



Private audience with His Holiness Pope Francis – 27.8.2021

*Address by Dr. Christiaan Alting von Geusau,
President of the International Catholic Legislators Network*

Holy Father! I am equally grateful and privileged to be standing before you again today.

Legislators, church leaders and policy experts from around the world have arrived to Frascati yesterday where during the next days we will be praying together, build friendships and discuss a topic that has caused many of us great concern: ***“Science, Technology and the Future of Freedom & Democracy: charting our own vision for living in dignity and liberty”***.

The past 18 months have shown us in a new and pressing manner the remarkable advances and possibilities of science and technology and we are deeply grateful for that. In many ways it has saved humanity from much greater disaster. Yet we also see during the past decades that Man – encouraged by these major developments – always struggles with the great temptation that comes with these advances, and that is a lack of humility in the face of God our Creator. One may call it scientific arrogance and technological absolutism. Salvation still belongs to our God, and not solely to our human designs. For example, despite the many advantages of online meetings, the greatest suffering caused by our current crisis has been endemic fear, loneliness and poverty, also leading to a massive rise in suicides amongst isolated young people. At the same time, our impressive medical breakthroughs have brought much improvement and also saved countless lives around the world, yet fully controlling this or other dangerous pathogens has naturally once again proven impossible.

We will be discussing these and other pressing questions and we ask for your apostolic blessing for a fruitful time of prayer, encounter and deliberation leading to new insights how a suffering humanity can be better helped by Christian leaders who walk with God.

In concluding, I would like to quote the words that are our motto for these days and that were written by Dag Hammarskjöld, Secretary-General of the United Nations 1953-1961

“Our work of peace must begin within the private world of each one of us. To build for man a world without fear, we must be without fear. To build a world of justice, we must be just. And how can we fight for liberty if we are not free in our own minds? How can we ask others to sacrifice if we are not ready to do so?”