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## **Pope Francis: put “people first” during COVID-19 pandemic to prevent “viral genocide”**

Faced with the “geometric progression” of the pandemic, governments should take measures showing “the priority of their decisions: people first”, so as to prevent a “viral genocide”. Pope Francis wrote this in a letter to Roberto Andrés Gallardo, President of the Pan-American Committee of Judges for Social Rights, welcoming the decisions of those governments that prioritise health over the economy in times of COVID-19. In his letter, Pope Francis praised once again the behaviour of “so many people, doctors, nurses, volunteers, religious men and women, and priests who risk their lives to heal the sick and defend healthy people from contagion”. “Some governments have taken exemplary measures with well-defined priorities to defend the population”, Pope Francis said about the measures taken that are always essential to “the common good”, even when “they bother those who are forced to comply with them”. “Governments that face the crisis in this way - Pope Francis wrote - show the priority of their decisions: people first. This is important because we all know that defending the people means an economic disaster”. “It would be sad if the opposite was chosen, which would lead to the death of many people, something like a viral genocide”, he warned. “Preparing for the aftermath is also important”, the Pope remarked, who told the judge about his meeting last Friday “with the Dicastery for Integral Human Development to discuss the present and the future”. Pope Francis focused the final part of his letter on the “economic future”, citing the vision” of economist Mariana Mazzucato, professor at the University College London, set out in her 2018 book “The Value of Everything: Making and Taking in the Global Economy”. “I believe - the Pope said – it can help us to think about the future”.

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