SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
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
BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

N. 230420a

Thursday 20.04.2023

Audience with a delegation of “Interfaith Leaders from Greater Manchester”, Great Britain

This morning, the Holy Father Francis received in audience a delegation of “Interfaith Leaders from Greater Manchester”, Great Britain.

The following is the Pope’s greeting to those present at the meeting:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to welcome you and I thank Bishop John Arnold for his kind words. I express my appreciation for your efforts, as religious and political leaders, to raise awareness of the urgent need to protect the environment and to work concretely to address the effects of climate change.

Your united witness is particularly eloquent, since the history of your city is closely linked to the industrial revolution, with its legacy of immense technical and economic progress, together with an admittedly negative impact on the human and natural environment. It has become increasingly evident, in fact, that our present commitment to safeguarding God’s gift of creation must be part of a broader effort to promote an integral ecology that respects both the dignity and value of each human person and acknowledges the tragic effects of environmental degradation on the lives of the poor. We need, in a word, to acknowledge that the environmental and social crisis of our time are not two separate crises but one (cf. *Laudato Si’*, 139). Certainly, this demands the creation of new and far-sighted economic models. Yet it also requires a determination to overcome the “throwaway” culture of waste generated by present-day consumerism and by a globalized indifference that inhibits efforts to address these human and social problems in the light of the common good.

Dear friends, your group is distinguished by its common witness to the intrinsically *moral* and religious dimension of our duty to protect the environment as a God-given gift calling for our responsible stewardship. Within your communities, and guided by the wisdom of your various traditions, you play an important role in contributing to a

much-needed “ecological conversion” grounded in the values of respect for nature, sobriety, human solidarity and concern for the future of our societies. An essential aspect of this contribution is your commitment, as men and women of faith, to forming the minds and hearts of the young, and seconding their demand for a change of course and for farsighted policies that have as their goal a sustainable and integral human development.

Dear friends, in thanking you for your visit, I offer you my prayerful good wishes for your work and your intentions. Upon all of you I cordially invoke the divine blessings of wisdom, strength and peace. And I ask you kindly to remember me in your prayers.