

The Letter is a documentary film on YouTube from Pope Francis to all the world. It is a message for our Earth.

The film introduces us to the subject of climate change and the cry of the poor which accompanies climate change. The film engages our interest immediately by showing us how the Pope sent out four letters inviting people involved in combatting climate change to meet him. None of them were Catholics. The letters reach them in all sorts of ways and the recipients are:

Arouna Kandé from Africa, Senegal, a climate refugee who has survived a boat crossing to a new life and is an ambassador of the poor; Ridhima Pandey from India, a young woman climate activist who represents the voice of the youth; Cacique Dadá Borari from The Amazon, Brazil, working to protect the forest and its environment; And two Americans researching the Coral reefs in Hawaii, Robin Martin and Greg Asner. They all make their way to the Vatican and spend two days together talking with the Pope and sharing their hopes and fears for the environment as they experience it. To support their work, see <https://www.theletterfilm.org/support-the-protagonists/>

The overall message is that we stand at the crossroads of humanity, we need to stand together and ask: how will we care for our common home, for whatever happens to one of us, in the end happens to all of us? There is no doubt that this world will change. The Pope, through the Letter, is bringing together different people for dialogue, for the opportunity to share their concerns in a solution-focused way.

‘We are building a tower of human arrogance with bricks of power. Economic arrogance suggests that if people fall, nothing happens and if nature falls, again nothing happens.’ (The Letter)

But now, as the Pope says in the documentary, Nature is complaining and screaming ‘stop!’ We need to listen to those who call for action, the artists and scientists are like a choir, calling us to sing together, to recognize the sacred in the world, the places where the veil between Heaven and Earth is gossamer thin and to find solutions to heal our changing world.

The Letter sends a powerful message of hope, if only we will listen and act on what we see. As Lorna Gold (President of the Laudato Sí movement) says: Once you know, you cannot look away. At the end of The Letter the participants agree that they came together as strangers and became an orchestra. This is a beautiful image and we hope that this workshop will help us do the same. Here in Aotearoa we need to open our eyes and take action against the exploitation and denigration of Nature and human beings, to protect biodiversity and rejoice in every small step we achieve on our journey to recovery. The recent weather events show there is no time for delay.

For more info visit www.theletterfilm.org