

## Reflection Grid

### World Environment Day 2021, June 5, 2021



This year Pakistan will host World Environment Day and embrace the theme of Ecosystem Restoration: resetting our relationship with nature. In taking a step from crisis to healing Pakistan means to restore its country's forests by conducting a *10 Billion Tree Tsunami*. In planting trees, Pakistan recognizes that the restoration of nature is imperative to the survival of our planet and the human race. It will mark the formal launch of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030. Its purpose is to raise worldwide awareness and action for the environment and

coincides with the Sustainable Development Goals and the timeline scientists identify as critical for avoiding the worst impacts of climate change (Inger Andersen, Director of UNEP)

One is reminded of the words of Thomas Berry: *There is no such thing as "human community" without earth, rock, air, water and all living forms. Without these, humans do not exist. There is, therefore, no separate human community. Humans are woven into the larger community which is the Sacred Earth Community.*

Here in the US we are reeling from a year that has laid bare the unjust and inequitable systems enabled by a history of structural and environmental racism. People of color remain disproportionately vulnerable to COVID-19. The concentration of people of color in disempowered neighborhoods are exposed to toxins that put them at

higher chance of impaired heart and lung function. Poor communities of women, children, seniors are feeling the impact of environmental degradation. In Laudato Si, perhaps the most

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**So far, a total of 350,000 hectares were planted with trees, creating 3,500 green enclosures nation-wide**



Image credits: [Ten Billion Tree Tsunami](#)

important encyclical ever written, Pope Francis makes clear that our care for one another and our care for the earth are intimately connected, noting that humanity is not faced “with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather one complex crisis which is both social and environmental.”



The science of Climate Change is clear: To halt our pollution by 2030 we must be about “restoring and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, and halt biodiversity loss.” (Sustainable Development Goal 15)

As members of JPIC and through our shared Wisdom Charism, we allow these challenges to capture our imagination and to guide our work on issues of climate change. Our President Joe Biden’s groundbreaking executive order on climate aims high and we are happy that our country has rejoined the Paris Climate Agreement. For the first time in federal policy, President Biden pairs the urgent issues of leaking greenhouse gases with the creation of new jobs for energy workers and people who live in heavily polluted neighborhoods.

In the US Province we see our work of establishing relationships with our Senators and Representatives as crucial in advocating for Justice. This is accomplished through visits to their offices. It is an impactful way to speak, neighbor to neighbor with our representatives and let them know why and how the laws and policies pertaining to environmental justice impact our community. If we are unable to do this we make phone calls and write letters to our legislators to support the passage of bills that uphold the common good.

#### OUR ASKS

**We ask our government leaders to accelerate the transition to clean energy, investing in sustainable infrastructure, and prioritizing communities most impacted by environmental injustice.**

An increase in global warming (1.5 C) will significantly disrupt human and natural systems. Now is our time to act.