



MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD FOOD DAY 2024
to His Excellency Mr. QU Dongyu,
Director-General of FAO

Dear Director-General:

The 44th *World Food Day* invites us to reflect on the *Right to foods for a better life and a better future*. This is a priority, since it satisfies one of the basic needs of human beings, that is to say, to nourish himself in order to live in accordance with adequate qualitative and quantitative standards, which safeguard the dignified existence of the human person. However, we see this right frequently undermined and not applied fairly, with the harmful consequences that this entails.

In order to promote the right to food, FAO acutely proposes considering a transformation of food systems, that takes into account the plurality and variety of nutritious, affordable, healthy and sustainable foods, as a way to achieve food security and healthy diets for all.

To do this, we must not forget the intrinsic social and cultural dimension of the act of receiving nourishment. In this regard, political and international leaders must listen to the demands of those at the bottom of the food chain, such as small farmers, and of intermediate social groups, such as families, which are directly involved in feeding people.

Bold solutions to address and resolve the food problems of our time, require that we consider the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity as foundations of our development programmes and projects, so that we never delay truly listening to the needs that come from below, from workers and farmers, from the poor and hungry, and from those who live with difficulties in isolated rural areas. Jesus Christ has taught us: “So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” (Mt 7:12).

Humanity, wounded by so many injustices, claims, with an increasing urgency, for effective measures to lead a better life, by acting together in the same spirit of brotherhood, and knowing that this planet that God has offered us, must be a garden open to peaceful coexistence. This is what I had in mind when I proposed to consider the paradigm of integral ecology, so that the needs of each man and of the man as a whole would be taken into account, so that his dignity would be protected in his relationship with others, and in close conjunction with the protection of creation. Only if we take the ideal of justice as a guide for our actions, will it be possible to meet the needs of people.

This also requires that we allow ourselves to be questioned and moved by the condition of others, and that solidarity becomes the main focus of our decisions. In this way, the protection of future generations will go hand in hand with listening to and acting in favour of the demands of present generations, through an intra and intergenerational alliance, that calls us all to fraternity and a new, more authentic sense of international cooperation, a cooperation that must stimulate this Organization and the entire multilateral system.

On this path, filled with obstacles and difficulties, but at the same time exciting and full of challenges, the international community will be encouraged by the Holy See and the Catholic Church, which will not cease to offer their tenacious contribution, so that everyone can have food in adequate quantity and quality for themselves and their families, so that each person can lead a decent life, and so that the painful scourge of poverty and hunger in the world can be definitively defeated.

With these feelings and wishes, upon all of you and upon those who work for this noble cause, I invoke the blessing of God Almighty, who never tires of supporting those who have at heart the good of all humanity.

Vatican, October 16th 2024