



Greeting of His Holiness Pope Francis to Participants in the Conference sponsored by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences “Food and Humanitarian Crises: Science and Policies for their Prevention and Mitigation”



*Your Eminence,
Mr President,
Dear brothers and sisters all!*

I extend to all of you a cordial welcome on the occasion of your Conference, with its theme “Food and Humanitarian Crises: Science and Policies for their Prevention and Mitigation”, and I thank President von Braun for his kind greeting. Yours is indeed a timely subject, not only for academic discussion, but also one that calls for farsighted leadership and practical policies that can be enacted at different levels of society in order to relieve the sufferings of so many of our brothers and sisters who lack healthy diets and access to sufficient food. Some months ago, an expert said to me: “If, over the course of one year, we did not manufacture weapons, hunger would end in the world”.

This challenge is a pressing one, as all too often situations marked by natural disasters, as well as by armed conflict – I think especially of the war in Ukraine – political or economic corruption and exploitation of the earth, our common home, hinder food production, undermine the resilience of agricultural systems and dangerously threaten the nutritional supply of entire populations. At the same time, these various crises have been worsened by the long-lasting effects of the Covid-19

pandemic. Moreover, we are witnessing the decline of fraternal solidarity – this is a fact: wars and poverty lead to the decline of fraternal solidarity – and this decline is brought about by, among other things, the selfish demands inherent in some current economic models.

In this perspective, we need to become more and more aware that everything is closely interrelated, that “today’s problems call for a vision capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis” (*Fratelli Tutti*, 137). One important element of this vision is the understanding that a crisis can also become an opportunity, a chance to recognize and learn from past mistakes.

In this sense, it is my hope that your Conference will help all of us emerge better from the crises we currently face, not only by focusing on technical solutions, but above all by recalling how essential it is to develop an attitude of universal solidarity grounded in fraternity, love, and mutual understanding. In this regard, the Church wholeheartedly supports and encourages your efforts, together with those of all who are working not only to feed others or respond to crises, but also to promote an integral human development, justice among peoples and international solidarity, thus strengthening the common good of society.

Dear friends, I express once again my gratitude for your valuable service in collaboration with the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and assure you of my prayers that your work will bear fruit in helping to address the numerous problems which result from food and other humanitarian crises. Crises and conflicts are different. Conflicts are closed in on themselves, it is difficult to emerge from a conflict in a constructive way. On the other hand, we can and must emerge from a crisis, but under two conditions: we cannot emerge alone from a crisis – either we emerge together or not at all. This is important: we cannot emerge alone; we need the community, the group, in order to emerge. Secondly, we emerge from a crisis in order to become better, to move ever forward, to make progress. I thank you for your attitude in regard to these crises: emerging together and emerging better. Upon all of you I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God, and I ask you, please to pray for me. Thank you!