

## Holy See

*Excellency,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*I have the honor of read an excerpt of the Message of Pope Francis, addressed to the President of this Conference.*

We can achieve the goals set by the Paris Agreement only if we act in a coordinated and responsible way. Those goals are ambitious, and they can no longer be deferred. Today it is up to you to take the necessary decisions.

We are facing an epochal change that calls for commitment on the part of all, particularly those countries possessed of greater means. These countries need to take a leading role.

For its part, the Holy See has adopted a strategy of net-zero emissions operating on two levels: 1) the commitment of Vatican City State to achieve this goal by 2050; and 2) the commitment of the Holy See to promote education in integral ecology to favour a cultural model of development and of sustainability centred on fraternity and on the covenant between human beings and the natural environment.

Along these same lines, on 4 October last, I joined a number of religious leaders and scientists in signing a Joint Appeal in view of COP26. What clearly emerged was a remarkable convergence on the urgent need for a change of direction, a decisive resolve to pass from the “throwaway culture” prevalent in our societies to a “culture of care” for our common home and its inhabitants, now and in the future.

Humanity possesses the wherewithal to effect this change. Especial care must likewise be shown for the most vulnerable peoples, in whose regard there is a growing “ecological debt” related to commercial imbalances with environmental repercussions and to the disproportionate use of the natural resources of one’s own and of other countries. The “ecological debt” raises in some ways the issue of foreign debt, the burden of which often hinders the development of peoples.

[We can and must restart from a consideration of all these aspects, along with the setting in place of carefully negotiated procedures for forgiving foreign debt, linked to a more sustainable and just economic restructuring aimed at meeting the climate emergency.]

Sadly, we must acknowledge how far we remain from achieving the goals set for tackling climate change. This cannot continue! There is no time to waste. All too many of our brothers and sisters are suffering from this climate crisis. Now is the time to act, urgently, courageously and responsibly.

The young, who in recent years have strongly urged us to act, will only inherit the planet we choose to leave to them, based on the concrete choices we make today. Now is the moment for decisions that can provide them with reasons for hope and trust in the future.

I accompany you with my prayers as you take these important decisions.

Thank you