



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS
SIGNED BY THE CARDINAL SECRETARY OF STATE,
FOR THE "SEMAINES SOCIALES DE FRANCE"**

Ms. Dominique Guinio

As you open your annual 2021 "Semaines Social" meeting today, His Holiness Pope Francis is pleased to join you in thought and prayer, along with all the participants in the reflections and debates that will take place over the next three days.

This year you have chosen the theme: *Osons rêver l'avenir. Prendre soin des Hommes et de la Terre* – "Let us dare to dream of the future. Taking care of people and the earth". Dreamers are sometimes criticised for not facing up to the depths of reality, and this is indeed a risk that we must guard against.

But we must not be afraid to dream, especially if this dream is shared and carried forward together. As Dom Helder Camara so aptly put it, "When you dream alone, it is only a dream; but when you dream with others, it is the beginning of a new reality".

So let me share with you the dreams that the Holy Father expressed in his Apostolic Exhortation [*Querida Amazonia*](#), and which apply equally well to the context of your annual meeting. We must

dream of a society that "fights for the rights of the poor" – we must dream of a society that fights for the rights of the poorest; "where their voices can be heard and their dignity advanced"; we must dream of a society that "can preserve its distinctive cultural riches, where the beauty of our humanity shines forth in so many varied ways"; we must dream of a society that "can jealously preserve its overwhelming and the superabundant life teeming in its rivers and forests" ([*Querida Amazonia*](#), 7); finally, to dream of a society that welcomes the message of the Gospel, that is, the proclamation of "a God who infinitely loves every man and woman and has revealed this love fully in Jesus Christ, crucified for us and risen in our lives" ([*Querida Amazonia*](#), 64). These dreams can only become reality if they are shared. The Holy Father is therefore pleased with the exchanges

you will experience over the coming days, since they are part of this “culture of encounter” he is calling for.

The pandemic has, in a way, accelerated the awareness that our lifestyles must change. It is urgent to think of a future that makes people want to live in hope. As Christians, it is this beautiful virtue of hope that we can bring to the world at this decisive time for the future. It is “a thirst, an aspiration, a longing for a life of fulfilment, a desire to achieve great things, things that fill our heart and lift our spirit to lofty realities like truth, goodness and beauty, justice and love. Hope is bold; it can look beyond personal convenience, the petty securities and compensations which limit our horizon, and it can open us up to grand ideals that make life more beautiful and worthwhile” (*Fratelli tutti*, 55).

The Holy Father asks the Lord to open your hearts, enlighten your minds and inspire your exchanges, so that they may formulate the pathways of hope that our world so desperately needs; that your work may support, defend and promote the care of creation, of the most fragile people, and the integral development of each person, also in their fundamental spiritual dimension. Pope Francis entrusts the fruitfulness of your annual meeting to the intercession of the Virgin Mary, and grants you, Madam President, and all the participants, his blessing and the assurance of his prayer.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin
Secretary of State of His Holiness

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