



Laudato Si'  
Special Anniversary Year  
2020-2021

SEASON OF CREATION  
1.09 - 4.10.2020  
Jubilee of the Earth

World Day of Prayer for  
the Care of Creation  
1st September

## THE COURAGE TO CHANGE TO EMERGE FROM THIS PANDEMIC BETTER PRAYER | REFLECTION | EXPERIENCES

Friday, 4 of September 2020 - online for 1h

**September 4, 2020**

**(memory of Blessed Giuseppe Toniolo)**

*intervention on the topic of the meeting*

Matteo TRUFFELLI, National President of Italian Catholic Action

First of all, thanks to Rafael and Maria Grazia for inviting me to offer some thoughts on a topic as important as the one at the center of our meeting today: a topic that really concerns the whole world, touches the whole humanity, and challenges us all, asking to each of us to take on the responsibilities that we are entitled to, wherever we live, whatever we do in life. The pandemic, in fact, has made us feel that the human family is truly a single family, beyond all differences and distances, and that it is saved only if it behaves like a family: if each one feels the responsibility towards all those who are part of it and for the common home in which we live, if we think of them as brothers and sisters, called to take care of what makes us such. If we are able, as Pope Francis reminded us in the great prayer of March 27 under the pouring rain in a deserted St. Peter's Square, of making the logic of "we are all on the same boat" prevail over that of "every man for himself" .

This is undoubtedly the first and most important change that we must know how to make. Forcing the cage of "individualistic sadness" (Evangelii gaudium, 2) which prevents us from thinking of the future as a common destiny, a horizon that includes us all and which, precisely for this reason, we cannot think of facing while remaining sheltered behind a wall made of privileges, injustices, violence.

It is above all a change of gaze, what we asked . The experience we have lived in recent months and which still afflicts every corner of the world with different intensity, should teach us to see and understand in a different way the aspirations, the life and the tears of those who know too well the sense of uncertainty, of fear and helplessness that we too have experienced in recent months, and they know it because they were born and raised in it: because of poverty, war, climatic upheavals, crime, discrimination.

Instead, we found ourselves unprepared for the great storm that hit the world precisely because, all caught up in small and huge selfishness, small and large rivalries - among individuals, among social groups, among states, among different areas of the world - "nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet".

Pope Francis had often reminded us of this, and he also reiterated it in his prayer on March 27: «In this world, that you love more than we do, we have gone ahead at breakneck speed, feeling powerful and able to do anything. Greedy for profit, we let ourselves get caught up in things, and lured away by haste. We did not stop at your reproach to us, we were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet. We carried on regardless, thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick.».

This time we cannot let history pass over our heads without wondering deeply about our way of living, of producing, of consuming, of distributing wealth, of using public resources, of organizing health systems, of investing in both education and research, in regulating migratory flows, in participating in political life and promoting democracy, building relations among states, among cultures, among different religions.

Pope Francis also strongly emphasized this on the occasion of the Regina Coeli on May 31, when in Italy the grip of the virus began to wane: if we want to hope to get out of this pandemic really in a better attitude- as we all announced with a bit rhetoric and perhaps even a little superficiality in the days when we were most afraid - we must have the intelligence, humility and the courage to change, just as the title of our meeting says.

We believers, in a special way, are asked not only to know how to significantly inhabit the time in which we live, but to do so by knowing how to read it in depth and knowing, therefore, to see the good that is already at work within it, and therefore knowing how to cultivate hope. That hope that arises, first of all, from entrusting us to the risen Lord, the one who makes the history of salvation of the events of humanity. And we are asked, precisely for this reason, to incarnate the Gospel in the time it is given to us, transforming the Good News into the bud of a more just, more fraternal, more human humanity.

In this task we can certainly find an important point of reference in the lesson of Blessed Giuseppe Toniolo, we remember today, and who at the beginning of the last century had a fundamental role in "refounding" Catholic Action on the mandate of Pope Pius X , rethinking it with the aim of making it more suitable for living in a prophetic way in its own time: capable of taking on the expectations of good and problems, the potential and contradictions that characterized the era he lived in.

His lesson is certainly valuable even for today. Even in the difficulties that the world is going through due to the Pandemic. In fact, Toniolo represents the exemplary witness of a layman capable of concretely living the humanizing power of the Gospel in every area of his life, putting into circulation the talents received and, above all, knowing how to involve many people of good will to live this responsibility together. Economics scholar, he was able to elaborate and authoritatively propose a vision of the productive reality aimed at justice and not just profit. University lecturer, he always saw in the education of young people a decisive function for building a better, fairer and freer future, in a society that was completing its industrialization process and that for this reason saw the need for education growth . Protagonist of the cultural confrontation, he fought until the end of his life to establish the Catholic University of Milan, and gave life to the Social Weeks of Italian Catholics, an important tool the ecclesial community can contribute to an in-depth and wise reading of the social, political and economic phenomena of their time. A man of peace in a time of exasperated nationalisms and inhuman conflicts, he

promoted the idea of international law as the only possible common ground on which to build friendly relations between nations. A courageous innovator, he was among the first in the Italian Catholic world to speak positively about democracy. Husband and father of a family, he always lived this dimension as the center of his existence.

Today too we are asked to be able to make a significant contribution in all these and many other areas, with courage, competence and generosity. With "Catholic passion", Pope Francis told us three years ago. And in all these areas we cannot think - here is another great change that we must take on fully - of "doing it alone". Neither as countries of the world, nor as social groups, much less as an ecclesial community, nor as an association. In 2015 Pope Francis, meeting the Italian Church gathered at the congress, addressed a very clear and very strong invitation, which I think applies to everyone:

"Italian society builds itself up when its diverse cultural treasures can dialogue in a constructive way: popular, academic, artistic, technological, economic, political, the way of youth, that of the media.... May the Church be fermented by dialogue, encounter, unity. After all, our own formulations of faith are the fruit of dialogue and encounter among cultures, communities and various situations. We must not fear dialogue: on the contrary it is precisely confrontation and criticism that help us to preserve theology from being transformed into ideology.

Remember moreover that the best way to dialogue is not that of speaking and debating but that of doing something together, of making plans: not alone, among Catholics, but together with all those who are of good will. Do not be afraid to engage in the exodus necessary for every authentic dialogue. Otherwise it is not possible to comprehend the reasons of the other, nor to completely understand that a brother is worth more than the positions that we judge as far from our own authentic certitudes. He is a brother.

Knowing how to read history and cultivating hope within it therefore also means remembering that we are called to live as brothers. Able to preserve the feeling of trust in others and of responsibility towards everybody- these months of fear and sharing leave it to us as a legacy, to translate it into a search for new alliances. Alliances among nations, among social groups, among generations. Between nature and the inhabitants of the earth, between institutions and citizens, between science and politics, between wealth and need. Between believers and non-believers. Because more than anything else, these months of suffering have taught us that truly No one is saved by himself or herself, individually" (Evangelii gaudium, 113).