



The Holy See

**LETTER OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS
ON THE OCCASION OF THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE VISIT TO LAMPEDUSA**

Dear brother

Archbishop Alessandro Damiano of Agrigento

On the occasion of the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the [visit to Lampedusa](#), I wish to send my cordial greeting to you, the faithful of the Archdiocese, the authorities and those present. I am close to you with affection, prayer and encouragement.

Dear friends, in these days in which we are witnessing the repetition of grave tragedies in the Mediterranean, we are shocked by the silent massacres before which we still remain helpless and stunned. The death of innocents, mainly children, in search of a more serene existence, far from wars and violence, is a painful and deafening cry that cannot leave us indifferent. It is the shame of a society that no longer knows how to mourn and pity others.

Ten years have passed since the journey I wished to make in the community of Lampedusa to express my support and paternal closeness to those who landed on your shores after painful ordeals at the mercy of the sea. The occurrence of such inhuman disasters must utterly shake consciences; God still asks us: “Adam, where are you? Where is your brother?” Do we want to persevere in error, to presume to put ourselves in the place of the Creator, to dominate in order to protect our own interests, to break the constitutive harmony between Him and us? We must change our attitude; the brother who knocks at the door is worthy of love, hospitality and every care. He is a brother who, like me, has been placed on earth to enjoy what exists there and to share it in communion.

In such a context, we are all called to a renewed and profound sense of responsibility, showing solidarity and sharing. It is therefore necessary, that in order to be truly prophetic, the Church make a diligent effort to set out on the paths of the forgotten, coming out of herself, soothing with

the balm of fraternity and charity the bleeding sores of those who bear the same wounds of Christ imprinted on their own bodies.

I therefore urge you not to remain imprisoned by fear and partisan logic, but to be Christians capable of making this island, located in the heart of Mare Nostrum, fruitful with the spiritual richness of the Gospel, so that it may once again shine in its original beauty.

As I thank each one of you, the radiant and merciful face of the Father, for your commitment to assist migrants, I entrust to the Lord of life those who have died in the crossings, and gladly impart my Blessing, asking you to please pray for me.

Rome, from Saint John Lateran, 20 June 2023

FRANCIS

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