



*Tesfaye Tadesse Gebresilasie, MCCJ*

## Opening Address



*Fr. Tesfaye Gebresilasie, President of SEDOS*

***“Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honour and glory and power, for ever and ever!” (Revelation, 5:13)***

Dear Brothers and Sisters, participating in the Residential Seminar, with the title ***Living Green Mission***, I greet you using the words of the liturgy, **Christ our Hope is Risen, Alleluia.**

Fr. Peter Baekelmans, CICM, and the Staff of the Office of SEDOS, as well as the Executive Committee of SEDOS are happy that many are participating in this Seminar on a particularly important theme for our world,

the Church, and our daily missionary commitment.

We thank God that, with the prophetic and imperative input and emphasis of Pope Francis, the Church has strengthened its attention and commitment to one of the vital mission trends of our day, *Ecological Conversion and Care of God’s Creation* in an era where Climate Change is negatively affecting our life and the whole universe.

Once again, SEDOS is happy to dedicate time to prayer and reflection on the issue of taking care of Creation and the attention needed to heal the ecological wounds of our environment and the deep concern for the damage of nature and for the devastating effect of Climate Change.

As Pope Francis reminds us, we are not dealing with something new or an issue addressed only by us: *“These statements of the Popes echo the reflections of numerous scientists, philosophers, theologians, and civic groups, all of which have enriched the Church’s thinking on these questions. Outside the Catholic Church, other Churches and Christian communities – and other religions as well – have expressed deep concern and offered valuable reflections on issues which*

*all of us find disturbing. To give just one striking example, I would mention the statements made by the beloved Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, with whom we share the hope of full ecclesial communion.” (LS, 7).*

I believe that we can affirm once again that, our concern for the universe, for the environment and the whole of creation is part of our concern for human beings. More especially, it is part of our commitment to our brothers and sisters in dire need who live in miserable poverty.

It is a concern for the beauty of nature and its dignity as created by God, but it is also about our responsibility for humanity. The issue of climate change and the consequent natural crises, is a preoccupation for Nature at large and for humanity in particular way. *“Human beings too are creatures of this world, enjoying a right to life and happiness, and endowed with unique dignity. So, we cannot fail to consider the effects on people’s lives of environmental deterioration, current models of development and the throwaway culture.” (LS, 43).*

We thank God for all those engaged in projects and life plans according to the inspiration coming from *Living Green Mission* in our difficult days of climate change and the worldwide pandemic of COVID-19: - As missionaries at the service of **Missio Dei, God’s Mission**, besides our human concern and creativity, we are first and basically, moved and motivated because of our faith. *“Given the complexity of the ecological crisis and its multiple causes, we need to realize that the solutions will not emerge from just one way of interpreting and transforming reality. Respect must also be shown for the various cultural riches of different peoples, their art and poetry, their interior life and spirituality. If we are*

*genuinely concerned to develop an ecology capable of remedying the damage we have done, no branch of the sciences and no form of wisdom can be left out, and that includes religion and the language particular to it. I would like from the outset to show how faith convictions can offer Christians, and some other believers as well, ample motivation to care for nature and for the most vulnerable of their brothers and sisters. If the simple fact of being human moves people to care for the environment of which they are a part, Christians in turn ‘realize that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith’. It is good for humanity and the world at large when we believers better recognize the ecological commitments which stem from our convictions.”(LS, 63-64).*

SEDOS is not alone in reflecting on this. Many Associations and NGO’s run by various congregations and church personnel are doing a lot of reflection and to make people aware of the ecological problems. Just to mention a few: the **Dicastery for Human Integral Development** at the Vatican, **VIVAT, REPAM, AEFJN, USG-UISG, JPIC commission**.

I thank all those who have agreed to help us these days, the Speakers at our Seminar and all the resource people who will help us and enrich our reflection and sharing in our groups.

From this moment, may we ask ourselves: What we can take from the seminar for our daily life? What homework will we do as we are called continuously to practice ecological conversion?

*Thanks, and God Bless.*