[His Holiness Pope Francis Filmed in Vatican City First shown at TED Countdown Global Launch, October 2020]

Hello! We are living during a historic moment, marked by difficult challenges, as we all know. The world is shaken by the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which highlights yet an even bigger challenge: the socio-environmental crisis. And this requires us, all of us, to face a choice. The choice between what matters, and what doesn’t. The choice between continuing to ignore the suffering of the poorest and to abuse our common home, our planet, or engaging at every level to transform the way we act.

Science tells us, every day, with more precision, that urgent action is needed -- and I am not dramatizing, this is what science says -- if we are to keep the hope of avoiding radical and catastrophic climate change. And for this we must act now. This is a scientific fact.

Our conscience tells us that we cannot remain indifferent to the suffering of those in need, to the growing economic inequalities and social injustices. And that the economy itself cannot be limited to production and distribution. It must also consider its impacts on both the environment and on the dignity of people. We could say that the economy should be creative in itself and in its methods, in the way it acts. Creativity.

I would like to invite you to go on a journey together. A journey of transformation and of action. Made not so much of words, but rather of concrete and pressing actions. I am calling it a journey because it requires a shift, a change. From this crisis none of us must come out the same -- we cannot come out the same: from a crisis, we never come out the same -- and it will take time, and hard work, to overcome it. We will have to take it one step at a time; help the weak; persuade those in doubt; imagine new solutions; and commit to carry them out.

Our goal is clear: to build, within the next decade, a world where we can meet the needs of the present generations, including everyone, without compromising the possibilities of future generations. I would like to invite all people of faith, Christian or not, and all people of goodwill, to embark on this journey, starting from your own faith, or if you do not have a faith, from your own intention, from your own goodwill. Each one of us, as individuals, or members of a group -- families, communities of faith, businesses, associations, institutions -- can make a substantial contribution.

Five years ago I wrote the encyclical letter "Laudato Si’," dedicated to the care of our common home. It proposes the concept of "integral ecology," to respond together to the cry of the Earth, as well as to the cry of the poor. Integral ecology is an invitation to an integral vision on life, starting from the conviction that everything in the world is connected and that, as the pandemic made sure to remind us, we are interdependent on each other, as well as on our Mother Earth.

From such a vision stems the need to find new ways of defining progress and measuring it, without limiting ourselves to the economic, technological, financial and gross-product aspects, but rather, giving central relevance to its ethical, social and educational dimensions.

I would like to propose today three courses of action. As I wrote in "Laudato Si’," the change and the right orientation for our journey of integral ecology require first that we all take an educational step.

So, my first suggestion is to promote, at every level, an education geared towards the care of our common home, developing the understanding that environmental problems are linked to human needs. We must understand this from the beginning: environmental problems are tied to human needs. An education based on scientific data and on an ethical approach. This is important: both of them. I am encouraged by the fact that many young people already show a new ecological and social awareness, and many of them fight generously for the defense of the environment and for justice.

As a second proposal, we must focus on water and nutrition. Access to safe and drinkable water is an essential and universal human right. It is essential because it determines the survival of people and therefore is a condition for the exercise of all other rights and responsibilities. Providing adequate nutrition for all, through non-destructive farming methods, should become the main purpose of the entire cycle of food production and distribution.

The third suggestion is about energy transition: a gradual replacement, but without delay, of fossil fuels with clean energy sources. We only have a few years. Scientists estimate approximately less than 30 -- we have a few years, less than 30 -- to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere. Not only must this transition be quick and capable of meeting present and future energy needs, it also must be attentive to the impact on the poor, on local populations, as well as on those who work in the energy production sectors.

One way to encourage this change is to lead businesses towards the urgent need to commit themselves to the integral care of our common home, excluding from investments those companies that do not meet the parameters of integral ecology, while rewarding those that work concretely, during this transitional phase, to put, at the center of their activities, sustainability, social justice and the promotion of the common good.

Many organizations, Catholic and of other faiths, have already taken on the responsibility to act in this direction. In fact, the Earth must be worked and nursed, cultivated and protected. We cannot continue to squeeze it like an orange. And we can say that this -- taking care of the Earth -- is a human right.

These three proposals must be considered as part of a larger group of actions that we must carry out in an integrated way in order to find a lasting solution to these problems.

The current economic system is unsustainable. We are faced with the moral imperative, and the practical urgency, to rethink many things: the way we produce; the way we consume; our culture of waste; our short-term vision; the exploitation of the poor and our indifference towards them; the growing inequalities and our dependence on harmful energy sources. We need to think about all these challenges.

Integral ecology suggests a new conception of the relationship between us humans and Nature. This leads to a new economy, where the production of wealth is directed to the integral well-being of the human being and to the improvement -- not the destruction -- of our common home.

It also implies a renewed politics, conceived as one of the highest forms of charity. Yes, love is interpersonal, but love is also political. It involves all peoples and it involves Nature. I invite therefore all of you to embark on this journey, that I proposed in "Laudato Si’" and also in my new encyclical "Fratelli Tutti."

As the term Countdown suggests, we must act with urgency. Each one of us can play a precious role, if we all begin our journey today -- not tomorrow -- today. Because the future is built today, and it is not built in isolation, but rather in community and in harmony.

Thank you.