

A home for all? Renewing the Oikos of God

Joint statement from the presidents of the CCEE and the CEC on the occasion of the 2021 Season of Creation

“My Lord, if now I have grace in your eyes, do not go away from your servant” (Gn 18: 3). In the desert, as he sat at the entrance to his tent in the hottest hour time of the day, Abraham proved himself to be welcoming and generous, and by sharing some water and a piece of bread, God’s promise was revealed to him. The old man, full of faith, understood that poverty of spirit consists of abandoning any presumption pretending to find solutions for all problems, placing instead every hope in God, with humility and patience.

This year, the biblical sign of Abraham's tent was chosen to represent our commitment towards caring for our common home, caring for creation, in a spirit of welcoming and dialogue.

The wisdom of this biblical passage enlightens the journey and the work of the churches in Europe and reinvigorates their commitment to the safeguard of creation. Through prayer and action, our churches aim to renew God's *Oikos* – inspired by the theme of this year’s Season of Creation celebration – so that the world may become a home for all God's children, without exclusion of any kind.

The Greek word *Oikos* conveys the meaning of 'home', of all that which is domestic and familiar, everything that is the object of one's care, representing a common interest as well as a shared responsibility. Therefore, renewing God's *Oikos*, the common home we share, is a concept that unites the whole human family in the quest for integral and sustainable development with shared fairness.

This type of development requires a better-quality relationship with the Creator of our human life, of our relationship with others and with nature. The spirit of selfless welcoming and sincere dialogue, as shown by Abraham, becomes for European Christians an expression of self-giving love, able to generate human and spiritual experiences that acknowledge that we all inhabit, together and without exclusion, the *Oikos* of God, that common home that God has entrusted to us with shared responsibility.

In a true spirit of welcoming and dialogue, we would like to contribute with our thoughts and prayers to a couple of important forthcoming summits organised by the United Nations later this year: the Conference on Biodiversity in Kunming, China, as well as the 26th Climate Change Conference of Partners (COP 26) in Glasgow, UK. Most of what the churches in Europe offer as their contribution to the international community find its origin in the courageous initiatives and good practices that inform the life of our church communities every day.

With a true sense of belonging to Christ's Church, we strive to be generous builders of a civilisation that appreciates and cherishes all that is human and knows how to give fair value to what is God's gift in people's lives.

Faced with the question: "A home for all?" our response must be woven into goodwill and concrete commitment to the renewal of God's *Oikos* every day. If we know how to practice justice and speak truth from our hearts, and we do not harm our neighbour, we will then be worthy to "*abide in His tent*" (Ps 15:1), and His "*Oikos*" will truly be a home for all.

We invite all Christians in the churches of Europe, parishes, church communities and every person of good will to observe and celebrate the Season of Creation from 1 September to 4 October ~~in~~ with an ecumenical spirit, united in prayer and action. Furthermore, we invite everyone to pray for the major international events of this autumn - the UN Summit on Biodiversity and COP 26 - so that these events may take the necessary steps that the climate emergency requires.

26 August 2021

Rev. Christian Krieger
CEC President

Cardinal Angelo Bagnasco
CCEE President