

# International Seminar

## TERRA MATER

### THE GUBBIO CHARTER 2007

In the 25th anniversary of the Gubbio Charter 1982, the participants to the Forth International Seminar Terra Mater (Gubbio, September 24-27, 2007) think it is necessary to propose the extraordinarily strong Franciscan view of nature not just to believers, but to everybody, while our planet situation seems to be more worrisome than ever before.

Several exponents of the scientific community have recently multiplied their alarmed appeals, particularly addressed to political authorities. However, the necessary changes are delaying to be activated: fear is not a strong enough motivation either to overcome the culture of profit per se, or to graze the consumerist push that continuously occurs from it.

The progressive reduction of oil and gas reserves makes it more and more difficult to provide enough of energy, even causing bloody conflicts.

Scientific academies denounce the phenomenon of climate changes, occurred from massively applying to fossil fuels: the quick increase in the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere upsets the stability of equilibriums and periodic phenomena that determine climate.

Thus, it is absolutely necessary to modify the structure of energetic budget, despite the fact it is not possible yet, in place of fossil fuels, to use nuclear energy, because of all the unsolved problems this involves.

At the very core of the emergency, besides the energetic and climatic problems, there are also: the loss of biodiversity, a massive deforestation, pollution destructive effects on environment and the painful picture of degenerative diseases, the deterioration of urban centers, the long-lasting scandal of poverty and hunger in the world that forces millions of human beings to emigrate.

The recurrence of the eighth centennial of St. Francis' arrival at Gubbio – where he cured the lepers in the culminant point of his conversion – suggests we let his example leads us to a total change of perspective.

The Franciscan teaching, which focuses on brotherhood among all living and not-living creatures, reveals the model of a man that, after eight centuries, can still inspire both believers and non-believers.

The life style deriving from this point of view suggests everybody “a good life” inspired by a culture of limit, rather than boundless development and measureless consumerism.

Therefore, Terra Mater thinks it is essential

to impose - as the technological progress has enormously increased the ability to manipulate nature, which has consequently become considerably vulnerable - a deeper human responsibility, in order to defend all natural systems and to restore their delicate equilibriums, as well as a criterion of caution that can prevent from adopting innovations without a reasonable guarantee of their safety;

to promote an increase in one's individual responsibility, after becoming fully aware of the gradually more serious environmental crisis, in order to avoid any prejudicial behavior, and to encourage a critical vigilance and defense of environment, which is to be thought as a common possession;

to adopt moderation in goods and resources supply, that are not to exceed the demand for fundamental needs: this is going to lead people to do without unnecessary objects, habits and comfort levels, according to a frugal life style;

to invite governments, institutions, citizens and firms to experiment and use, with determination and constancy, alternative energy sources, from energetic concentrate sources, as fossil fuels and nuclear energy, to sources diffused on the territory, in order to make them – together with energy saving - the crucial point of public politics and private habits;

to stop thinking of the "world consume" as a structural element of human beings in the industrial and technological civilization, and to encourage people to consider environment as a whole of natural and cultural realities, while man is an original and indissoluble part of it;

to individualize new sites to make planetary political decisions, in order to overcome the traditional diplomatic relationships among the States and to allow a plurality of subjects and agencies (non - governmental organizations, employers' associations, etc.) to partake of any decision making processes;

to definite again the reasons for unequal economic relationships between industrialized and developing Countries, with particular reference to agricultural politics and, above all, to the imposition of monocultures that impoverish biodiversity and make the Countries that adopt them more subject to crisis and conflicts;

to recognize women's dignity and fullness of their gifts, like in the franciscan vision, and valorize them as the bearers of the ethics of care, which, in alternative to the culture of dominion, assume among their own privileged objects nature and environment;

to recognize the cultural dimension of the relationship between man and nature in the form of landscape, expression and heritage of a community that, according to its own interpretation of housing, does not betray the identity and the historical and symbolical dimensions of the place where it lives;

to privilege the direct experience of places and environment, to be contemplated, crossed and known in order to be enjoyed and aesthetically used;

to effect a permanent environmental education (that involves schools, institutions, associations, firms and media) according to a view of complexity, considered as a systemic vision of reality, both in its scientific and ecological aspects and in its ethical and behavioral features, privileging directed experiences on the territory;

to assume an attitude inspired to the more advanced sensibility towards animals, protecting them from as many maltreatments and sufferings as possible (in particular, valorizing alternative methodologies to animal experimentation), and to defend all species risking extinction;

to adopt an analogous attitude of respect towards the vegetable and mineral world: S. Francesco teaches us that the ethics that only deals with humans, risks being inhuman. His humanism, for its cosmic opening, can be defined ecological.

At a quarter of a century from the "prophetic" Gubbio Charter 1982, Terra Mater again encourages every man to follow St. Francis' footsteps, to rediscover the fundamental values of housing the Earth.

## TERRA MATER

Assisi Nature Council ( A.N.C.)  
Associazione Italiana per il World Wildlife Fund (W.W.F. Italia)  
Associazione Nazionale Italia Nostra  
Boureau Européen de l'Environnement ( B.E.E.)  
Centro Francese Studi Ambientali  
Club Alpino Italiano ( C.A.I.)  
Club of Rome  
Comune di Gubbio  
Comunità Montana "Alto Chiascio" Gubbio  
Conferenza dei Ministri Generali delle Quattro Famiglie Francescane  
Ordine dei Frati Minori (OFM)  
Ordine dei Frati Minori Cappuccini (OFMCap.)  
Ordine dei Frati Minori Conventuali ( OFMConv.)  
Terzo Ordine Regolare di S. Francesco (TOR)  
Ente Nazionale Protezione Animali ( E.N.P.A.)  
FAI - Fondo per l'Ambiente Italiano  
Federazione Italiana Pronatura - Federnatura  
International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (I.U.C.N.)  
Istituto Italiano di Bioetica  
Legambiente  
Lega Italiana Diritti dell'Animale ( L.I.D.A.)  
Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli ( L.I.P.U.)  
Mountain Wilderness Italia  
Planning Environmental and Ecological Institute  
Provincia di Perugia  
Regione Umbria  
Società Italiana di Ecologia ( S.IT.E.)  
Society for International Development (S.I.D.)  
Terraceleste  
World Futures Studies Federation

Contatti: [postmaster@istitutobioetica.org](mailto:postmaster@istitutobioetica.org)