



DICASTERY FOR EVANGELIZATION
*SECTION FOR FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS
REGARDING EVANGELIZATION IN THE WORLD*

MESSAGE

44th WORLD TOURISM DAY

“Tourism and Green Investment”

September 27, 2023

1. “Tourism and Green Investment”. It is with this expression, proposed by the World Tourism Organization, that we prepare for and celebrate the upcoming 44th World Tourism Day on September 27, 2023. The Church wishes to participate together with the countries, associations, and the many entities involved in this moment of special commitment, so that the magisterium of Pope Francis may more effectively and positively increase the care of creation, an essential goal for people’s lives.

Sustainable Investment for the Protection of Creation

2. In the Encyclical *Laudato si’*, Pope Francis highlights the need to commit to sustainable investment: “Investments have also been made in means of production and transportation which consume less energy and require fewer raw materials, as well as in methods of construction and renovating buildings which improve their energy efficiency. But these good practices are still far from widespread” (n. 26).

Fostering sustainable investment is also a witness of faith that is made strong by respecting nature, created and entrusted to us by God. Indeed, concern for creation and its preservation also belongs to the biblical message. One need only open up the first page of Sacred Scripture to highlight this dimension. God’s creative action is, first and foremost, an expression of his outpouring love that intends to reach its culmination by involving man and woman in the same project: “So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food.” (Gen 1:27-29).

Christian Hospitality

3. The Christian community directly feels the need to develop gatherings on the issues at hand, especially during the summer months, when people from many parts of the world set out for a period of rest, contact with nature and contemplation of artistic beauty. It is hard not to see in this movement a propitious opportunity for the Christian community, not only to work alongside the various responsible organizations to help ensure the vacation season is lived to the fullest, but above all to express the welcoming sense that characterizes the spirit of our communities by virtue of the faith lived out. Tourists are particularly sensitive to how they are received. They immediately perceive the familiar style of those interacting with them; they are able to distinguish it from the formal, often detached welcome of those who consider them merely a customer. In a cultural context where there is an excess of indifference, it is crucial that Christians be witnesses of a welcome that makes people feel comfortable and allows them to experience fraternity. Entertaining dialogue, taking an interest in making sure the vacation is an experience of peace, facilitating ways that enable people to have the Gospel in their hands, or readings that awaken interest in prayer and spirituality, are some ways that help give meaning to the vacation time.

Sustainable Economy and Human Dignity

4. Concern for creation also enables Christians to promote a form of economy that does not have profit maximization as its goal, which often leads to violence against nature, with severe repercussions on the dignity of the person. The primacy of ethics cannot be overshadowed by the thirst for profit. That is not to say that technological progress or economic development should be stifled. Attention to and support for sustainable investment, therefore, cannot be thought of as a hindrance; rather, it constitutes a forward-looking vision that opens up to long-term plans without falling into a short-sightedness of immediate gain. It is necessary to make room for the creativity of generations to facilitate the rediscovery of the dignity of each person. Indeed, as Pope Francis reminds us in the Encyclical *Laudato si'*: “Such creativity would be a worthy expression of our most noble human qualities, for we would be striving intelligently, boldly and responsibly to promote a sustainable and equitable development within the context of a broader concept of quality of life.” (n. 192). In this journey, it is especially important for politicians to support with conviction and confidence, the paths that are being discovered, in order to wisely discern the most suitable projects, which aim for a common good and which increase the quality of life, especially of people belonging to the more disadvantaged societal groups.

Cultural and Spiritual Investment and Preservation

5. The Church has always recognized and supported the value and importance of art, culture, and their preservation in order to allow people to know God and keep Christian roots alive. The way of beauty is an integral part of our mission to proclaim the Gospel and promote the spiritual growth of believers. For this reason, it is necessary that investments not only target mass tourism, a possible

vehicle for loss of cultural and religious identity. On the contrary, it is appropriate that while focusing investment on infrastructure, the dignity of all tourism workers should be promoted, so as to help increase the quality of their work and of tourism itself. In caring for the works of art that have been the heritage of humanity for centuries and become a destination for tourists from around the world, it is worthwhile to reiterate that their protection is everyone's responsibility. Therefore, any form of violence that undermines their preservation must be firmly condemned.

Responsible Tourism for a Common Home

6. Economy and ecology correspondingly lead back to the "common home" in which we live and for which everyone, no one excluded, needs to feel responsible in the ways befitting the role they play and the professionalism they exercise. Advocating for a message that invites tourism to be designed in a manner that respects people and the environment, opens the way to receiving the goodness of the Father who reaches out to all with his love. Tourism operators hold in their hands the opportunity to offer valid and effective avenues for rediscovering a different kind of vacation: more supportive and less consumerist; more respectful of nature and capable of contemplating beauty in its manifold expressions. Even the vacation, then, can become a catalyst to adopt behaviors and lifestyles that help us turn our gaze back towards Above, rediscovering the goodness of faith, the power of charity and the certainty of hope. This must be the starting point for everyone, in order to give reason to the respect for nature and to commit to an integrated ecology.

Tourism Operators, an Important Resource

7. May the appreciation for keeping this commitment alive be received by all those who make tourism their professional and pastoral endeavour, making Pope Francis' wish their own, so that even in view of the upcoming Ordinary Jubilee 2025, we do not neglect, to contemplate the beauty of creation in caring for our common home, entrusted to us by God. Therefore, the preparation of the upcoming Jubilee Year should be celebrated and lived with this care for creation, keeping firmly the hope of building the future together.

May 26, 2023

St. Philip Neri Memorial

X Rino Fisichella

Pro-Prefect

This translation into English is not an official document; the Italian text is the official reference.