



DICASTERO PER IL SERVIZIO
DELLO SVILUPPO UMANO INTEGRALE



Press release

Po Delta, October 4th : The inauguration of the "Laudato si' Garden", a symbol of a new model of development

A "Laudato si' Garden" in the heart of the Veneto Regional Park of the Po Delta. This project, inspired by *Laudato Si'*, is part of the celebrations for the Laudato Si' Anniversary Year, announced by the Pope, which will be presented on **October 4th** in Rosolina (Rovigo), promoted by seven municipalities in the area (in addition to Rosolina, Ariano nel Polesine, Corbola, Loreo, Porto Viro, Porto Tolle, Taglio di Po), the Veneto Region and Veneto Agricoltura, as well as the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, Holy See.

The "Laudato Si' Garden" project originated as an idea for a new model of development, thanks to the collaboration of seven local Administrations and the productive, economic, educational and social territorial forces. Following the publication of the Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'* (2015), they decided to create a partnership for the enhancement and care of ecosystems and biodiversity in the Po Delta area, integrating them with human activities, and also creating a new expressive language inspired by interconnection. The concerned local administrators and decision makers took the challenging exhortation of Pope Francis in "asking, please, all those who occupy roles of responsibility in the economic, political or social spheres, all men and women of good will: we are "guardians" of creation, of God's plan inscribed in nature, guardians of the other, of the environment" (Francis, Homily at the Mass at the beginning of the Petrine ministry, 19.III.2013).

The project of the Garden will be presented during an event on **October 4th**, which will happily unite word, music, art and nature, with the involvement and participation of all the territorial actors (companies, craftsmen, schools, parishes, civil society associations, representatives of the political-economic world). In the presence of Card. Peter K.A. Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, as well as other authorities representing the world of Institutions at local, national and international level, the **tenor Francesco Grollo** will begin by dedicating a sacred chant from St. Mark's Basilica in Venice, holding then a "Live Concert for Integral Ecology" in Rosolina. He will be accompanied by the Italian Rhythmic-Symphonic Orchestra conducted by **maestro Diego Basso**, as well as the Art Voice Academy and Opera House choirs. The concert will include pieces from the Christian tradition, among others ("Tu ci sei"; "Nessun dorma"; "Canto della terra", performed exceptionally on the piano by the composer, **maestro Francesco Sartori**; "Panis Angelicus", plus some off-programme pieces). The pieces will symbolize the harmonious link between life, human relations, economy, values of encounter and welcoming, protection of eco-systems and biodiversity. It will take place on a platform floating on the water. At the end, Card. Turkson will inaugurate the "Laudato Si' Chapel", created by Arch. Mario Cucinella with the collaboration of some internationally renowned technical partners.

The different musical performances and sings will be complemented with some interventions of those who have followed and supported the project. After the institutional greetings, including that of the President of the Veneto Region, **Mr. Luca Zaia**, the following will take the floor: **Sister Alessandra Smerilli**, Coordinator of the Economic Taskforce of the Vatican COVID-19 Commission, established by Pope Francis; **Mrs. Beatrice Finh**, Executive Director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, Nobel Peace Prize 2017; **Mr. Si Qiuli**, Chinese contemporary artist, who will be present in video link; **Fr. Jostrom Isaac**



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Kureethadam, Head of the Year of the Special Anniversary Laudato si' and Coordinator of the Ecology Taskforce of the Vatican COVID-19 Commission; H.E. **Mrs. Chiara Porro**, Australian Ambassador to the Holy See; **Arch. Mario Cucinella**, author of the "Laudato Si' Chapel". The event will be presented by **Mrs. Eugenia Scotti**, author and TV presenter.

"The Garden project - said **Card. Peter K.A. Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development** - is an example of the concreteness that the Holy Father constantly asks of us, and which is found in the Social Doctrine of the Church: to see, discern and put into practice. This is what has been done in the Po Delta. And I was very impressed that among the initial inputs there was the exhortation of a parish priest, Fr. Lino Mazzocco, who - when Laudato Si' was published - encouraged the administrators of the area to discern if they could do something useful together, for the care of their common home. That is, for this beautiful area, where there is a unique combination of land and water, and where families, communities and productive activities intervene. From the difficulties, as there have been here, we come out connecting all the aspects; the same from the crises like the one we are experiencing: since everything is connected, it is necessary to work together as a single body".

The Po Delta is, in fact, an inhabited and cultivated place, a land that the river has built and human beings have shaped and transformed. A treasure chest of biodiversity. All the more reason - said **Franco Vitale, Mayor of Rosolina**, representing all the mayors of the Po Delta of Veneto, Franco Vitale - "we are grateful to the Holy Father and to the project Laudato si' Garden, because in this way it is highly recognized what has always been for us all a heritage to be respected, valued and perpetrated". The "Laudato si' Chapel" will be placed in the Porto Caleri Botanical Garden, wanted by Veneto Region and managed by Veneto Agricoltura together with the Po Delta Park as a synthesis of the naturalistic values of this unique wetland area. "So - added **Alberto Negro, Extraordinary Commissioner of the Veneto Agricoltura Regional Agency** - if before it was a witness of water and earth, from now on, thanks to the blessing of the Holy Father, this territory will be a sign of water, earth and sky".

In this sense, said the **tenor Francesco Grollo**, "the Laudato si' Garden will be a sign of peace and harmony. Music and singing immerse us in this dimension of harmony: they bring us closer together, put us in relation with creation and open us to praise and transcendence".

Just like the "Laudato Si' Chapel", built inside the Garden in respect of environmental sustainability and following the principles of Pope Francis' Encyclical Laudato Si'. "In the context of the Po Delta - said **Arch. Mario Cucinella** - we must not add anything except building a new friendship with nature. 'The Living Chapel' is a light in the night of this park, an immaterial sign and an architecture to watch the spectacle of nature".

After the 4th of October, the project will continue with a series of initiatives dedicated to schools, parishes, businesses, universities and families, so that everyone can commit to living the message of Laudato Si'.