

The following is a 21st century version of St. Francis' Letter to the Rulers of the People, written in 2008 by Leonardo Boff. This is a version translated into English.

Near the end of his life, St. Francis of Assisi wrote an open letter to the leaders of the people. More than a thousand Franciscans who came from all over the world to a mid-October meeting in Brasilia tried to rewrite it. I brought my collaboration -prohibited by local bishops- in these terms:

"To all the Heads of State and bearers of power in this world, Brother Francis of Assisi, your little one and humble servant, wish you peace and all good.

I am writing this message with my heart in my hands and my eyes directed upward in supplication. I hear coming from everywhere two cries that rise to heaven. One is the cry of Mother Earth, terribly devastated. The other is the lacerating complaint of millions and millions of our brothers and sisters hungry, sick and excluded, the most threatened of created beings.

It is the cry of ecological injustice and social injustice that begs to be heard urgently. My brothers and sisters in power: on behalf of one who was announced as the "sovereign lover of life" (Wisdom 11:26) I implore you: let us form a global partnership for Earth and Life.

We have little time, and we lack wisdom. The wheel of global warming is turning and we can not stop it. But we can slow it down and prevent its catastrophic effects. We do not want our Mother Earth, in order to save other lives threatened by us, is obliged to exclude us from her own body and the community of living beings.

For too long we have behaved as a Satan, exploiting and devastating ecosystems, when our vocation is to be the Good Angel, the Keeper and Guardian of all that exists and lives.

Therefore, dear ladies and gentlemen, I advise you strongly to think not only in the sustainable development of your regions, rather I advise you to think of the planet as a whole, as the only common home we have to live in, that it can continue to have vitality and integrity and that the conditions are preserved for our existence and for the whole earth community.

The technoscience that helped destroy, can help us to rescue. And it will be what saves us if its reason is accompanied by sensitivity, heart, compassion and reverence.

I humbly warn you, my brothers and sisters, that if you do not join this sacred alliance of care and universal brotherhood, you will have to be accountable to the court of humanity and confront the judgment of the Lord of history. We want our time to be remembered as a time of collective responsibility and loving care of Mother Earth and all life.

Finally, brothers and sisters, modelers and shapers of our common future: remember that the earth does not belong to us. We belong to her, that carried us as beloved sons and daughters. It is hard to accept that after so many millions and millions of years on this glorious planet, we have to be expelled from it.

By enlightenment that comes from above, I feel that this is not a tragedy of a disastrous end. We are in a crisis that will refine and purify us and make us better. Life is called to life. Born of stardust, the Lord of the universe created us to shine and sing the beauty, majesty and grandeur of Creation that is the space of the Spirit and the temple of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

If you observe all this that God has inspired in me and I have communicated in a few words, I assure you that the Earth will again be the Garden of Eden and we, its dedicated gardeners and caretakers. "

Signed: F. of Assisi.