

Vatican City, March 2, 2017

**“Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, [...] essential to human survival, and [...] a condition for the exercise of other human rights.”**

Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'*, 30

In line with Pope Francis' attention to environmental issues, the Club of Rome and the Pontifical Council for Culture are organizing an International Event entitled *Watershed: The Value and Values of Water*, to be held at the Vatican, March, 21-23 2017.

The main part of the event on March 22 gathers diplomats and religious leaders on World Water Day for a Conference including attendance at the General Audience with Pope Francis.

The Conference will be bookended by expert workshops on March, 21 and 23. The first workshop will set the agenda for discussing values relating to water. And during the final workshop, experts will synthesize information concerning how the world values water with the ultimate aim of developing suitable educational tools to heighten the ecological awareness on children and the youth, as well the general public.

The organizers invite experts, citizens, artists, political and business leaders to a broad conversation. They are inspired by Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'* urging the world to solidarity and cooperation for the care of creation through a new and universal dialogue about how we might shape the future of our planet. To foster solidarity we need to formulate shared values through common understanding, which requires an “openness to categories which transcend the language of mathematics and biology, and take us to the heart of what it is to be human.” (*Laudato si'*, 11)

With global, interactive participation, *Watershed* is intended to contribute to a new dialogue about how the world values water and to formulate universal values relating to water. *Watershed's* worldwide conversation will aim to be truly inclusive because “the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all.” (*Laudato si'*, 14) Through this effort, new relationships will be developed and a new social fabric will emerge, with a common language and identity.

Organized in collaboration with Circle of Blue, the joint UN/World High Level Panel on Water, The World Economic Forum Global Future Council on the Environment, and The Value Web, *Watershed* will launch a sustained global dialogue that reframes how the world understands and values water. This event is unprecedented in scope, and it seeks to promote a global consensus around our *The Value and Values of Water*.