

## International Solidarity Days – May 2022

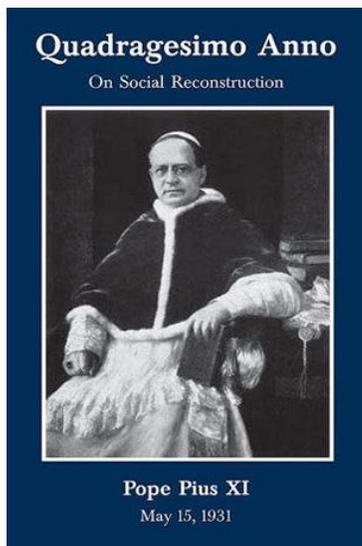
### May 1—International Workers’ Day

*International Workers’ Day* is a special day to honor workers around the world as they continue to struggle for safe working conditions, a living wage, an 8-hour working day, respect and recognition for their contributions to the common good, and an end to child labor. Many workers also continue to struggle to organize themselves so that they can share their concerns with management and employers without retribution. Paid sick leave and job security following illness or on-the-job injury are still not available to many workers. Even in those countries where union organizing and workers rights have been enacted into law, efforts continue to try to roll back these hard won accomplishments. As Pope Francis says in his most recent encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, the first step toward a more just economic system needs to be implementation of a living wage. This is defined as a wage that can support a worker and his/her family. Presently, many two-parent households require 2-3 jobs in order to make ends meet. This means that children are often unable to receive the parental attention that they need. It also means that adults are overworked, which affects their health and wellbeing.



*God of justice, bless workers throughout the world whose labors contribute to building up communities and societies. Help us to recognize and affirm the dignity of every human being and the value of each person’s work, recognizing that they all contribute to the common good. As workers struggle to have a voice in their future, let us all stand in solidarity with one another as we insist that all workers receive a living wage, have safe working conditions, and be treated with respect.*

### May 15—The 91<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of *Quadragesimo Anno*



On May 15, 1931, Pope Pius XI published his encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (QA) on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. These two encyclicals outlined the moral principles that should inform a just development of the social order that was emerging following the industrial revolution. In QA, Pope Pius XI addressed issues such as private property and the common good, the rights and responsibilities related to capital and labor, the right to work as a human right, and the right for workers to earn a living wage for themselves and their families. In our present world many countries have no minimum wage laws, or the legal minimum wage for workers is not a living wage capable of providing the worker and his/her family with the essentials of life. This encyclical continues to challenge us to address these and other issues. QA further highlighted the essential role of labor in creating capital, and capital’s essential role in creating flourishing economies. It also called on governments to ensure the common good by taxation and equitable redistribution of goods and services while building and maintaining infrastructures needed to support all members of society. The widening gulf between rich and poor highlights the failure of many societies to live up to these principles. In *Laudato Si’* and *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope

Francis builds upon these concepts when speaking of a just economy as foundational to human development. Economic systems have profound effects on quality of life. Economic justice is an essential element in Pope Francis’ concept of “integral ecology.” Caring for the environment and caring for the poor can only be achieved through economic justice.

*Holy One, we pray for the poor and for creation, who suffer from what Pope Francis calls the globalization of indifference. Help us as we evaluate economic systems and our personal economic choices that contribute to destruction rather than to fullness of life. Bless our efforts to meet the needs of all, in order to create a flourishing future, now and for future generations.*

## May 21—Feast of Blessed Franz Jägerstätter

Franz Jägerstätter was born in Austria in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Like St Francis, he had a rather wild youth, joining a motorcycle gang and often disturbing the peace of his little village. After marrying, he seemed to settle down, working as a farmer, studying scripture, and becoming a third order secular Franciscan. He took the Gospel and Franciscan message of non-violence to heart just as the Nazi party was coming to power in Germany. It was not long before the Nazis annexed Austria. Like many Austrians, he quickly learned of their activities and intentions. His commitment to Gospel values led him to refuse mandatory military service, which he saw as a form of complicity with the Nazi regime. In spite of having a wife and three daughters, he continued to follow his conscience. He was arrested and later beheaded for treason on August 9, 1943, at the age of 36. It is said that when his attorney advised him that other Catholics were serving in the army, Franz responded, “I can only act on my own conscience. I do not judge anyone. I can only judge myself.” He continued, “I have considered my family. I have prayed and put myself and my family in God’s hands. I know that, if I do what I think God wants me to do, he will take care of my family.” The story of his bravery and commitment to nonviolence has inspired many people over the years. His life and death remind us that the price of Gospel living can be great and may even cost us our lives. As we seek to be a blessing in the heart of the world, may we witness to God’s love and mercy through nonviolent presence.



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*Loving God, we pray for an end to injustice, intimidation, violence, and war. We recognize that lasting peace can only be achieved through dialogue, trust, understanding and love. As our world continues to witness brutality and suffering caused by violence, greed, fear, and intimidation, may we stand in solidarity with those who work for peace. May every person be recognized as our brother and sister. Grant us lasting PEACE!*

## May 22—International Day for Biological Diversity



International Day for  
Biological Diversity

This year, the theme for International Day for Biological Diversity is “Building a shared future for all life.” Biodiversity is the answer to several sustainable development challenges. It is the backbone to addressing climate change, sustainable agriculture, restoring clean air and water sources, and restoring the health of both plant and animal species on our planet. Fish provide 20 per cent of animal protein to about 3 billion people. Over 80 per cent of the human diet is provided by plants. As many as 80 per cent of people living in rural areas in developing countries rely on traditional plant-based medicines for basic healthcare. But loss of biodiversity threatens all, including our health. It has been proven that biodiversity loss could expand diseases transmitted from animals to humans. On the other hand, if we keep biodiversity intact, it offers excellent tools to fight against pandemics like those caused by coronaviruses. As biodiversity is protected and restored, the earth’s ecosystems will begin to recover and heal the planet. We are being urged to put nature at the center of sustainable development. While there is a growing recognition that biological diversity is a global asset of tremendous value now and to future generations, the number of species is being significantly reduced by certain human activities. Therefore, human activity can also reverse this trend.

For more information see “A Beginner’s Guide to Ecosystem Restoration” at [www.unep.org/news-and-stories/beginners-guide-ecosystem-restoration](http://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/beginners-guide-ecosystem-restoration)

*Creator God, inspire us to take immediate action to protect the wonderful biodiversity of our planet. We know that measures great and small can help restore the health of Mother Earth, which is home to so many creatures. As we celebrate this day dedicated to biodiversity, may we raise our voices in praise and rededicate ourselves to preserving, protecting, and honoring the marvelous diversity of your creation.*

### ***May 24—Seventh Anniversary of Laudato Si’: On the Care of Our Common Home***

*Laudato Si’—On the Care of Our Common Home* is the encyclical published in 2015 by Pope Francis. It is addressed to “every person living on this planet,” not merely to Catholics. It was clearly inspired by St. Francis, the patron of those who promote ecology, who called all creatures brothers and sisters. If we see ourselves as one with creation, our relationship with creation becomes personal, loving, respectful, open, grateful, and filled with wonder. We will no longer be able to see ourselves as “masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on our immediate needs. By contrast, if we feel intimately united with all that exists, then sobriety and care will well up spontaneously.” (Paragraph 11) *Laudato Si’* calls us to a personal and communal conversion of heart, that moves us to action on behalf of our common home. Pope Francis invites us to examine our lives, to consider our environmental footprint, and to make the changes necessary to reestablish our right relationship with creation. Let us join with the entire worldwide community in this effort, recognizing that creation is a unique revelation of the divine presence which we are called to recognize, cherish, and protect.



*God of all creation, you bless us with such wonderful gifts on this beautiful and life-filled planet. We praise you for the beauty, power, wonder, and love revealed in all that is. As we celebrate this 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Laudato Si’, inspire us to act boldly on behalf of Earth, our common home. Rooted in love, may we restore right relationships with creation and with one another as we create a flourishing future for ourselves and for future generations.*