

VIDEOMESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER

Pope Francis

TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE "COUNTDOWN",

TED'S DIGITAL EVENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

[Multimedia], original Italian, in official translation

Good morning!

We live a historical moment marked by difficult challenges. The world is troubled by the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, which highlights even more another global challenge: the socio-environmental crisis.

This confronts us all with the need for choice.

The choice between what matters and what does not. The choice between continuing to ignore the suffering of the poorest and mistreat our common home, the Earth, or committing ourselves at every level to transform the way we act.

Science tells us, every day more precisely, that we need to act urgently - and I am not exaggerating, this is what science tells us - if we are to have any hope of avoiding radical and catastrophic climate change. And for this, to act urgently. This is a scientific fact.

Our conscience tells us that we cannot be indifferent to the suffering of the poorest, to growing economic inequalities and social injustices. And the economy itself cannot be limited to production and distribution. It must necessarily consider its impact on the environment and the dignity of the person. We could say that the economy must be creative in itself, in its methods, in the way it acts. Creativity.

I would like to invite you to undertake a journey together. A journey of transformation and action. Made not so much of words, but above all of concrete actions that cannot be postponed.

I call it a "journey", because it requires a "shift", a change! From this crisis none of us must come out the same - it will never be possible to come out the same: from a crisis, we never come out the same - and it will take time and effort to get out of it. It will be necessary to go step by step, to help the weak, to persuade the doubtful, to imagine new solutions and to commit ourselves to carry them forward.

But the goal is clear: to build, in the next decade, a world where we can respond to the needs of present generations, including everyone, without compromising the possibilities of future generations.

I would like to invite all people of faith, Christian or not, and all people of good will, to undertake this journey, [starting] from his faith or, if he has no faith, from his will, from his own good will. Each and every one of us, as individuals and members of groups - families, faith communities, businesses, associations, institutions - can make a significant contribution.

Five years ago I wrote the Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'*, dedicated to the care of our common home. It proposes the concept of "integral ecology", to respond together to the cry of the earth but also to the cry of the poor. Integral ecology is an invitation to an integral vision of life, starting from the conviction that everything in the world is connected and that, as the pandemic reminded us, we are interdependent on one another, and also dependent on our Mother Earth. From this vision derives the need to seek other ways of understanding progress and measuring it, without limiting ourselves to the economic, technological, financial and gross product dimensions alone, but giving central importance to the ethical-social and educational dimensions.

I would like to propose three lines of action today.

As I wrote in *Laudato Si'*, change and the right orientation for the journey of integral ecology requires first of all an educational step (cf. n. 202). Therefore, the first proposal is to promote, at every level, an education for the care of the common home, developing the understanding that environmental problems are linked to human needs - we must understand this from the very beginning: environmental problems are linked to human needs -; an education based on scientific data and an ethical approach. This is important: both. I am heartened by the fact that many young people already have a new ecological and social sensitivity, and some of them are fighting generously for environmental protection and justice.

As a second proposal, the emphasis should be placed on water and food. Access to safe drinking water is an essential and universal human right. It is essential because it determines people's survival and for this reason it is a condition for the exercise of all other rights and responsibilities. Ensuring adequate food for all through non-destructive farming methods should then become the fundamental goal of the entire food production and distribution cycle.

The third proposal is that of the energy transition: a progressive replacement, but without delay, of fossil fuels with clean energy sources. We have a few years, scientists calculate approximately less than thirty - we have a few years, less than thirty - to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere. This transition must not only be rapid and capable of meeting present and future energy needs, but must also be attentive to the impacts on the poor, local populations and those working in the energy production sectors.

One way to foster this change is to lead companies towards the unavoidable need to commit themselves to the integral care of the common home, excluding from investment those companies that do not meet the parameters of integral ecology and rewarding those that make concrete efforts in this transition phase to put at the center of their activities parameters such as sustainability, social justice and the promotion of the common good. Many Catholic organizations and other faiths have already taken on the responsibility of working in this direction. In fact, the land must be worked and cared for, cultivated and protected; we cannot continue to squeeze it like an orange. And we can say that this, caring for the land, is a human right.

These three proposals should be understood as part of a large set of actions that we must take forward in an integrated way to achieve a lasting solution to the problems.

The current economic system is unsustainable. We are faced with the moral imperative, and the practical urgency, to rethink many things: how we produce, how we consume, thinking about our culture of waste, the short-term vision, the exploitation of the poor, indifference towards them, the increase of inequalities and dependence on harmful energy sources. All challenges. We must think about it.

Integral ecology suggests a new conception of the relationship between us and nature. This leads to a new economy, in which the production of wealth is directed towards the integral well-being of the human being and the improvement - not the destruction - of our common home. It also means a renewed policy, conceived as one of the highest forms of charity. Yes, love is interpersonal, but love is also political. It involves all peoples and involves nature.

I therefore invite you all to embark on this journey. So I proposed it in the *Laudate* yes and also in the new Encyclical *Fratelli tutti*. As the term "Countdown" suggests, we must act urgently. Each one of us can play a valuable role if we all set out today. Not tomorrow, today. Because the future is built today, and it is built not by ourselves, but in community and in harmony.

Thank you!

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