



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO A DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN PROJECT
"SNAPSHOTS FROM THE BORDERS"**

Clementine Hall

Thursday, 10 September

2020[\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I offer my welcome to you who have joined the project “Snapshots from the Borders”. I thank Mr Salvatore Martello, mayor of Lampedusa and Linosa, for the words he addressed to me on everyone’s behalf. And I also thank you for this beautiful cross, so meaningful, that you have brought. Thank you. Yours is a forward-thinking project. It aims to promote a deeper understanding of migration, which would allow European societies to offer a more human and coordinated response to the challenges of contemporary migrations. The network of local authorities and organizations of civil society, from which this project arose, is determined to contribute positively to the development of migratory policies that respond to this end. The current migratory scenario is complex and often presents dramatic consequences. The global interdependencies that determine migratory flows are to be studied and understood better. The challenges are many and involve everyone. No one can remain indifferent to the human tragedies that continue to occur in different regions of the world. Among these we are often challenged by those having the Mediterranean as their theatre, a sea of borders, but also of cultural encounter.

Last February, during the very positive Meeting with Bishops of the Mediterranean, [in Bari](#), I recalled that: “In the Mediterranean region, these include all who are fleeing war or who have left their homelands in search of a humanly dignified life... We are aware that, in different social contexts, there is a growing attitude of indifference... The international community has been content with military interventions, whereas it should have built institutions that can guarantee equal opportunities and enable citizens to assume their responsibility for the common good... In the meantime, we can never resign ourselves to the fact that someone who seeks hope by way of the sea can die without receiving help... To be sure, acceptance and a dignified integration are

stages in a process that is not easy. Yet it is unthinkable that we can address the problem by putting up walls” ([Address, 23 February 2020](#)).

In facing these challenges, it seems evident that concrete solidarity and shared responsibility, both at the national and international level, are indispensable. “The current pandemic has highlighted our interdependence: we are all connected to each other, for better or for worse”

([General Audience, 2 September 2020](#)). We must act together, not alone.

It is also fundamental to change the way of seeing and speaking about migration: it means putting the people, the faces, the stories at the centre. Thus the importance of projects, like the one you promote, that seek to offer different approaches, inspired by the culture of encounter, which constitutes the journey toward a new humanism. And when I say “new humanism”, I do not mean just as a philosophy of life, but also as a spirituality, as a style of conduct.

The inhabitants of border cities and territories — the societies, communities, Churches — are called to be the first actors in this turning point, thanks to the continuous opportunities for encounter that history offers them. Borders, always considered barriers of division, can instead become ‘windows’, spaces for mutual knowledge, for reciprocal enrichment, for communion in diversity; they can become places in which to experience models to overcome the difficulties that new arrivals bring to local communities.

I encourage you to continue working together for the culture of encounter and solidarity. May the Lord bless your efforts in this sense, and may Our Lady protect you and the people you work for. I pray for you, and you, please, do not forget to pray for me. May the Lord bless all of you, your work and your efforts in order to go forward in this direction.

Thank you.

**L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly edition in English*, n.38, 18/09/2020