



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
BOLLETTINO

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS
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BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

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Audience with members of the *Laudato si'* Centre for Higher Education

This morning, the Holy Father Francis received in audience a delegation from the *Laudato si'* Centre for Higher Education, to whom he delivered the following address:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear brothers, Father Baggio,

*and all collaborators of the *Laudato si'* Centre for Higher Education!*

Thank you for the commitment with which you are involved in this new project. And I would like to take the opportunity to remember together, with gratitude, the journey made so far.

To make the desire to promote ecological conversion visible and concrete, I thought of creating a tangible model of thought, structure and action, which I called Borgo *Laudato si'*. And I felt that the amenities and outbuildings of the Villas of Castel Gandolfo were the right space to host this sort of “laboratory” for experimentation with formative content.

To this end, at the beginning of 2023 I established the *Laudato si' Centre for Higher Education*, as a body for scientific, educational and social activity. It is endowed with its own patrimonial, technical, administrative and accounting autonomy, and works for the integral formation of the person in the context of a sustainable economy and according to the principles of the Encyclical *Laudato si'*.

In the months following its constitution, the *Laudato si'* Centre for Higher Education set to work to develop the “Borgo” project. Assisted by national and international experts of the highest level, the Centre outlined the three main directions of the project: inclusive education in integral ecology, the circular and generative economy, and environmental sustainability.

After months of intense work, the Executive Board of the Centre for Higher Education presented the result to me: it is a complex, multi-faceted project, involving various aspects of integral ecology. One of the essential elements is without doubt agriculture, which in the Borgo *Laudato si'* is intended to be distinguished in terms of its sustainability and diversification, investing in infrastructure, irrigation systems and the development of agricultural techniques respecting the ecosystem and biodiversity.

The Borgo's agricultural project includes the development of a new vineyard for wine production. It is intended to act as a synthesis of tradition and innovation, as a 'trademark' of the Borgo. In this, too, the Centre for Higher Education has drawn on the advice of some of the leading experts, because the intention is to strive for excellence. It is very important not to remain "average", because from average one heads towards mediocrity. Always strive for excellence.

I was particularly pleased to note that, for both cultivation and agricultural production - and the vineyard in particular - a large amount of labour is involved. This responds to the intention agreed upon at the outset to strive for the restoration of good and fruitful relations between the human family and creation, through labour that cares for and cherishes what has been entrusted to us by the Creator.

Dear friends, I wish to express my thanks to all of you who, in various ways, are collaborating in this important project. I am sure that the fruit of this collaboration will well represent those principles of integral ecology that I wished to highlight in the Encyclical *Laudato si'* and in the Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate Deum*. Go forth! I bless you heartily, you and your work. And do not forget to pray for me – in favour!
