



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SECOND FORUM
OF THE LAUDATO SI' COMMUNITIES IN AMATRICE, ITALY**

I address a cordial greeting to the organizers and participants in the second Forum of the *Laudato si'* Communities, which is being held in a territory devastated by the earthquake that struck Italy in August 2016, and which more than any other area has paid a very high price in terms of the number of victims.

It is a sign of hope, the fact that you are indeed in Amatrice, the memory of which is always present in my heart, to focus on the imbalances that devastate our “common home”. Not only is it a sign of closeness to the many brothers and sisters who still live between the memory of a terrible tragedy and the reconstruction that is slow to get started, but it also expresses the desire to make resonate, loud and clear, that it is the poor who pay the highest price of environmental devastation. The wounds inflicted on the environment are inexorably wounds inflicted on humanity at its most defenceless. I wrote in the Encyclical *Laudato si'*: “There can be no renewal of our relationship with nature without a renewal of humanity itself. There can be no ecology without an adequate anthropology” (118).

After facing, last year, the theme of the plastic that is suffocating our planet, today you reflect on the grave and no longer sustainable situation of Amazonia and the peoples who live there. You are thus inspired by the theme of the Synod of Bishops which will be held this coming October for the Pan-Amazon region, and whose *Instrumentum laboris* was recently presented.

The situation of Amazonia is a sad paradigm of what is happening in various parts of the planet: a blind and destructive mentality that favours profit over justice; it makes evident the predatory attitude with which man relates to nature. Please, do not forget that social justice and ecology are profoundly interconnected! What is happening in Amazonia will have repercussions at a global level, but it has already prostrated thousands of men and women, robbing them of their territory, making them strangers in their own land, impoverishing them of their own culture and their own

traditions, and breaking the millennia-long equilibrium that united those peoples with their land. Man cannot remain an indifferent spectator in the face of this destruction; nor can the Church remain silent: the cry of the poor must resonate in her mouth too, as already highlighted by [Saint Paul VI](#) in his Encyclical *Populorum progressio*.

Promoted by the Church of Rieti and the *Slow Food* movement, the *Laudato si' Communities* are engaged not only in disseminating the teaching proposed in the Encyclical of the same name, but in favouring new styles of life. From this pragmatic perspective, I wish to offer you three words.

*The first word is **doxology***

Faced with the good of creation and, above all, the good of man who is the peak of creation, but also its custodian, it is necessary to assume the attitude of praise. Faced with such beauty, with renewed wonder, with the eyes of a child, we must be able to appreciate the beauty that surrounds us and of which man too is also formed. Praise is the fruit of contemplation, contemplation and praise lead to respect, and respect becomes almost veneration before the goods of creation and its Creator.

*The second word is **Eucharist***

The Eucharistic attitude faced with the world and its inhabitants knows how to grasp the status of gift that every living being carries within itself. Everything is consigned to us freely, not to be plundered and swallowed up, but to become in turn a gift to share, a gift to give so that joy may be for all and that it may therefore be greater.

*The third word is **asceticism***

Every form of respect arises from an ascetic attitude, that is, from the capacity to know how to renounce something for a greater good, for the good of others. Asceticism helps us to convert the predatory attitude, which is always lurking, to take the form of sharing, and of an ecological, respectful and polite relationship.

I hope that the *Laudato si' Communities* may be the germ of a renewed way of living in the world, to give it a future, to preserve its beauty and integrity for the good of every living being, *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*.

I thank you and I bless you from my heart. Pray for me.

From the Vatican, 6 July 2019

FRANCIS

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