



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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Press Conference for the conclusion of the special Year of the fifth anniversary of *Laudato si'* and to present the *Laudato si'* Action Platform

At 11.30 this morning, a press conference was live-streamed from the Holy See Press Office, on the conclusion of the special Year of the fifth anniversary of *Laudato si'* and to present the *Laudato si'* Action Platform.

The speakers were: His Eminence Cardinal Peter K. A. Turkson, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development; Fr. Joshtrom Isaac Kureethadam, coordinator of the "Ecology and Creation" Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development; Sr. Sheila Kinsey, executive co-secretary of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission (JPIC) of the Union of Superiors General; and Carolina Bianchi, *Laudato si'* animator of the Global Catholic Climate Movement and INECOOP Collaborator for the *Policoro* Youth Project of the Italian Episcopal Conference.

The following are their interventions:

Intervention by Cardinal Peter K. A. Turkson

Dear sisters, brothers and dear friends,

Good morning and a warm welcome to everyone for this press conference that the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development has organized for the conclusion of the special year of the fifth anniversary of the Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'*, announced on May 24 last year, and for the launch of the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform.

Last year, the covid-19 pandemic prevented celebrations, conferences, events, a documentary and an immersive show (*ECHO*) for the fifth anniversary of the Encyclical letter. However, but this discomfort has sparked the creativity of the Dicastery, leading it to suggest to the Holy Father the proclamation of a special anniversary of *Laudato si'*, with many rich initiatives and activities: *Laudato si' week* (18-24 May), a common

prayer for earth and humanity (on the date of the anniversary, 24 May), the *publication of an Interdicasterial Text with operational guidelines on Laudato si'*, a *Webinar for the evaluation and future of Laudato si'* (in June), the *season of creation* (1/09 to 4/10), reinventing the *Global Pact on Education* (October), *Economy of Francesco* (February), *World water day* (22 March 2021), the worldwide receipt of the proposal and celebration of a special year of *Laudato si'* has been fabulous and generous.

Local Churches, associations, vements, and many others have responded with great enthusiasm to Pope Francis's appeal to take care of our common home. *Laudato si'* living gardens and chapels were born, places not only made of trees but born from the interconnection between the territory, humanity and its educational, social and economic activities, respecting ecosystems and biodiversity. For example, the Church in Bangladesh, with 400,000 Catholics have planted more than 700,000 trees this year, nearly two per baptized individual. The young Vivianne Harr received a million dollars from Twitter to plant trees to stop the advancement of the Sahara desert. These are the first, visible fruits of the special anniversary year that commemorates the impact *Laudato si'* has had on us all.

To testify the enthusiastic reception of the Encyclical *Laudato si'*, the Dicastery will also publish a *Laudato Si' Reader*, which contains testimonies of the impact and experiences of people from all corners of the globe on *Laudato si'*. The book will highlight how *Laudato si'* is not a story that is lived from afar, but an encyclical about life that is at the heart of our natural and social environment.

With this press conference, the special year of *Laudato si'* ends. However, it also signals the beginning of seven year action plans as local Churches, communities, businesses, healthcare centres and education facilities continue to bring the message of the encyclical to life through concrete actions.

Six years after the encyclical letter *Laudato si'*, we must look at the world we are leaving to our children, to future generations. The pandemic has made us reflect and has taught us a lot, but the cry of the Earth and the poor is becoming more and more heartbreaking, and the message from our scientists and our young people is increasingly alarming: we are destroying our future. Our human and non-human family, in its entirety, is in great danger, and we no longer have time to wait or postpone action. It is of fundamental importance to limit the increase in global average temperature to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, since exceeding it would and already does have disproportionate, catastrophic global impacts.

We must listen to and respond to science, to the cry of the Earth, of the poor and of our children. We must listen to the frustration and anger of young people towards our generation; we must listen to their message of hope, creativity and act now to ensure a better future for them and for generations to come. We must become painfully aware of the personal suffering it causes and as a result dare to use our agency to transform lived realities that listen to and abide by socio-ecological limits.

Now more than ever, it's time to act, to do something concrete. We can all change for a just and sustainable future, we must think new models, reject questionable life behaviors and engage in new ones. We need to recognize our role as ecological citizens and make the world a greener and better place, healthier for us and sustainable for our lives. Pope Francis has invited all of us to join forces, to dream and "prepare the future". This means recognizing that even if things look bleak, as they are not set in stone, it is worth looking for economic models that will help humanity create a more just world, and not return to a world of inequality.

As we try to prepare the future, we can also recognize that it is time to embrace new opportunities. There is no sustainability without fairness, without justice and without involving everyone, especially the poorest and most marginalized people; we must involve all voices and wisdom.

With this in mind, the Dicastery is pleased to announce that the *Laudato si'* year will flow into a concrete action project, the *Laudato Si' Action Platform*, a seven-year journey towards integral ecology that will be explained in the detail during this conference. As Pope Francis reminds us, the mitigation of the effects of the current imbalance depends on what we do now, and I join His Holiness in urgently inviting you all to renew the dialogue on how we are building the future of the planet.

We can all collaborate for the care of creation and I would like to conclude with a sentence from the encyclical: *hope invites us to recognize that there is always a way out, that we can always change course, that we can always do something to solve problems.* It's our turn.

Intervention by Fr. Joshtrom Isaac Kureethadam

His Eminence Cardinal Peter Turkson has presented the context of the creation of the *Laudato si'* Action Platform, namely, the gravity of the crisis of our common home and the urgency to respond to it. It is the WHY of the LSAP.

It is my turn to dwell on the WHAT and the HOW of the LSAP.

First of all, what is the *Laudato si'* - Action Platform? It is a journey to realize the integral ecological vision of *Laudato si'*. As Pope Francis reminds us in the encyclical, “we are all interrelated and interdependent” and “everyone’s talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God’s creation” (*Laudato si'*, 14). Integral ecology demands that we journey together on this mission. In order to bring persons together to care for our common home we have identified seven key sectors: Families, Parishes and Diocese, Schools and Universities, Hospitals and Health Care Centres, Economy (Workers and Businesses, Farms and Cooperatives), Groups, Movements and Organizations, and Religious Orders.

LSAP is a journey towards total sustainability in the spirit of the integral ecology. In order to ensure that we remain faithful to the integral ecological vision of *Laudato si'*, we are proposing seven *Laudato si'* Goals, namely, the Response to the Cry of the Earth, the Response to the Cry of the Poor, Ecological Economics, Adoption of Simple Lifestyles, Ecological Education, Ecological Spirituality, and Community Involvement and Participatory Action.

It is a journey to be realized in time. Inspired by the biblical theme of the Jubilee we chose the time frame of seven years. We envisage the first year to be dedicated to the three fundamental tasks of community building, resource sharing, and drawing up concrete action plans for the realization of the seven *Laudato si'* Goals. This will be followed by five years of concrete action (some might finish this part of the journey even quicker). The final year will be the Sabbatical year to praise and thank God.

Secondly, how do we realize the *Laudato si'* Action Platform? We can realize it only through partnership, walking the “Synodal” path that Pope Francis is proposing to the entire Church. We have been working on the LSAP for nearly two years or so, and there is an ad hoc “Steering Board” that leads this process. It is led by the Dicastery, but in collaboration with the *Caritas Internationalis*, the Global Catholic Climate Movement, the Union of Religious Superiors in Rome (USG and UISG), CIDSE – the network of Catholic NGOs, Ecclesial Networks: REPAM and REMAM in the Americas, REBAC in Africa, RAOEN in Asia, youth networks: CYNESA, Eco-Jesuit, Don Bosco Green Alliance and Living *Laudato si'* Philippines, and the leaders of the Sectorial Working Groups.

The partnership is especially evident in the Working Groups that are leading each of the seven sectors: the Families sector is led by the Focolare movement along with several other co-leaders, the Parishes and Dioceses sector is led by CAFOD along with Bishops’ Conferences and other partners, the Schools sector is led by the Don Bosco Green Alliance and *Scholas Occurrentes* along with other co-leaders, the Universities sector is led by the Jesuits along with several other networks of Universities, the Hospitals sector is led by the Catholic Health Association of India (CHAI) and Catholic Health Association US along with other co-leaders, the Economy sector is led by the *Economia di Francesco* and *Laudato si' Challenge* along with several others, the Groups and Movements by the CIDSE along with WUCWO, VIS, and the Religious Sectors by the USG and UISG. These Working Groups bring together partners from all over the world in their respective sectors. It is really a journey in partnership as we respond to Pope Francis’s invitation to enter into a *dialogue in action* “about how we are shaping the future of our planet” (LS, 13). In this way, we also respond to the Pope’s constant invitation to “prepare the future together” in the context of the current pandemic.

By way of conclusion, I would like to mention that our prayer and dream is to initiate “a people’s movement from below” that can really bring about the radical change needed given the urgency of the crisis of our common home.

For this, the LSAP will be a journey of exponential growth. The first batch of those who wish to join the LSAP will have time from today to 4th October, the feast of St Francis of Assisi, to enroll in the program. We hope that in the next year a bigger group will begin their seven-year journey, the year another even bigger group and so on. In this way, we hope to create the critical mass needed for societal transformation. Sociologists tell us the initial critical mass needed to kick such a transformation is just 3.5% of a community.

We have also produced a website in nine languages for the LSAP which can be accessed through the new *Laudato si'* Website that has been created at the end of the *Laudato si'* Year. I would like to end inviting you to watch a short technical demonstration video in this regard.

Intervention by Sr. Sheila Kinsey

What a time of celebration! We are here for the launch of the *Laudato si'* Action Platform-recognizing that “Interdependence obliges us to think of one world with a common plan.” (LS 164). I was chosen to speak about the sectors of this platform because religious are present in all of the sectors. Through our members and ministries, we are able to influence the other groups.

The seven sectors are comprised of important areas of our church: families, educational institutions, economy, religious orders, parishes & dioceses, hospitals & healthcare centers, and organizations & groups. It is the expectation that the persons in these groups are able to share the richness and variety of their experiences.

The leadership of the sectors are members of the *Laudato si'* Steering Board which provides the overall framework for the implementation of the platform. The meetings have provided opportunities for thoughtful and fruitful discussions that have built a vibrant community. Here issues and concerns related to the implementation of the platform are address in a timely manner.

Our sector is composed of men and women religious: priests, brothers, and sisters, from around the world and working in various capacities. In our meetings, we listen carefully to one another as we discern our way together. Three pillars guide our planning efforts. The first, is to encourage congregations to make a commitment to *Laudato si'* based on the congregation's charism, one that is prophetic, public, and accountable. The second, is to transition to an integral ecology through actualizing the seven *Laudato si'* Goals. Here we encourage a reflective process of discernment, an assessment, by listening to local voices as concerns are raised. Dreams that are shared inspire us forward and seek to be embedded in a community project cycle. The third, is journeying and working together in partnerships, in advocacy efforts, with integrity and based on the principles of nonviolence as we meet the challenge of the ecological crisis.

The working group for this sector meets regularly to reflect on what we have been learning from our contacts and to determine next steps. Currently, we are working with suggested targets for the action platform. We will also be considering some templates and guides to help with planning and the sharing of resources. Enthusiasm for the *Laudato si'* Action Platform is growing with the strength of our network.

Our grassroots coordination for this project, Sowing Hope for the Planet, is encouraged by the leaders and members of the major superiors of men and women religious, the USG and UISG. Through SHFP, we developed an interactive framework for community building, education, sharing resources and support. Our working group is also connected to 900 members who are solidly committed to promoting *Laudato si'* and who provide additional input to the development of the platform. We are grateful for all the dynamic energy and support for our work together as we face the realistic challenges before us.

For Pope Francis reminds us, *All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents* (LS 14).

Intervention by Carolina Bianchi

I am honoured to represent the Global Catholic Climate Movement at today's event, a movement committed to integral ecology that has been closely involved in the preparation of this *Laudato si'* Platform together with the Dicastery. I speak today also on behalf of young people, of a generation that is asking older generations to take the ecological crisis seriously. Our future is at stake. We need urgent action.

As the *Laudato si'* animator of the movement, I am committed to community action on the care of our common home. I am so committed to talking to others to encourage them to reflect on creation and to take concrete steps to care for it. In particular, after graduating with a degree in Economics and Finance, I decided to deepen and specialize in environmental and social sustainability, and international cooperation, which is why I attended a second level Master's degree in Development Economics and International Cooperation. Last year I did an internship at COMI (FOCSIV member) - Cooperation for the Developing World, with the intention of continuing my professional career in the field of NGOs and sustainable development. I am currently a COMI member, and work with Inecoop for the Policoro project of the National Office for Social and Labour Problems of the Italian Bishops' Conference.

However, sometimes it is difficult to know exactly what different groups should do. What should a university do? What should a parish do? This kind of programme would really help LS animators like me, because it is a common tool that all Catholic groups can use. It is a common structure that everyone can use.

I am personally inspired to work as a *Laudato si'* Animator because the Animator training gave me the opportunity to reflect further on the interaction between all of us and also between man and the environment, highlighting even more how necessary it is to be respectful of the environment that hosts us and of natural resources, but above all the importance of solidarity towards those who are in difficulty and live the consequences of climate injustice, which are among the most important values of the encyclical *Laudato si'*.

I am happy because the *Laudato si'* Platform for Action shows that the Church is making progress in building the better future that *Laudato si'* calls us to build. People all over the world are looking for hope, and the *Laudato si'* Platform for Action provides real hope. As *Laudato si'* says, "we know that things can change", and this new Vatican programme is a concrete sign that things are changing.

I renew my urgent appeal, on behalf of the world's youth, and ask everyone in the Church to use this platform as an opportunity to accelerate commitment and action for our common home. Together we will succeed.
