

VIDEO MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO MARK THE "EARTH DAY"

[Multimedia]

Brothers and sisters,

On this Earth Day commemoration, it is always good to recall that the things that we have been saying to one another for a while must not fall into oblivion. For some time now we have been becoming more aware that nature deserves to be protected, if only because human interactions with God's [God-given] biodiversity must take place with the utmost care and respect: caring for biodiversity, caring for nature. And we have learnt this more clearly in this pandemic. The pandemic has also shown us what happens when the world stops, pauses, even for a few months, and the powerful impact that this has on nature and climate change, in a sadly positive way, has it not? In other words, it hurts.

And this shows us that nature, globally, needs our lives on this planet. It involves us all, albeit in many different and unequivocal forms; and so it teaches us even more about what we need to do to create a fair, equitable, environmentally safe planet.

In short, the Covid pandemic taught us about this interdependence, this sharing of the planet. And both global catastrophes, Covid and climate change, show that there is no time to lose. Time is pressing and, as Covid-19 taught us, yes, we have the means to rise up to the challenge. We have the means. It is time to act, we are at the limit.

I would like to repeat an old Spanish saying: "God always forgives, we humans forgive from time to time, nature no longer forgives". And when this destruction of nature is triggered, it is very difficult to stop it. But we are still in time. And we will be more resilient if we work together instead of doing it alone. The adversity that we are experiencing with the pandemic, and that we already feel in climate change, must spur us on, must drive us to innovation, to invention, to seek new paths. We do not come out of a crisis the same, we come out better or worse. That is the challenge, and if we do not come out of it better, we will be on a path of self-destruction.

May all of you... I also join you in an appeal to all the leaders of the world to act with courage, to act with justice and to always tell people the truth, so that

people know how to protect themselves from the destruction of the planet, how to protect the planet from the destruction that we very often trigger.

Thank you for what you do, thank you for the good intentions, thank you for coming together. And best wishes to all [and prosperity to all].

Bulletin of the Holy See Press Office, 22 April 2021

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