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Ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to be here with you and would like to thank Thierry de Montbrial in particular for inviting me. This is the second time I have had the honour of being asked to attend this important forum on the problems facing the world.

Now it is time for philosophy and theology to provide some insight and have their say on the issues raised here, complementing the talks that have already taken place. Of course, my remarks will be based on the Pope's Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, an expression by Saint Francis that means "Praise be to you, oh Lord". This is a fundamental approach of the Pope that overlaps with everything expressed during this forum, especially in the seminar on energy. It is clear that in his Encyclical the Pope is trying to remind us of our duty and our responsibility as Christians towards God and His Creation. He has put human beings at the centre of the universe and considers them the Earth's guardians and protectors. By respecting the Earth, human beings respect themselves, for we are connected to it. When we say human beings must be the "guardians" of Creation, we exaggerate a bit because, for example, we cannot be the "guardians" of the Milky Way.

But we do have a special responsibility towards the Earth, for it is a gift that God created for humankind; we must therefore preserve and protect it as our own home because this is where we live. The idea of creation is a basic given in the Bible, as well as in several cultures. Even Saint Thomas says that the notion of Creation exists in Plato and Aristotle. We must be "guardians" of Creation, not in the sense of a museum guard who dusts off paintings in a gallery but in the sense of "stewards". The latter word is more appropriate here because it suggests that we must collaborate with God's Creation while ensuring its long-term survival, desired by God. Put another way, we must develop it in a sustainable manner. In a magnificent speech at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Paul VI said that the duty of scientists towards the Earth, especially if they are Christians, is to develop its true potential, in other words, the possibilities given by Providence for the good of humankind and the planet's long-term survival.

Pope Francis has submitted and integrated all the information from the natural and social sciences to the fundamental teachings of the Bible and faith. As you have said during this forum, scientific data show that if the energy necessary for human activity comes from fossil materials, the outcome will be climate change and global warming. Consequently, we must change course in light of these data. The Pope is very familiar with the data produced by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. We have an excellent team of scientists — Crutzen, Molina and Ramanathan — who have been studying the Earth for years. They were the first scientists to have spoken about these problems and the anthropic age. Then they convinced other scientists, economists and, lastly, religious authorities as well. Fossil fuels are still safe to use — as I heard at this conference — if their carbon dioxide emissions are captured and stored underground. The new Boundary Dam coal-fired power plant in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan suggests that the costs of capturing and storing carbon can be reasonably low and will decrease in the future as more is learned about this technology. Nuclear power can still be completely safe to use with improvements in nuclear technology. A promising possibility is the integral fast reactor with its technology that uses nuclear waste as an energy source in a closed fuel cycle. These reactors also have passive security features that would be safer in the event of a shutdown. Renewable sun and wind power are being developed and their cost is decreasing. Renewable energy can be used not just for the power grid and emission-free electric vehicles, but also to make synthetic fuels.

It is very important to understand what the Pope is asking for. He wants religion — not just the Catholic religion but also other Christian religions, the Anglicans, for example, and more generally all religions — to also be involved in these considerations. He is not calling for a discussion on religious content, strictly speaking, in other words on the nature and attributes of God, but affirming the defence of human dignity in relation to our home, that is to say the Earth where we live. The Encyclical seeks to raise our awareness that this is not just an economic issue or a problem involving only the natural and social sciences, but also and above all a spiritual matter. We have talked a lot about



specific issues during this conference, but in the final analysis this is a spiritual matter. The Pope speaks of an “ecological conversion”. We cannot undertake any changes unless we view ethics as the main, fundamental issue: human ethics, common to us all.

What is the role of ethics? Of course, I am not overlooking the consequences for nature, but the Pope also takes the social consequences into account. That is why he often says that to him, the Encyclical is not just an ecological Encyclical, but also a social one. Climate change, which affects many people, especially the poorest, and more precisely the poorest individuals within a country, is a fundamental problem for the Pope. Think of the Philippines or other countries where climate change is increasing poverty. Extreme poverty leads to desocialisation, exclusion and, lastly, marginalisation. Marginalisation is the key feature of what the Pope calls the globalisation of indifference. These are the new forms of modern slavery, that is to say forced labour, prostitution, drug use and the sale of organs, etc. The Pope believes that a relationship exists between all these forms of slavery and climate issues, which lead to social injustice and poverty. He therefore calls for an ethical conversion that can also be termed an ecological conversion. This has two facets. First of all, a caring relationship with the Earth and its resources, but also a golden rule for human relationships: “do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (Luke 6:31).

I would go even further by asserting that the Pope’s call is precisely Christ’s message in His Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes, as well as in Matthew 25:40 with the protocol by which we will be judged: “whatever you have done for the least of my brethren, you have done for me.” Christ asks us to turn to others, to the poorest, the neediest and those in situations of precariousness and real suffering. Choosing the Beatitudes — “the least of my brethren”, the poor, those who suffer, those who weep, those who have pure hearts, the gentle, the merciful, the artisans of peace, the lovers of justice and the unjustly persecuted — is a transcendent choice for the golden rule, too abstract to respond to the suffering of others and the neediest. The Beatitudes touch upon humankind’s fundamental problem, the problem of suffering. It offers a solution to human beings’ emotional and physical suffering by giving them their dignity and their freedom from the new, extreme forms of slavery I mentioned. The estimated number of people in this situation is put at 40 million and growing. That is why I take the liberty of saying that the Pope’s programme is the same as the Beatitudes. The Pope himself says in the Encyclical that we must understand poverty to keep it from growing and to give people a better life. We must understand the idea that the justice people seek is the same as that expressed in the Beatitude on justice. Above all, we must seek purity of the heart and understand in general what human suffering is, especially the human suffering that poverty engenders. In short, the Pope integrates his new concept of “integral ecology” into the social thought of the Church, on an equal footing with dignity, freedom of conscience, fraternity, the universal destination of goods, solidarity, etc. Integral ecology encompasses ecological balances, social justice and spiritual responsibility.

You can see that the Pope has put out a deeply spiritual, deeply religious, deeply ethical call, one that is the essence not only of spiritual life, but also of human life. The Pope is not asking us to talk about the different contents of religion, as I have already mentioned. He is asking the secular world, as well as all religious leaders, to create a common movement for integral ecology and for the defence and promotion of human dignity, for liberty, fraternity and justice — justice not only within countries, but also in the world and in governance of the common welfare. That is why I am very interested in the discussions at this forum to promote governance that brings peace. If we do not have justice, we cannot have peace. That very classic principle is also in the Bible.

I am very glad to be here with you to discuss all these economic and social issues. The decisive dimension of these problems is deeply spiritual. In other words, in the final analysis, it is religious. We can solve these problems by seeking to achieve the common good and considering the other as a person, a person just as we ourselves are persons.

There is something Paul Ricœur said in this regard that I like very much: “Be like another.”

Thank you for your attention.