



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS,
SIGNED BY ARCHBISHOP PAUL GALLAGHER,
SECRETARY FOR RELATION WITH STATES OF THE HOLY SEE,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE VIRTUAL EVENT PROMOTED BY THE FAO
FOR "WORLD PULSES DAY"**

*Mr. Director-General of FAO,
Distinguished authorities and diplomatic representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I welcome the opportunity to participate in this event to commemorate another anniversary of World Pulses Day. This initiative also aims to highlight the transcendental role of rural women in the production and distribution of food through cooperative mechanisms which, basically, find their reason and strength in the love of others and in working together.

Pulses are a noble food with enormous potential to strengthen food security worldwide. They are not proud and do not imply luxury, yet they are an essential component of healthy diets. They are simple and nutritious foods that transcend geographical barriers, social provenance and cultures. Lentils, beans, peas or chickpeas can be found on the tables of many families, as they meet a variety of protein needs in our daily diets.

I would like to remind you that the word *legumes* comes from the Latin word *legumen*, and refers to the fruits or pods, which are harvested not by mowing but by pulling from the plants by hand. This naturally evokes those hands weathered by their contact with the earth and difficult climates, for long hours, which rural workers, particularly women, have carried out and continue to carry out.

Unfortunately, as the statistics show, there are still many people, including children, who do not have access to the most basic resources and lack healthy and sufficient food. Hunger continues to strike with its deadly scourge in many regions of the world, a situation that has been exacerbated by the health crisis we are experiencing. It is now urgent to cultivate the earth without damaging it,

so that we can share its fruits not only among ourselves but also for the generations that will come after us.

In particular, rural women and indigenous women have much to teach us about how effort and sacrifice enable us to build, alongside and not dependent upon others, the fabric that ensures access to food, the equitable distribution of goods, and the possibility for every human being to realise their aspirations.

A healthy diet should be a universal right. Therefore, the role of States to make this possible is fundamental, also in encouraging public education policies that promote the incorporation of nutritious foods in accordance with each particular situation, and where pulses should surely be part of these diets with other foods that complement them.

Let us walk together in hope. Let us imitate the beautiful and good deeds of those rural women who do not give up their mission to feed their children and the children of other families. Let us accord value to the commitment to being part of a common home where there must be room for everyone, without discarding anyone. Let us feed everyone in a healthy way, so that everyone has the same opportunities and we can build an inclusive and just world.

The Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges once said that “every man must think that [...] everything that happens to him, even humiliations, embarrassments, misfortunes, all that has been given to him as clay, as material for his art; he must make the most of it [...] These things were given to us so that we can transmute them, so that we can make of the miserable circumstances of our lives, eternal things or things that aspire to be eternal” (“La ceguera”, in *Siete noches*, taken from: *Obras Completas III*. 1975-1985, Buenos Aires, EMECÉ, 1997, p. 285). Well then, I invite you to develop our art, to be vigorous and resilient like legumes and to unite to put an end, once and for all, to hunger.

Archbishop Paul R. Gallagher
Secretary for Relations with States

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