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Audience with the participants in the International Conference “Nature in Mind” on the protection of biodiversity

Audience with the participants in the International Conference *Nature in Mind. A new culture of nature for the protection of biodiversity*, organized by the Carabinieri Command Corps, held in Rome from 19 to 20 May 2022.

The following is the Pope’s address to those present at the meeting:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear friends,

I welcome you, participants to the International Conference “Nature in Mind. A new culture of nature for the protection of biodiversity”, organized by the competent Command of the Carabinieri Corps. I thank the Commander General for his kind words and express my gratitude for this initiative, which demonstrates the will to work together to protect our common home. Your commitment contributes to strengthening the urgent, responsible dialogue on the future of the planet, “since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all” (Encyclical Letter *Laudato si’*, 14).

The title of the conference “Nature in Mind” brings to mind the itinerary of Saint Buonaventure of Bagnoregio, who on several occasions invites us to discover the Transcendent also through contemplation of the beauty of nature. It is a formative journey for the mind and soul. When we gaze in wonder at the sky and the stars or the crystal-clear waters of a stream, by analogy we contemplate the author of beauty (cf. *Wis* 13:3). It has been given as a gift to the human race, which is called to cultivate and preserve it (cf. *Gen* 2:15). In Sacred Scripture, the beautiful and the good are inseparable.

Just as God made his creation available to humans, so they find their full realization by overcoming selfishness and enjoying a “shared beauty”. This dynamic bond between Creator, human and other creatures is an *alliance* that cannot be broken without irreparable damage. We must not delude ourselves “that we can substitute and

irreplaceable and irretrievable beauty with something which we have created ourselves" (*Laudato si'*, 34). The myth of Prometheus, suitable perhaps for other epochs, is no longer so for ours. We do not need titanic heroism, but a meek and patient brotherhood among ourselves and with creation. Life and history show, in fact, that we cannot be ourselves without each other and without others. In a world in which "everything is closely interrelated" (*ibid.*, 137), new pedagogical paradigms need to be identified to be promoted in educational processes, aimed at dialogue between knowledge and contributing to the growth of a culture of care. And the culture of care is a culture of harmony, it is to preserve harmony, and not a culture of details that breaks harmony.

Such a culture, in fact, is closely linked to an *inclusive education* that rests on the pillars of integral ecology. Faced with the richness and complexity of the natural world, every educational project offers a perspective of understanding that emphasizes the interrelationships between man and the environment. In order to promote a truly sustainable development, it is necessary to be creatively open to new, more integrated, shared itineraries, directly connected to people and their contexts. In this way, everyone feels involved in contributing to the *educational pact*, which tends to form mature people, capable of overcoming fragmentations and oppositions. Any measure will be ineffective if it is not assisted and supported by an educational process that promotes the care and protection of our common home.

Through our talents we are all called to build the "global village of care", to form a network of human relationships that reject all forms of discrimination, violence and prevarication. In this "village" of ours, education becomes a bearer of fraternity and a generator of peace between peoples as well as dialogue between religions.

Dear Carabinieri, dear friends, I renew my appreciation for your daily efforts and I urge you to continue courageously. I bless you all and your families. I wish you all good work; and I ask you, please, to pray for me. Thank you.
