



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR WORLD FOOD DAY 2022

*To His Excellency
Mr. Qu Dongyu
Director-General of FAO*

Excellency,

Thank you for your kind letter inviting me to participate in the celebration of World Food Day 2022, the 77th anniversary of the founding of FAO. This institution was established in order to respond to the needs of so many people who were suffering from destitution and hunger in the context of the Second World War. Today, unfortunately, we are also living in a context of war, which we could call a “third world war”. The world is at war, and this should give us food for thought.

The theme of the Day this year is: *“Leave no one behind. Better Production, Better Nutrition, Better Environment, and a Better Life for all”*. Certainly, it will not be possible to tackle the many crises affecting humanity if we do not work and walk together, leaving no one behind. This demands, first and foremost, that we see others as our brothers and sisters, as members of the same human family, whose sufferings and needs affect us all, for “if one part suffers, all the others suffer with it” (cf. *1 Cor 12:26*).

The “four Betters” — better production, better nutrition, better environment and better life for all — which make up this year’s theme, allow me to mention the importance of FAO’s *Strategic Framework 2022-2031*, and to highlight the need for interventions to be planned and programmed so that they contribute to the total eradication of hunger and malnutrition, and are not simply the response to circumstantial shortfalls or emergency appeals. To achieve just and lasting solutions, the urgency of tackling the problem of poverty, which is closely linked to the lack of adequate food, must be reiterated together and at all levels.

However, the goals set are ambitious and may seem unattainable. How can we achieve them? First of all, by not losing sight of the fact that at the heart of any strategy are the people, with

concrete stories and faces, who live in a given place; they are not numbers, data or endless statistics. Also, by introducing “the category of love” into the language of international cooperation, to clad international relations with humanity and solidarity, in pursuit of the common good. We are therefore called to refocus our gaze on what is essential, on what has been freely given to us, focusing our work on care for others and for creation (cf. Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, 216 ff.).

Mr Director-General, I reiterate once more the commitment of the Holy See and the Catholic Church to walk alongside FAO and other intergovernmental organizations working for the poor, putting fraternity, harmony and mutual collaboration first, in order to discover prospects that will bring genuine benefit to the world, not only today, but also for generations to come. I raise my prayer to God Almighty for this intention, knowing that every creature receives sustenance from his hand, and that he richly blesses those who break bread with the hungry.

From the Vatican, 14 October 2022

Francis

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