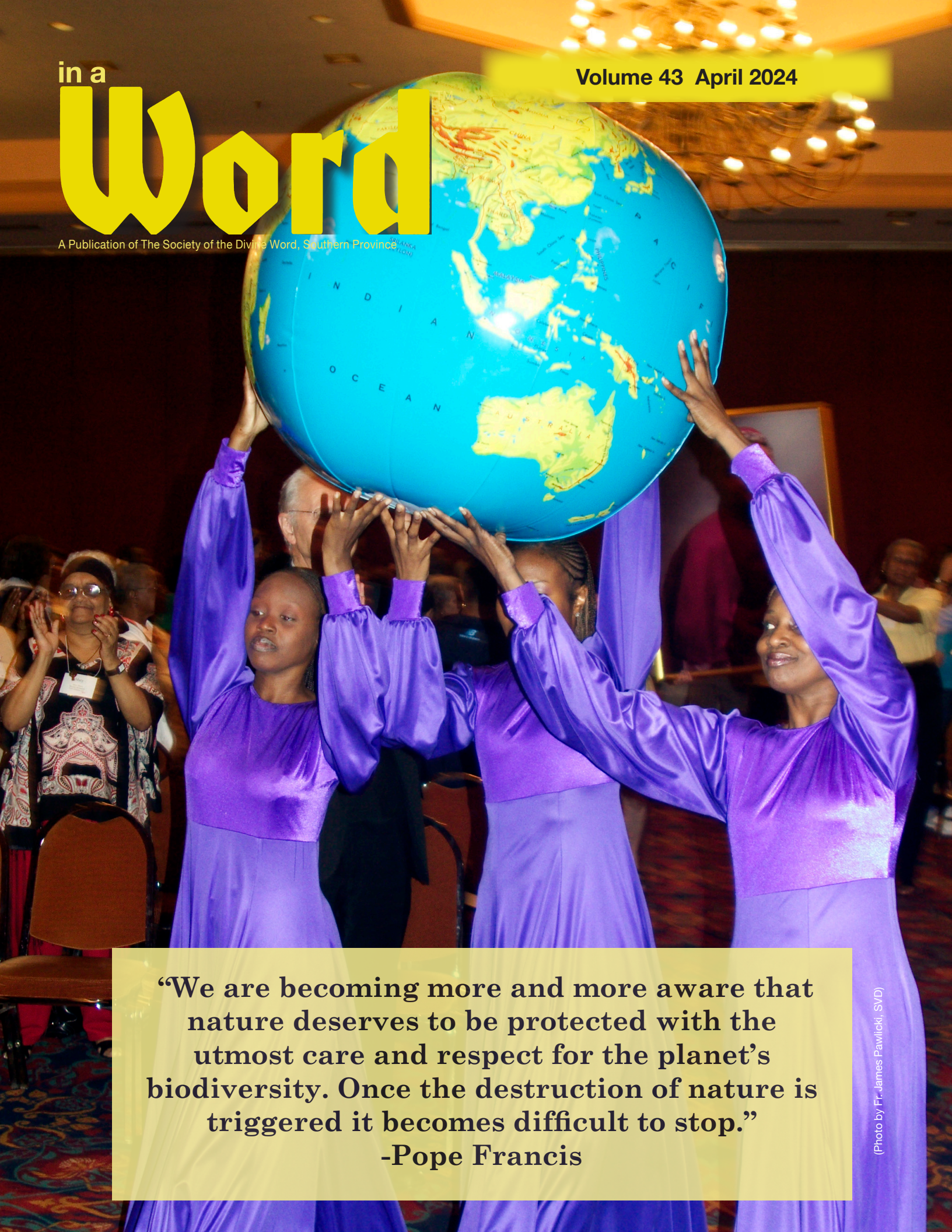


in a

# Word

A Publication of The Society of the Divine Word, Southern Province

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**“We are becoming more and more aware that nature deserves to be protected with the utmost care and respect for the planet’s biodiversity. Once the destruction of nature is triggered it becomes difficult to stop.”**

**-Pope Francis**

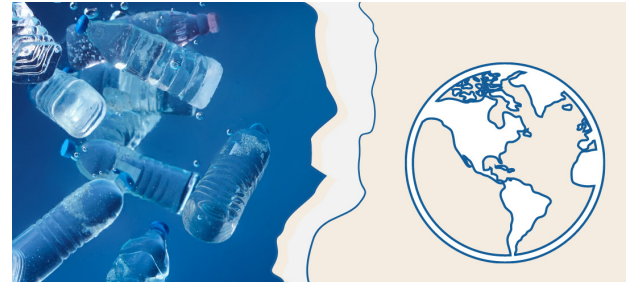


# INTRODUCTION

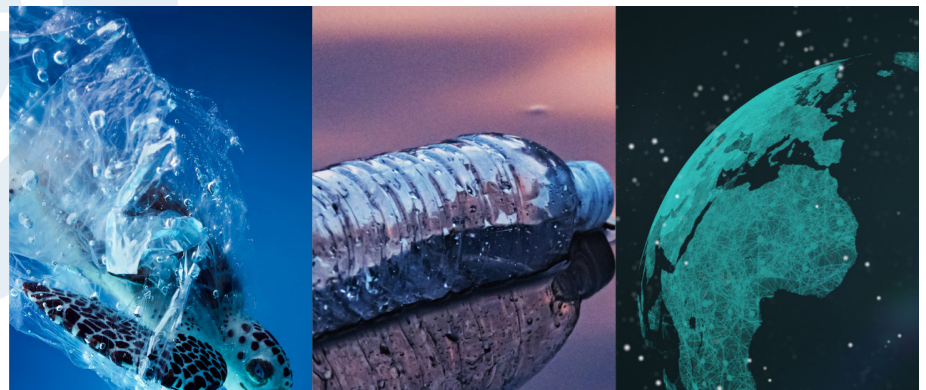
Every April 22nd, people across the globe join hands in observance of World Earth Day, a poignant reminder of our collective responsibility to safeguard the planet we call home. This year, our focus sharpens on the pressing issue of plastic pollution under the theme “Planet VS Plastic.” As our environmental crisis intensifies, exacerbated by the proliferation of plastic waste, the need for concerted action has never been more critical.

From oceans suffocating with plastic debris to landfills brimming with single-use plastics, the consequences of our throwaway culture are stark and undeniable. The very ecosystems that sustain life on Earth are under siege, demanding urgent intervention and systemic change.

In response, we extend a heartfelt invitation to join the Laudato Si Action Platform, a global movement inspired by Pope Francis’ encyclical Laudato Si, advocating for integral ecology and the protection of our common home. Together, let us rise to the challenge, commit to reducing plastic consumption, and embrace sustainable practices that nurture rather than harm our planet. World Earth Day 2024 serves as a rallying cry for solidarity and action, uniting individuals, communities, and nations in the shared mission to preserve the beauty and vitality of our world for generations to come.



## WORLD EARTH DAY 2024: PLANET VS PLASTIC



**“The nations raged, but your wrath has come, ... to destroy those who destroy the earth.”  
(Rev 11:18: NAB)**

frightening indictment of human activities that are damaging and defiling God’s creation through environmental destruction. No one of God’s creations destroys another. Sadly, the same is not true about humanity’s creations.

In the context of this year’s earth day, one of such activities is the irresponsible use of one of human own creations: plastics. The uncontrolled proliferation of plastic products and, particularly, plastic waste, contaminates lands, oceans, and ecosystems around the world. This could be viewed as humanity “destroying the earth” by saturating it with non-biodegradable pollutants.

This biblical passage suggests there are consequences from God for such wanton devastation of the natural environment. It frames plastic pollution as not just an environmental crisis, but a spiritual offense against the Creator by destroying and defiling the planet entrusted to humanity’s care. It is a call to spur faith communities to corrective action to combat plastic waste.

# BIBLICAL REFLECTION

This verse from the Book of Revelation warns of God’s judgment on “those who destroy the earth.” In the context of the plastic pollution crisis, it serves as a

# ACTION PLAN

**Climate education:** Be part of climate education. Climate and environmental literacy, coupled with strong civic education will instill more awareness.

**Clean up:** Join a clean up group in your locality. Volunteer to tackle out-of-control waste from seashore, marketplace or common places together with others.

**Simple act of Green:** Always carry a reusable bag, carry water reusable bottles (not plastics), use reusable utensils instead of onetime use and throw utensils, reach the world by posting to the Earth Day map, etc.

**Reject fast fashion:** The fast fashion fuels over-consumption, disposable and environmental harm, hence, purchase affordable and sustainable clothing.

**Protect the endangered species:** Every animal, bird, planet, etc. is God's creation, they sustain the earth. Be watchful and protect endangered species.

**March or Rally:** Organize in your locality a march or rally to highlight Earth Day and its significance.

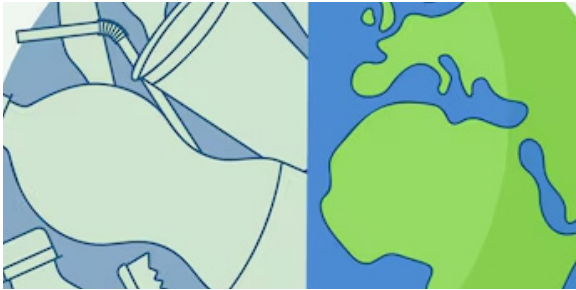
**Activities and events:** Have some activities in every parish/institution or events to mark this day, so that the parishioners or the students will remember this day and its implications.

**Support plastics treaty:** Reduce the usage of plastics in everyday life, and let our home and life become plastic free. Support the global plastics treaty.

**Plantation:** Plant a tree or grow flower garden or make your environment green. Let every house make simple plan for plantation.

**Reduce, reuse, and recycle in the Garden:** Reduce the plastic pots, reuse the waste, recycle the compost, find ways how your garden be green and free of plastics and waste.

**Join the Laudato Si Action Platform:** In your communities, families, create your own action plan to reduce the use of single-use plastics. Share your action plan with the entire church by registering on the website: <https://laudatosi-action-platform.org/>



WORLD EARTH DAY 2024  
PLANET VS PLASTIC



The Canticle of the Sun by St. Francis of Assisi, - adapted

Most high, all powerful, all good Lord! All praise is yours, all glory, all honor, and all blessing. To you, alone, Most High, do they belong. Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures, especially through my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day; and you give light through him.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars; in the heavens you have made them, precious and beautiful. Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, and clouds and storms, and all the weather, through which you give your creatures sustenance.

Be praised, My Lord, through Sister Water; she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure. Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you brighten the night. He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong.

Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Mother Earth, who feeds us and rules us, and produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs. Praise and bless my Lord, and give thanks, and serve him with great humility.

# PRAYER



# in a word or two



Congratulations to Father Michael Moody, SVD on his 60th anniversary to the priesthood. He was recently honored by his fellow Divine Word Missionaries and Bishop of Lafayette at a special Mass at the Consolata Nursing home in New Iberia, Louisiana. During his homily at the Mass Father Michael Sucharski, SVD shared stories of Father Moody's time as a devoted and hardworking priest,

especially during his time in Mouth Bayou, Mississippi. Fr. Moody, empowered by the strength he found in the gospels, worked tirelessly to build up the Catholic Community which, when he arrived was only 13 families. To the people of Mount Bayou and in every community he was assigned to in Mississippi or Louisiana, Fr. Mike taught Catechism, prepared young and old for the sacraments and was a faithful Divine Word Missionary preacher and teacher of the Gospel message of Jesus.



Front cover photo along with photo on right is from the Archbishop Lyke Conference in 2005. Over the years this Black Catholic liturgy conference has provided inspiration and valuable resources to the Church. Going to the 2024 Conference is worth the time to attend.

## Prayer to Care for Our Common Home


Father of all,  
 Creator and ruler of the universe,  
 You entrusted your world to us as a gift.  
 Help us to care for it and all people,  
 that we may live in right relationship--  
 with You,  
 with ourselves,  
 with one another,  
 and with creation.  
 Christ our Lord,  
 both divine and human,  
 You lived among us and died for our sins.  
 Help us to imitate your love for the human family  
 by recognizing that we are all connected—  
 to our brothers and sisters around the world,  
 to those in poverty impacted by environmental  
 devastation,  
 and to future generations.  
 Holy Spirit,  
 giver of wisdom and love,  
 You breathe life in us and guide us.  
 Help us to live according to your vision,  
 stirring to action the hearts of all—  
 individuals and families,  
 communities of faith,  
 and civil and political leaders.  
 Triune God, help us to hear the cry of those in  
 poverty, and the cry of the earth, so that we may  
 together care for our common home.  
 Amen.



Divine Word Missionaries is an international missionary community of over 7,000 brothers and priests. In 1905 the SVDs began working among African Americans in the Southern United States. Today, Divine Word Missionaries work in over 35 parishes in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Florida and Arkansas. IN A WORD is a publication of The Society of the Divine Word's Media Production Center. Rev. James Pawlicki, S.V.D., Director and Editor; Cathy Green-Miner, office manager; consultant.

Correspondence to Media Production Center, 199 Seminary Drive, Bay St. Louis, MS 39520, Phone: 228-344-3166.. Electronic messages to our [inawordsvd@gmail.com](mailto:inawordsvd@gmail.com). IN A WORD is not published during July and August.

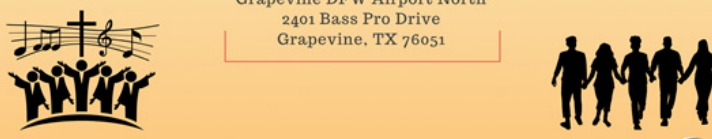
Web page can be found at <http://www.inaword.com>



**2024 ARCHBISHOP LYKE CONFERENCE**

**STANDING IN THE NEED OF PRAYER**  
*Reclaiming Our Black Catholic Liturgy*

June 18-22, 2024  
 Embassy Suites by Hilton  
 Grapevine DFW Airport North  
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