



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER
TO PARTICIPANTS AT THE MEETING
'COMMON GOOD: THEORY AND PRACTICE'**

[Hall of Pius XI– Palace of Saint Callixtus, 14 November 2024]

I am very glad to extend my cordial greetings to all the participants at the [meeting “Common good: theory and practice”](#), organized by the [Pontifical Academy for Life](#).

Within the numerous reflections on the theme of the common good, the meeting is particularly significant for at least two reasons.

The first is that it is promoted by the [Pontifical Academy for Life](#). If one really wants to safeguard human life in every context and situation, one cannot avoid placing the themes of life, even the most classic ones of the bioethics debate, in the social and cultural context in which such phenomena occur. A defence of life that is limited only to some aspects or moments, and which does not take into account in an integral way all the existential, social and cultural dimensions, risks being ineffective and can fall prey to the temptation of an ideological approach, in which abstract principles are defended more than real people. The quest for the common good and justice are central and indispensable aspects of any defence of every human life, especially the most fragile and defenceless, with respect for the entire ecosystem we inhabit.

The second reason I would like to highlight is that at this event, two women with different responsibilities and backgrounds will be present at this event. We need, in society as in the Church, to listen to female voices; we need diverse forms of expertise to cooperate in the formulation of an extensive and wise reflection on the future of humanity; we need all world cultures truly to be able to offer their contribution and express needs and resources. Only in this way can we “envisage and engender an open world”, as I advocated in the third Chapter of my Encyclical [Fratelli tutti](#).

With reference to this [Encyclical](#), I would like to remark that universal fraternity is, in some way, a “personal”, warm way of understanding the common good. Not simply an idea, a political and social project, but rather a communion of faces, histories, people. The common good is first and foremost a practice, made up of fraternal welcome and a common search for truth and justice. In our world, marked by so many conflicts and contrasts that are the fruit of the incapacity to look beyond particular interests, it is of great importance to recall the common good, one of the cornerstones of the social doctrine of the Church. We need solid economic theories that take on and develop this theme in detail, so that it can become a principle that effectively inspires political choices (as I indicated in my Encyclical [Laudato si'](#)) and not merely a category much invoked in words but disregarded in deeds.

I bless you all from my heart, asking you, please, to pray for me.

Vatican City, 12 November 2024

FRANCIS

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