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## A well for Africa, Well4Africa

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For more than seven years we have had the privilege of having a Jesuit pope named Francis who speaks to us a hundred times more about Francis of Assisi, than he has about Ignatius of Loyola!

It is not difficult to recognize ourselves as Franciscans through what he writes to us. Five years ago, Pope Francis wrote the encyclical: [Laudato Si](#) and in that encyclical, he gave us a picture of [the environmental situation of our planet](#).

From the very first pages, the Pope wrote: "In reality, access to safe drinking water is a primordial, fundamental and universal human right, because it determines the survival of people and is therefore a condition for the exercise of other human rights". In the same encyclical, he explicitly noted that:



**"The lack of running water is especially acute in Africa, where large sectors of the population do not have access to safe drinking water, or suffer from droughts that make it difficult to produce food".**

It couldn't be more explicit, could it? In the light of all that is written there, how can we not support a project like a well for Africa, [Well4Africa](#). The goal of this project is precisely to provide easy access to water.

This year, the Pope has published on the eve of the feast of St. Francis, another encyclical called: [Fratelli tutti](#). The encyclical is long and filled with verifiable facts.

St. Francis of Assisi addressed all his brothers and sisters with "Fratelli tutti", to propose a way of life that is in keeping with the Gospel. Among his counsels, I would like to highlight one in which he invites us to **a love that overcomes the barriers of geography and space**. He exhorts that the one who loves the other to be happy **"as much when he is far from him as when he is with him"**. In a few simple words, he expresses the essence of an open fraternity that makes it possible to recognize, value and love each person regardless of physical proximity, no matter where they were born or where they live.

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After encouraging us to start from St. Francis, our model and inspiration, the Pope explains the parable of the Good Samaritan, which everyone knows, but from which he draws very specific implications for our world.



It was impossible to publish an encyclical in 2020 without mentioning the pandemic that has struck and is still striking. The Pope comments on the situation: **"After the health crisis, the worst reaction would be to plunge ourselves further into a consumerist fever and into new forms of violence,"** he says, **Heaven forbid that in the end there is not "the others" but rather an "us"!** »

We find our humanity when we act as one with our brothers and sisters in Africa and elsewhere, and it is certainly a beautiful way to be one with our African brothers and sisters by contributing to the Well4Africa project.

### Editor's Note:

10 months ago, the National JPIC Team decided to take on the task of helping our brothers and sisters in Africa by joining the CIOFS initiative spearheaded by the National Fraternity of Lithuania. This was before the Covid-19 pandemic made a mess of world economies, health services, and personal freedoms.

You would think under these circumstances that a fundraising effort would fizzle before it even started. Maybe in another country that would be true, but not in Canada! The Secular Franciscans of Canada have showed their ability to cope with



our own difficulties and to face a demanding situation in a spirited and resilient way by contributing well above anyone's expectations. **As of November 30<sup>th</sup>, our total contributions for the Well4Africa project is \$20,740.**

The OFS National JPIC Team is humbled and truly thankful for your generosity and as Br. Alix noted **showing your humanity and that you are "one" with Africa.**

The total contributions are more than what is needed for this particular project and after consideration by the JPIC Team and the National Council, it was decided to inform the CIOFS Well4Africa team to use all the funds as they see fit by expanding the project at [The Mutemwa Care Centre](#) if there is a need, or by using any surplus for another water project in Africa that needs funding. Our goal, your goal, was to be "one" with our African brothers and sisters and as St Francis noted to show our love that overcomes barriers of geography and space. Thank you and God bless you all in this Christmas Season.

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