



PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM
DE IUSTITIA ET PACE

Prot. N. 0521/2015

Palazzo San Calisto
19 August 2015

Your Eminence/Your Excellency,

It is my pleasure to share with you and your local Church that Pope Francis has instituted the *World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation* to be celebrated each year on 1 September.

In establishing this day, the Holy Father has accepted the suggestion made by Metropolitan John of Pergamum, Representative of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who took part in the presentation of the Encyclical *Laudato si'* in the Vatican on 18 of June 2015. On that occasion, Metropolitan John asked whether the 1 September, the day celebrated by the Orthodox to pray for the environment, could not become a day for all Christians to pray for the same intention.

In his letter dated 6 August and made public 10 August, Pope Francis asked me as President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and His Eminence Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, to communicate his new initiative. The Holy Father emphasizes that Christians are “called to an “*ecological conversion* whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them” (*Laudato si'*, 217). In fact, “living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience” (*ibid.*).

The reminder of the vocation to be stewards of creation should reach all faithful Catholics as well as men and women of goodwill. Accordingly, Pope Francis asked me to inform “the Justice and Peace Commissions of the Bishops’ Conferences, as well as the national and international organizations involved in environmental issues” of this initiative.

Therefore, Your Eminence/Your Excellency, I ask you duly to inform the National Commissions of Justice and Peace or other corresponding bodies, the office within the local church that is dedicated specifically to ecological issues, and any other civil organizations you think should be informed of the establishment of the *World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation*.

For 2016 “suitable ways of promoting and celebrating the Day” are being considered, “so that this annual event will become a significant occasion for prayer, reflection, conversion and the adoption of appropriate lifestyles”. At this time I would like to draw your attention to a webpage (www.laudatosi.va) on the site of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace dedicated exclusively to *Laudato si'*. It includes articles and aids which will be helpful for understanding the Holy Father’s Encyclical and also for promoting the *World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation*.

With gratitude for the response and cooperation of your Episcopal Conference, I gladly take the opportunity to renew my prayerful wishes and sentiments of great esteem.

Sincerely yours in Christ