



THE FAMILY IN LAUDATO SI'

Welcoming and protecting life

In the encyclical "Laudato si'", Pope Francis speaks to us of the family, as a place where life, a gift of God, can be adequately welcomed and protected against the many attacks to which it is exposed to, and can develop according to the needs of authentic human growth.

Cradle of the culture of life

Against the so-called **culture of waste**, of death, the family is the cradle of the culture of life. It is in the family that *"the first habits of love and care for life are cultivated, such as the correct use of things, order and cleanliness, respect for the local ecosystem and the protection of all creatures. The family is the place of integral formation, where the different aspects, intimately related to each other, of personal maturation, unfold"*.

The gestures that help to grow

It is precisely in the family that *"we learn to ask permission without arrogance, to say 'thank you' as an expression of heartfelt appreciation for the things we receive, to dominate aggression or greed, and to apologize when we do something wrong. These **small gestures** of sincere courtesy help to build a culture of shared life and respect for what surrounds us"*. (LS 213)

The world we want to leave to our children

The invitation addressed to all, to us families in particular, for an **"ecological conversion"** refers to the need for an interior conversion of the heart that translates into a convinced and concrete commitment in favor of creation. Ecology is a place of witness to our faith, against the new idols that seduce, dazzle, destroy modern man and the environment in which he lives.

Our "common home"

However, we often show little attention to our "common **home**", a **sister**, with whom we share our existence... a beautiful mother who welcomes us" (LS n.1); home, sister, mother: it is significant that they are all metaphors taken from family life.

A "cultural revolution"

The Pope confronts us with the urgency of proceeding with a courageous **cultural revolution** to affront this society of voracious consumption, which is forgetting that life comes from the land that nourishes us, from nature that gives us the beauty of creation. A revolution that will be fully accomplished by our children if, as fathers and mothers, we know how to guide and support them on this journey.

Building processes towards change

The world is hungry for the future and we, as Christian families and parents, are called to participate in the **construction of processes of recovery, rehabilitation and rebirth**; a true ecological conversion, generated by a willing heart that loves, by respect for justice, by responsibility towards the least. The eyes of poor children, migrants, climate refugees, or for acts of war challenge our consciences, their gazes penetrate our hearts.

Combining equity and sustainability

We can no longer talk about justice without taking into account **sustainability** and the only way to combine equity and sustainability is for the rich to convert to **sobriety**, that is, to a lifestyle, more sparing, clean, slow, respectful of natural cycles. A further challenge to be undertaken on the educational level.

An "ecological citizenship" to counteract bad habits

It is a path that can seem tiring because it clashes with established **habits** and hectic life **times**. In this journey to be undertaken **calmly and gradually**, it will be important to **support every family** so that it learns to recognize the world as a gift (n.220), so that it can grow in the awareness of its responsibilities and acquire an increasingly ecologically sustainable and supportive **lifestyle**, even against the current (n. 211).

To conclude

Our pilgrimage to Main ends here. The tenth world meeting of families awaits us. We leave you with two last lines and our fraternal greeting. Thanks to all of you!

"Do not chase only pleasures and amusements, illusions and disposable golden moments. Search instead, in the normality, for the happiness inherent in the relationships between humans and between them and nature."

Rainer Maria Rilke