



Goal 7:

AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

As humans, we burn energy and use our bodies for work. Throughout the ages, we have also used the earth's resources to extract energy. People have used mills at waterfalls to grind grain, fire to heat food, wind to sail the seas. The energy sources that the earth has to offer have led to positive progress for many people. At the same time, the most commonly used energy sources are very harmful to the climate and the environment, which is why it is so important for the global community to choose clean energy – now and for the future. Then we can solve the challenge of poverty and the climate crisis without one solution coming at the expense of the other.

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) states that all people should have access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services by 2030. According to the World Health Organization, three billion people use smoke-filled stoves or fires to cook food, and about four million people die each year as a result of this harmful smoke.¹⁰

If we are to achieve this goal, a major effort is needed to promote clean energy, we must make clean energy more efficient, and we must ensure that everyone can buy electricity at a price they can afford. Everyone must have the opportunity to cook without any harmful smoke and to do their homework after the sun has set.

Biblical reflection

The word "energy" comes from Greek and means strength or power, what a person needs in order to perform a task. This is how the New Testament uses this term, in particular with reference to the power of God that empowers people to fulfil the ministry to which they are called (Colossians 1:29).

This adds an important perspective to our modern use of "energy". Energy is a resource that we receive as a gift of nature and that we are called to manage for the benefit of all. Admittedly, we are able to store energy and measure its power, however always in ways that depend on a shining sun, on winds blowing and on rain pouring down.

Jesus reminds us that God "makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous" (Matthew 5:45). God sees to the sources of energy in nature that they benefit everyone, as gracious expressions of the life-giving rhythm of days and seasons in creation. It includes a vision of original purity, taking form as a vocation to care for creation and engage in promoting a society that ensures equal access to all to these gifts and their energy as we strive for a good life.

Challenge

Can you do anything to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels – as individuals, as groups or through political influence? Or can you perhaps do something on all three levels?

Prayer

*Lord, you who have given us your creation in all its power,
With gushing waterfalls and warming sunshine,
Help us manage this energy for everyone's benefit.
Teach us to take care of nature's gifts.
Provide light and warmth in homes all over the world.*

We commit everything and everyone, into your hands, Lord. Amen.

Questions

- When is energy clean? Discuss this from an ethical perspective.
- What will it take to be able to say that everyone has equal access to clean energy?