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Audience with participants in the Convention organized by Vinitaly on the theme: “The economy of Francis and the world of Italian wine”

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the participants in the convention organized by *Vinitaly* on the theme “The economy of Francis and the world of Italian wine”, to whom he addressed the following greeting:

Greeting of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

I welcome you, I greet Msgr. Pompili and each one of you. You are here on the occasion of the Convention organized by *Vinitaly* on the theme “The economy of Francis and the world of Italian wine”. In terms of the number of producers involved, production quality and occupational impact, yours is certainly a significant reality, on both the Italian and international wine scene, and it is therefore good that you are here together to reflect on the ethical aspects and moral responsibilities that all this involves, and in that in so doing you draw inspiration from the *Poverello* of Assisi.

The fundamental directions in which you have chosen to move – attention to the environment, work and healthy consumption habits – indicate an attitude focused on *respect*, at various levels. And respect, in your work, is certainly fundamental: indeed, for a quality product, the application of industrial techniques and commercial logic will not suffice. The land, the vines, cultivation processes, fermentation and maturation all require constancy, they require attention, and they require patience.

The sacred Scripture talks about these themes. The Letter of James comes to mind, in which he says: “Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it until it receives the early and the late rain” (*Jm* 5:7). And I think above all of Jesus, who in the final image He leaves to His disciples, speaks of the Father as a farmer, who takes care of the vine, pruning it and ensuring that it bears good fruit (cf. *Jn* 15:1-6).

Respect, steadfastness, the capacity to prune to make bear fruit: they are valuable messages for the soul, which are well learnt from the rhythms of nature, the vines and work. It entails an infinity of skills, only in part transmissible in a technical, “academic” way, often instead linked to the sharing of practical, life knowledge, to a specific experience to be acquired in the field, in a way that is all the more profitable the more one allows oneself to be involved in the human dimension of what one does.

And while respect and humanity value the use of the land, they are even more decisive in the management of work, in the protection of people and in the consumption of products, in order to bring to maturity, at the level of individuals and companies, the capacity for “the rejection of every form of self-centeredness and self-absorption” that are “essential if we truly wish to care for our brothers and sisters and for the natural environment”, considering “the impact of our every action and personal decision on the world around us” (Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'*, 208). Indeed, “genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others” (*ivi.*, 70).

Dear friends, wine, the land, agricultural skills and entrepreneurial activity are gifts from God, but let us not forget that the Creator has entrusted them to us, to our sensitivity and our honesty, so that we make of them, as the Scripture says, a true source of joy for “the heart of man” (cf. *Ps* 104:15), and for every man, not only those who have more opportunities. Thank you, then, for having chosen to inspire your work with sentiments of concord, aid to the weakest and respect for creation, following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi. In this I bless you and I wish you, in his style, “peace and good”. Thank you.
