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BOLLETTINO

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ
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N. 180926e

Wednesday 26.09.2018

Message of the Holy Father Francis to the participants in the G20 Interfaith Forum in Buenos Aires

The following is the Message sent by the Holy Father Francis to the participants in the G20 Interfaith Forum (G20 Interfaith), taking place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 26 to 28 September 2018 on the theme “Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development: Religious Contributions for a Dignified Future”:

Message of the Holy Father

I greet with affection the organizers and participants in the G20 Interfaith Forum, taking place this year in Buenos Aires. These interfaith conferences, within the framework of the G20 Summit meetings, aspire to offer the international community the contribution of their different religious and philosophical traditions and experiences, to illuminate those social issues that concern us today in a special way.

In these days of exchange and reflection, it is intended to explore more deeply the role of religions and their specific contribution in consensus-building, for a just and sustainable development that ensures a decent future for all. Certainly, the challenges that the world has to face at this time are many, and very complex. We are currently facing difficult situations that not only affect many of our neglected and forgotten brothers, but also threaten the future of all humanity. And men of faith can not remain indifferent to these threats.

Thinking about religions, I believe that beyond differences and different points of view, a first fundamental contribution to the world today is to be able to show the fruitfulness of constructive dialogue to find together the best solutions to the problems that affect us all. A dialogue that does not mean renouncing one’s identity (see Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 251), but being willing to go out to meet the other, to understand their reasons, to be able to construct respectful human relations, with the clear and firm conviction that listening to one who thinks differently is above all an opportunity for mutual enrichment and growth in fraternity. It is not possible to build a common home, casting aside people who think differently, or what they consider important and which belongs to their deepest identity. It is necessary to build a fraternity that is not a “laboratory”, because “The future lies in the respectful coexistence of diversity, not in homologation to a single theoretically neutral way of thought” (*Address to the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue*, 28 November 2013).

Faced with a world in which a technocratic development paradigm is affirmed and consolidated, with its logic of

domination and control of reality in favour of economic and profit interests, I think that religions have a great role to play, especially due to that new outlook on the human being, which comes from faith in God, creator of man and the universe. Any attempt to seek authentic economic, social or technological development must take into account the dignity of the human being; the importance of looking at each person in the eyes and not as a number or a cold statistic. We are driven by the conviction that “man is the source, the centre, and the purpose of all economic and social life” (Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 63). Let us therefore offer a new way of looking at men and reality, no longer with a manipulative and dominant intention, but with respect for their own nature and their vocation in the whole creation, because “called into being by one Father, all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect” (Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'*, 89).

Dear friends, I wish to renew once again, and before this very distinguished assembly, my call to protect our common home through concern for the whole human family. An urgent invitation to a new dialogue on how we are building our society, in the search for sustainable development in the conviction that things can change.

Please allow me to conclude by recalling once again that we are all necessary in this task, and that we can collaborate together as God’s instruments to protect and care for creation, each one contributing their culture and their experience, their talents and their faith.

And, please, I ask you to pray for me.

Vatican, 6 September 2018

FRANCIS
