Leo XIV: Conversion and courage to oppose the destruction of our common home

Pope Leo XIV celebrates the first Mass for the Care of Creation at the *Laudato si' Village* in Castel Gandolfo, and urges Christians to embrace our mission to bring peace and reconciliation to our world and all creation.

"Just a few days after beginning his summer holidays in Castel Gandolfo, Pope Leo XIV celebrated the first Mass for the Care of Creation", a new formulary of the Roman Missal.

The Mass took place at the *Laudato si' Village*, an educational center located in the Papal summer residence near Rome, and was attended by the center's staff.

In off-the-cuff remarks at the start of his homily, the Holy Father said the Mass was being celebrated surrounded by beauty in "a kind of 'natural' cathedral".

He noted that the layout of the Laudato Si' Village, which has an altar in the front and a water basin nearby, recalls the ancient Christian churches, which placed the baptismal font near the entrance to symbolize that Christians have passed through water to be cleansed of our sins and weaknesses.

Pope Leo lamented the many natural disasters that afflict people around the world, which are "often caused—at least in part—by human excess and our way of life".

"We must also pray for the conversion of many people, both inside and outside the Church, who still do not recognize the urgency of caring for our common home", he said.

Turning to the prepared text of his homily, Pope Leo XIV noted the tranquil setting of the *Laudato si' Village* stands in contrast to the global warming and armed conflicts that afflict our world.

"Yet, at the heart of the Jubilee we confess: there is hope!" he said. "We have

encountered it in Jesus, the Savior of the world. He still, sovereignly, calms the storm".

Reflecting on Jesus' calming of the storm on the sea, the Pope said Jesus' parables of the Kingdom of God frequently pick up the rhythms of life and seasons inherent in nature.

In rebuking the wind and sea, Jesus "reveals His power of life and salvation, which towers over those forces before which creatures are lost".

Pope Leo said our mission as Christians to care for creation was entrusted to us by the Lord, so that we might bring peace and reconciliation to our troubled world.

"We hear the cry of the earth and of the poor", he said, "for that cry has reached the heart of God. Our indignation is His indignation; our work is His work".

The Church is called, therefore, to speak truth to nations in order to turn evil into good, injustice into justice, and greed into communion, since the Church bears witness to the "indestructible covenant between Creator and creatures".

He recalled St. Francis of Assisi's focus on God's love for all of creation, which gives everything life.

"Only a contemplative gaze can change our relationship with created things and lead us out of the ecological crisis caused by the rupture of relationships—with God, with our neighbor, and with the earth—resulting from sin", he said.

Pope Leo XIV said Pope Francis wanted the *Laudato si' Village* to be "a laboratory" in which to embody harmony with creation, while finding new ways to safeguard nature.

In conclusion, Pope Leo invited Christians to spread harmony throughout the world, drawing inspiration from St. Augustine.

"O Lord, your works praise you so that we may love you, and we love you so that your works may praise you."

* *Article published in Vatican News. By Devin Watkins. Photo: Vatican Media.*