



# FROM THE HEART OF THE STATE

## THE GOVERNORATE TELLS ITS STORY

Year I

Vatican City

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# EDITORIAL

This is the first issue of the newsletter of the Governorate, which will be published on a quarterly basis starting from 1 September.

The choice of date for the first issue is not accidental, but rather linked to World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. The Season of Creation begins on that day and will continue until 4 October, the liturgical memorial of Saint Francis of Assisi. The theme for the ninth Day is “Hope and Act with Creation” and is drawn from Saint Paul’s Letter to the *Romans* 8:19-25.

This is why the first issue is dedicated to the protection of our Common Home and all that has to do with the environment and its protection, in accordance with the principles set forth in Pope Francis’ Encyclical Letter *Laudato si’*.

Because the responsibilities of the Directorate of Infrastructures and Services, include the areas where the Encyclical Letter’s values are to be implemented, it has been at the forefront of the changes required.

The Newsletter is an opportunity to thank those who offer their skills and commitment to serving the common good, each day.

It also intends to be an instrument to connect what takes place in the working communities within the Vatican walls, with the world beyond.

Each issue of the Newsletter will include sections that will report on the activities of the President, the General Secretary and the various Directorates of the Governorate of Vatican City State

It is a small State, but not in its ability to transmit a message: the implementation of evangelical values in its structures, and its uniqueness as an institution at the service of the Bishop of Rome.





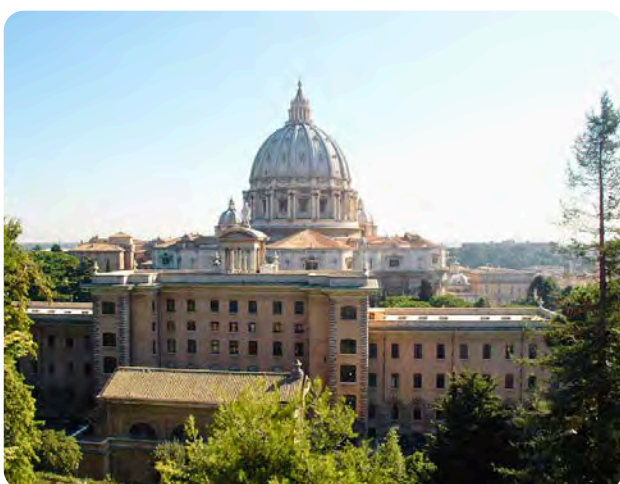
The Governorate, in fact, is the expression of a legal, institutional, and human entity, marked by the internationality of its members, by a shared orientation towards the construction of a society based on principles of solidarity, inclusion, fraternity and service to the Petrine Ministry of the Successor of Peter.

The uniqueness of the State lies in the fact that it is an instrument of the Bishop of Rome, and has the aim of supporting him in carrying out his universal mission.

This is why what happens within its boundaries, resonates in a way that cannot be measured by its territorial entity or by the number of its residents, but rather is part of a universal perspective.

It is with this certainty that these pages wish to help shine a light on an entity as wide and multifaceted as the Governorate.

With the hope of achieving our intentions.



# PRESENTATION

*Cardinal Fernando Vérgez Alzaga*

*President of the Governorate of Vatican City State*

There is always a first issue, the first day of any initiative. The one we are presenting begins on 1 September, the date set aside to celebrate and pray for creation, a yearly appointment, to which Pope Francis dedicates a special message. It is with a gaze towards our Common Home that we entrust these pages to our readers. What led us to promote this initiative?

Essentially because we would like this Newsletter to be a reflection of the Governorate of Vatican City State. In fact, it is unknown to a large part of the Catholic world. The premise and goal of this publication is to reach those near and far to offer a slice of life of an institution which, will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2029. The Governorate is not only a judicial, public and legal entity, but also a working community, in which men and women put their skills, resources and talents at the service of the Successor of Peter. As mentioned in Article 1 of the Law No. CCLXXIV on the Government of Vatican City State, of 25 November 2018, the Governorate “exercises its power and functions, so as to guarantee the absolute and visible independence also in the international arena, in its exercise of the universal and pastoral mission of the Supreme Pontiff”.



The Newsletter enters within this context, and aims to be a bridge, a connection and a means of contact between the various sections of the Governorate and the outside world, to show its vast and diversified responsibilities, including security, public order and civil protection; safeguarding health and hygiene, the environment, the ecology; financial activities, postal, philatelic and customs services. But also, all infrastructures related to connectivity and networks, construction activities, technical, water and electrical systems and their supervision and maintenance, the preservation, enhancement and use of the artistic complex of the Vatican Museums and the supervision of the assets of the entire artistic, historical, archaeological and ethnographic patrimony. It is obvious that, faced with such a complex entity, there will be countless topics to address in each new issue.

Our hope is that by reading these pages, people may have an opportunity to learn more about what occurs in the Governorate, with the hope that they will find some points of reflection in their own lives as well as inspiration, by coming into contact with the essence of the Vatican: to be functional to the universal ministry of the Pontiff without forgetting the spiritual dimension, which is neither secondary nor marginal, but rather constitutional to the whole apparatus of the Governorate. With regards to this, I recall the words of Saint Therese of Lisieux, who said that though the paths may be different the goal is the same. We only need one goal: to be saints on the path that God has planned for us.



# ***THE GOVERNORATE AND LAUDATO SI'***

*Sister Raffaella Petrini*

*General Secretary of the Governorate of Vatican City State*

The protection of creation “is not only an ethical issue, but one that is eminently theological, for it is the point where the mystery of man and the mystery of God” intersect”, Pope Francis said in his 2024 Message for World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, celebrated on 1 September. This year’s theme , “Hope and Act with Creation” was inspired by Saint Paul’s Letter to the *Romans* (8:19-25), in which the Apostle “explains what it means for us to live according to the Spirit and focuses on the sure hope of salvation that is born of faith, namely, newness of life in Christ”.

The Governorate of Vatican City State has chosen this occasion to launch its quarterly Newsletter, dedicating its first issue to the care and protection of our Common Home and to the implementation of the ethical principles outlined in the Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'*. In his Message for the Day, the Pope highlights that there is a “transcendent (theological-ethical) motivation that commits Christians to promoting justice and peace in the world, not least through the universal destination of goods”. It is “ a matter of the revelation of the children of God that creation awaits, groaning as in the pangs of childbirth”. The Pope highlights that at “stake is not only our earthly life in history, but also, and above all, our future in eternity, the eschaton of our blessedness, the paradise of our peace, in Christ, the Lord of the cosmos, crucified and risen out of love”.







Thus, to hope and take action with creation means “to live an incarnational faith, one that can enter into the suffering and hope-filled “flesh” of others, by sharing in the expectation of the bodily resurrection to which believers are predestined in Christ the Lord”.

This is why, ever since the publication of *Laudato si'* in 2015, the Governorate has been committed to implementing the principles suggested by Pope Francis. The goal is never more relevant than today: to promote the good of humanity because protecting creation is first of all, an act of charity towards the men and women who live in our Common Home, which has been so mistreated.

After all, integral ecology is at the heart of *Laudato si'*, and must become a new paradigm of justice because creation is not a “mere frame” of human life. It is not by chance that the start of the Encyclical Letter recalls Saint Francis of Assisi's words in the *Canticle of the creatures*: “Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs”. His words are an invitation to “ecological conversion”, and a change of course because there is no more time, we have to intervene. Humanity must take on its responsibility to be committed to the “Care of our Common Home”. It is a matter of the “ecological conversion” that puts man at the centre, with his frailties and needs, with a commitment to eliminate poverty, to solidarity, to the preferential option of the poor, to universal and equal access to the earth's resources and to a renewed social commitment to achieve peace and end wars.



The Pope launches an appeal to all mankind, not only to believers, because our Common Home belongs to everyone, no one excluded. He invites us to enter a dialogue, a debate, calling for reflection to take action before it's too late. He wants to awaken consciences, creating opportunities for reflection that will lead to action. First and foremost, he stirs Christians from their listlessness or indifference towards creation and reminds them of their vocation to be the custodians of the work of God. This vocation is undoubtedly, the essential part of "a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience".

Inspired by these values, the Governorate has tried to make the Encyclical Letter its reference point for planning, involving all the Directorates and the entities that are part of it. The efforts are aimed at reducing the environmental impact of carbon emissions with the goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2050 through the rational use of natural resources such as water and energy and through projects for energy efficiency and the redevelopment of its technological patrimony. Without forgetting sustainable mobility, diversifications and procurement of electric and alternative vehicles that pollute less, waste management and reforestation projects. I would also like to add that over the years, the Holy See has joined several Climate Protocols: Montreal (2008); Kigali Amendments to the Montreal Protocol (2020) and the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement (2022). In order to achieve the goals set out in the various Protocols, the Governorate has launched a series of projects for the production of energy systems from renewable sources, the rationalization of water resources and electric mobility.



The adoption of electric vehicles and the instalment of charging stations, the photovoltaic system over the covering of the entrance to the Vatican Museums and the agrivoltaic system that will be installed in the extraterritorial zone of Sana Maria di Galeria, are all part of this context. The agrivoltaic system, as Pope Francis wrote in the Apostolic Letter issued Motu Proprio, Fratello Sole, will not only feed electricity to the radio station located in Santa Maria di Galeria, but also provide for all the energy needs of Vatican City State. The Pope entrusted the project to the President of the Governorate of Vatican City State and to the President of the Administration of the Apostolic See.

These projects show a significant commitment that will allow Vatican City State to achieve energy self-sufficiency through renewable resources. I hope that readers will join our adventure with solidarity and support, including moral support.



# APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION *LAUDATE DEUM*

“Despite all attempts to deny, conceal, gloss over or relativize the issue, the signs of climate change are here and increasingly evident”, Pope Francis said in his Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate Deum*. The document was published on Wednesday, 4 October 2023, Feast Day of Saint Francis of Assisi, at the conclusion of the Season of Creation, which coincided with the opening of the first Session of XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission”.

The Governorate of Vatican City State has welcomed the indications set forth in *Laudate Deum* and implements them in its daily functions. The Apostolic Exhortation – in continuity with the Encyclical Letter *Laudato si’* of 24 May 2015 – is not only addressed to Christians, but to all people of good will who want to be involved in solving the climate crisis.

With *Laudate Deum*, the Pope completed and clarified what he had already written in *Laudato si’* and launched a cry of alarm to invite everyone to make an effort to stop climate change before it’s too late: “The reflection and information that we can gather from these past eight years allow us to clarify and complete what we were able to state some time ago. For this reason, and because the situation is now even more pressing, I have wished to share these pages with you”.





# **Climate Change**



In its six chapters, Pope Francis highlights that climate change is undeniable and its effects are increasingly more evident “Despite all attempts to deny, conceal, gloss over or relativize the issue”. In fact the Pope says, in “recent years, some have chosen to deride these facts. They bring up allegedly solid scientific data, like the fact that the planet has always had, and will have, periods of cooling and warming. They forget to mention another relevant datum: that what we are presently experiencing is an unusual acceleration of warming, at such a speed that it will take only one generation – not centuries or millennia – in order to verify it”. He then identifies “the human – “anthropic” – origin of climate change” which can no longer be denied, and calls for the adoption of measures to prevent further damage.

In *Laudato si'*, the Pope had given a brief explanation of the technocratic paradigm that is at the basis of the current conditions of environmental degradation. In *Laudate Deum*, he notes that this paradigm has established itself more and more in the last years and that “the natural resources required by technology, such as lithium, silicon and so many others, are not unlimited, yet the greater problem is the ideology underlying an obsession: to increase human power beyond anything imaginable, before which nonhuman reality is a mere resource at its disposal”.

Pope Francis also mentions the “weakness of international politics” and underscores the urgent need for cooperation: “It is not a matter of replacing politics, but of recognizing that the emerging forces are becoming increasingly relevant and are in fact capable of obtaining important results in the resolution of concrete problems, as some of them demonstrated during the pandemic. The very fact that answers to problems can come from any country, however little, ends up presenting multilateralism as an inevitable process”.

The Pontiff reflects on climate conferences and asks the parties to overcome egotisms at the international level, for the benefit of the common good and also invites members of other religions to take action. Pope Francis reminds Catholics of their duty to protect our Common Home and that the reasons for this commitment spring from Christian faith. Lastly, he calls on everyone “to accompany this pilgrimage of reconciliation with the world that is our home and to help make it more beautiful, because that commitment has to do with our personal dignity and highest values”.



# ***LAUDATO SI'* AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION AT THE GOVERNORATE**

Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter, *Laudato si'*, published in 2015, addresses the urgent issue of the protection of our "common home", that is, planet earth. It draws attention to the need to unite the entire human family in the search for sustainable development. For several years, Vatican City State has been committed to environmental protection policies to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 through the rational use of natural resources.

Over the years, it has joined various Protocols on climate: Montreal Protocol (2008 and 2020) and the Paris Agreement (2022) The Governorate's Directorate of Infrastructure and Services has spearheaded the implementation of strategies of efficiency to reduce carbon emissions by 20 percent by 2030. It is a highly significant ethical and cultural change that involves the development of projects aimed at the redevelopment of the technological patrimony, the rationalization of water resources, sustainability, waste management and supervision of the Vatican Gardens.

With regards to the production of electric energy from renewable sources, in 2008, even before the publication of the Encyclical Letter, photovoltaic panels had been installed over the roof of the Paul VI Hall (221 kWp). The installation of panels over the entrance to the Vatican Museums is underway (135 kWp) to compensate for their energy consumption. New panels are also scheduled to be installed above the warehouses of the "Vignaccia" area (221 kWp) which will bring the overall power from renewable resources produced by the State to over 577 kWp.







Vehicle charging stations are already being installed. There are currently 35 stations throughout the State, to which 32 more will be added shortly. They are available also for employee use.

Vatican City State's official vehicles are gradually being replaced with electric or hybrid vehicles. With regards to water, a project is in place to replace tubes for water supply in order to completely eliminate any leaks. Moreover, recirculation systems are being applied to the ornamental fountains. The Directorate of Infrastructures and Services is continuing to replace refrigeration systems with low global warming potential refrigerants (GWP) and updating its heating system.

Our architects and engineers carry out plans for new constructions for regeneration and conversion, in full respect of the environment, trying to use constructive solutions and materials with the lowest impact on nature. Also underway are plans for the renewal of structures, for example with the introduction of more efficient windows that can provide greater thermal comfort and the elimination of thermal bridges, which increase costs and energy waste.



Another important issue is the collection of organic waste, for composting in the Vatican Gardens. Moreover, the Vatican Garden's reforestation programme has led to the planting of 300 trees of various species in the last three years, and the elimination of the use of pesticides.

*Laudato si'* invites us to reflect on our responsibility to protect our planet and to consider our relationship with God, human beings and the earth.

The Directorate of Infrastructures and Services is composed of more than 300 men and women who work together efficiently and in synergy. The work of each member of staff is fundamental, as is the teamwork that characterizes their work. We are sure that "More and Together" we will be able to meet the needs and find solutions to the problems highlighted by the Holy Father in his Encyclical Letter.

*Salvatore Farina*

*Director of the Directorate of Infrastructures and Services*

# PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS TO REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

*Organized by Directorate of Infrastructures and Services*

Reducing energy consumption is ever more important as it is crucial to environment protection. In fact, lowering energy consumption also lowers pollution linked to the production of the sources used. In this period, the greater awareness of individuals is joined to an institutional commitment through the promotion of initiatives linked to energy saving and to the sustainable use of natural resources, for the benefit of all.

A greater awareness of environmental impact involves the pursuit of energy quality standards: but what does energy saving mean exactly and how can we improve our daily consumption?"

There are two methods:

- reducing energy consumption actively, through the production of energy from 100% renewable sources;
- Reducing energy consumption passively, through small gestures and energy efficient interventions.

In other words, passive savings in energy are all the actions that can be carried out on a daily basis to reduce energy consumption and make individual habits of consumption more efficient.

The following are five useful actions:



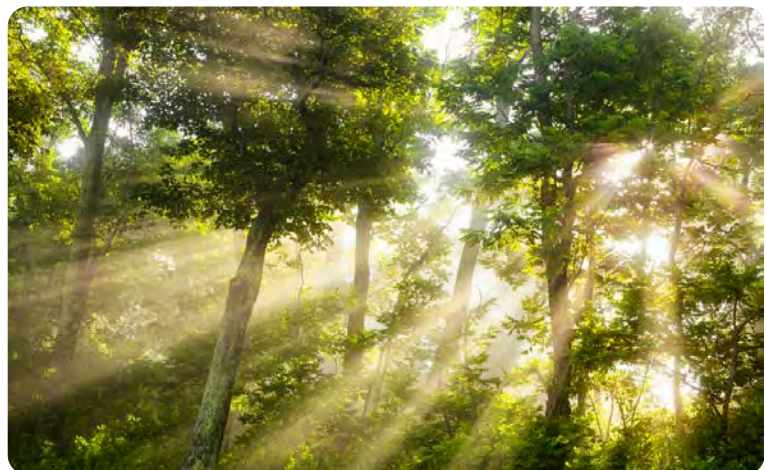
## 1. Electrical appliances

Switch electrical appliances off when they are not being used (in fact, precious energy is lost even when the appliance is on standby) and use them carefully: fill the refrigerator and the freezer without overpacking them, set the internal temperature to 4-5 degrees Celsius for refrigerators and - 15-18 for freezers and check the seals of the doors; use lower temperature settings for washing machines and dishwashers, and wash full loads; keep appliances in a good state so they consume less and replace older appliances with newer and more efficient models.



## 2. Lighting

Always switch lights off when they are not needed, taking advantage of natural light as much as possible and always choosing low consumption led light bulbs.



### 3. Heating and Air conditioning

Use the heating system in winter, in such a way as to consume less energy when not at home or during the night time hours. Do the same with the air conditioning system in the summer, which should be turned off before leaving the room or left at a higher temperature (in this way the room will cool down quickly when the air conditioner is turned on again). Moreover, to keep the rooms cooler in the summer, close the blinds and use dark curtains. Set the temperature on the thermostat to 20 degrees Celsius in winter and 26 degrees in summer, and use thermostatic radiator valves.



#### 4.Domestic Hot Water

Check the consumption of Domestic Hot Water (DHW) especially when using an electric boiler: to save, set the water temperature to 40-50 degrees Celsius, use the mixer tap rather than separate taps for hot and cold water, install diffuser heads and take short showers instead of baths.



## 5. Cooking

Use aluminium pots and pans, which have a heat conductivity that is 14 times more efficient than steel, use pressure cookers which reduce cooking time, put the pots on burners that are appropriate for their size and use induction-based hobs.



These are simple actions, involving common sense and good practices. Heating, air conditioning and electrical systems, which are the greatest sources of consumption, require periodic maintenance to reduce energy consumption.

*Carlo D'Alessandris*

*Official of the Laboratory and Plants Office of the Directorate of Infrastructures and Services*



# TIPLS AND ADVICE FOR THE GREEN THUMB

*Organized by Garden and Environment Services*

Nine years since the promulgation of Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato si'*, the Holy See has implemented many initiatives to respond in a positive and proactive way to sustainability. The world is wounded and an ecological conversion is needed, the Pope writes in the Encyclical. It is a call to change, an invitation to take action to protect creation. The Pope's appeal for a global ecological conversion is also an invitation to listen to the poor and marginalized communities and to the earth itself, especially in one's own neighbourhood.

With the objective of providing a practical example of ecological conversion, the Garden and Environment Services has set itself the goal of working on a few, yet fundamentally important guidelines, such as the use of natural-based plant protection products approved by organic agriculture, the fertilization of land, good pruning techniques, consumption control of exhaustible resources such as water and a ban on the use of chemical herbicides.



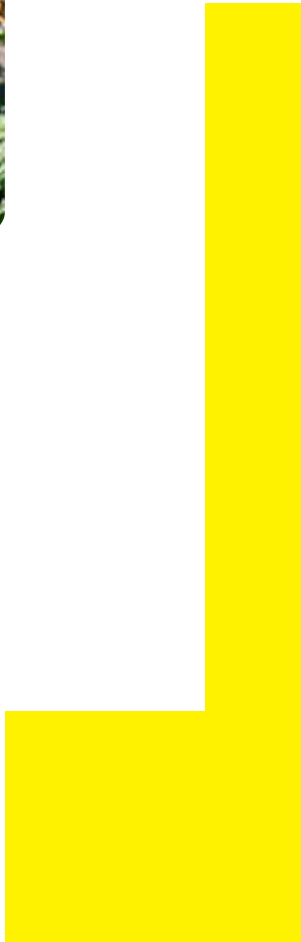
In this small guide, we will address each topic concisely but thoroughly, so that we can all cooperate with "The beauty of Creation".

Like all living beings, plants need to be nourished and to watered correctly. If these two factors are in balance, they run less risk of contracting diseases which can be fungal or parasitic, and are better equipped to defend themselves without the use of medicine (plant protection products).

Keeping this in mind, in order to work with more awareness, one should enact periodic fertilization with organic-based products. They are easy to find on the market. Watering methods should allow plants to put roots deep into the ground, stimulating the roots by not overwatering periodically but more importantly, watering them with enough water to ensure the water is absorbed correctly into the soil.

The same criteria should be used for plants in vases, if we do not have a suitable watering system with a programmed irrigation. Water abundantly, in relation to the plants, three times per week or at least paying attention to the humidity in the soil, by touching it or by observing the leaves and checking to see if they look healthy, if they are curled up if they point downwards, which are all signs of lack of water.





With regards to lawns, it is best to keep the height of grass at just below 6 cm. This creates a sort of natural shade over the lawn, and a greater preservation of humidity during the hotter hours of the day. With this simple precaution, lawns will save water and be in the best conditions.

What do we mean by proper pruning techniques? We have to take into consideration that plants develop their crown, depending on their root system, which means that what we see is directly proportionate to the roots. This is why we should avoid making drastic cuts, so-called pollarding, and instead make simple cuts to eliminate dry branches, thinning cuts and releadering cuts. This technique permits the branches to continue to transmit sap to the part that is not cut. If instead cuts are being made to stimulate flowering of plants, they have to be done in such a way as to protect the flower buds, which vary from plant to plant. This is best done at the end of winter when temperatures are milder.

*Rafael Tornini*

*Head of the Garden and Environment Service of the Directorate of Infrastructures and Services*



