

## **Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate Deum*, to all people of good will, Rome 4 October 2023.**

8 years after the publication of the Encyclical *Laudato Si*, on the care of our common home, Pope Francis returns to a central theme of his pontificate, with a document, of a different formal level but no less intense with respect to the content, on the themes of ecology and the climate crisis.

It is striking, first of all, that the exhortation is addressed "to all people of good will". Therefore, no religious or confessional characterization of the recipients is distinguishable, confirming the choice already made in *Laudato Si*, and offering proof of the configuration of a sort of "global magisterium", which has as its object the relationship between the Church and the world and the role of the Holy See, in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue.

*Laudate Deum* is a text richly accompanied by scientific data that reinforces the truthfulness and no longer deniable gravity of Pope Bergoglio's concerns about the future of the planet and of all humanity, called to a constant and growing rediscovery of its own responsibility.

Francesco identifies the basis of the current process of environmental degradation. He recalls that "there have been moments in history in which admiration for progress did not allow (us) to see the horror of its effects", therefore it is essential to recover "an adequately solid ethic, a culture and a spirituality that really give him a limit and contain him within a lucid self-control". The model to follow for the creation of a healthy environment is that of indigenous cultures, centered on the inseparable interaction of man with the environment around him.

The strength of the Exhortation lies, above all, in the criticism of the weakness of international politics, too often the expression of elite powers free from a collective ethic. "Good, like love, justice and solidarity, cannot be achieved once and for all; they must be conquered every day". To achieve solid and lasting progress, "multilateral agreements between states must be encouraged", but it is not sufficient. Bergoglio insists on the need to recognize the contribution of civil society groups and organizations capable of "compensating for the weaknesses of the international community, its lack of coordination in complex situations, its lack of attention to human rights". The bottom-up multilateralism promoted in the Exhortation is a declination of that principle of subsidiarity central to the Social Doctrine of the Church. "All this presupposes that a new procedure for the decision-making process is implemented", we need "spaces for conversation, consultation, arbitration, conflict resolution, supervision and, in short, a sort of greater "democratization" in the global sphere, to express and include different situations. It will no longer be useful to support institutions that preserve the rights of the strongest without addressing the rights of all. Rethinking multilateralism in these terms means involving the responsibility of subjects at various levels".

And it is on the nature of this responsibility that Pope Francis insists, explicitly placing the Western lifestyle in the dock. Assuming that every future problem can be solved with new merely technical interventions is a fatal pragmatism, so the spiritual roots of responsibility towards creation must be rediscovered, outlining it as common but at the same time differentiated, a founding principle of international environmental law. For Bergoglio, this responsibility towards creation and creatures is animated by an eschatological tension towards achieving the fullness of eternal life, which involves Christian believers in an «ecumenical mission of ecological evangelization» towards brothers of different faiths capable of transfiguring personal goals and enlighten “the relationship with others and the ties with all creation”. The heartfelt invitation is to become aware of being a universal family, a sublime communion of all creatures, founded on human dignity and divine filiation destined for a destiny of fullness, taking care of a world that sings the infinite Love of its Creator.

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