer against zoonotic diseases. Avoiding, slowing and reversing the loss of productive land and natural ecosystems now is both urgent and important for a swift recovery from the pandemic and for guaranteeing the long-term survival of people and the planet.

“The COVID19 pandemic has reinforced just how much we need our forests, drylands, wetlands and other land ecosystems: for food, for the green economy, for eco-tourism, as a buffer against extreme climate events. In Costa Rica, our unique tropical forests are a limited and precious natural resource that we cannot neglect. On Desertification and Drought Day, I urge us all to push hard to restore our lands. We all have a role to play, because we all have a stake in our planet’s future.”

— Andrea Meza, Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica

Mother/Father God, we thank you for Mother Earth from whom we were created and to whom we return when life’s journey is over. We recognize that climate change and human activity is degrading the land, turning once productive forests, grasslands and farmland into deserts. As we take action to restore and recover the land, guide our steps and our choices. Inspire us with creativity and help us to listen to nature’s wisdom as we create our future.

June 20—World Refugee Day



World Refugee Day is an international day designated by the United Nations to honor refugees around the globe. It celebrates the strength and courage of people who have been forced to flee their home country to escape conflict or persecution. World Refugee Day is an occasion to build empathy and understanding for their plight and to recognize their resilience in rebuilding their lives. The theme for World Refugee Day 2021 is: *Everyone Can Make a Difference—Every Action Counts*. On this day, the UN is calling on us to join together in creating an inclusive world. This year the UN is

highlighting the wonderful work by refugees living in their host countries during COVID 19. In addition to testing our strength and highlighting our inequalities, the pandemic has connected us in new ways and motivated us to act for the common good. Many refugees have responded by stepping up to serve their new communities as frontline workers. These everyday heroes, from all walks of life, have risked their own health to help their new neighbors, communities and country. Each of us can do something to welcome, mentor, assist or accompany a refugee in our community. But today we are also called to recognize and appreciate the gifts of cultural diversity, life experiences and values that refugees share with us. Their presence expands our awareness and challenges us to open ourselves beyond our comfort zones. Thus, we all grow together.

God, bless all those who are seeking refuge from violence, oppression, and desperation. Help us to recognize and affirm the refugees among us, not only their needs, but the gifts they bring. Inspire us to reach out in whatever way we can, knowing that “everyone can make a difference and every action counts.”

June 26—International Day In Support Of Victims Of Torture



Torture is the act of deliberately inflicting severe pain (either physical or psychological) and possibly injury. In modern society, torture is considered a violation of human rights and a crime under international law. It is declared unacceptable by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Geneva Conventions and the UN Convention Against Torture. There is no morally acceptable rationalization for inflicting torture. Therefore, torture is to be

condemned whenever and wherever it occurs. This day focuses on speaking out against torture as well as honoring and supporting victims and survivors of torture throughout the world. Many people around the world have worked tirelessly to bring perpetrators of torture to justice, often at great risk to themselves. Many others have reached out to victims of torture, evaluating them, addressing both physical and psychological traumas in need of treatment and healing, and accompanying them on their journey toward restored health and wholeness. On this day we stand in solidarity with victims of torture in condemning its use and rejecting any attempts to justify its use. We also demand that governments across the world be held accountable for torture committed within their boundaries, in their names, or at their request. Let us work to rid the world of torture once and for all.

God of compassion and love, we recognize that every human being was created in your image and deserves respect. All of us share the same innate human dignity and every person is our brother or sister. Protect all of us as we stand up and condemn the use of torture. Protect those who are working for human rights around the world, often at great person risk. Restore human compassion to the hearts of those who inflict torture and move them to refuse to participate in inflicting harm on anyone. Heal those who have been victims of torture, so that they may again feel loved, safe, and respected. May they be renewed by the compassion and kindness of others.