**THE LETTER: A MESSAGE FOR OUR EARTH**

**Explores the Pope’s Historic Call for Global Climate Action**

**New Documentary from Oscar-Winning Producers Offers Insight Into the Personal Story of Pope Francis and Highlights Unheard Voices on the Frontlines of the Climate Crisis**

**Premieres Wednesday, December 21 on PBS and Streaming**

**on PBS.org and the PBS Video App**

ARLINGTON, VA – In 2015, Pope Francis wrote a pastoral letter called *Laudato Si’* (“Praise Be”),a reflection on the state of the planet that confronted the looming calamity of human impact on the Earth and all life on it. One of the most ambitious and revolutionary papal statements in history, it was directed not just to Catholics, but to every single person in the world. The letter sparked both controversy and praise as the Pope took a passionate stance on the issue of climate change, stressing how those whose voices are not heard — the poor and the disenfranchised — are suffering the most devastating effects of the crisis. Produced by Off the Fence (*My Octopus Teacher*), **THE LETTER: A MESSAGE FOR OUR EARTH** follows the ramifications of the Pope’s groundbreaking letter and takes viewers around the world to see firsthand how climate change is affecting the daily lives of people. The film premieres Wednesday, December 21, 2022, 8:00-9:30 p.m. ET ([check local listings](http://www.pbs.org/tv_schedules/)) on PBS, [PBS.org](http://www.pbs.org/) and the [PBS Video app.](https://www.pbs.org/pbs-video-app/)

With extraordinary access to Pope Francis — credited with doing more to fight the climate emergency than any other leader on the planet — **THE LETTER** tells the stories of people from around the globe whose everyday lives have been profoundly impacted by global warming. As part of his effort to show the world the calamitous effects of climate change, the Pope invited individuals to the Vatican to speak on behalf of four groups — the poor, the Indigenous, youth and nature. The stories of these activists are featured in the film: Arouna Kandé, a climate change refugee from Senegal; Chief Dadá Borarí from the Maró Indigenous Lands of the Brazilian Amazon, under attack from uncontrolled deforestation; teenaged climate activist Ridhima Pandey of India; and scientists Greg Asner and Robin Martin from Hawaii, who are raising awareness of the devastating coral loss that threatens more than 25 percent of marine life.

Inspired by the writings of his namesake, St. Francis, Pope Francis chose the saint’s words, *“Laudato Si*,’” as the title of his letter. In the film, he speaks with the scientists and activists about his hopes for the future. “The cry of freedom has to come from a new generation,” he says. “You’re the ones inheriting the Earth.” He emphasizes that the leaders of popular movements and scientists have to work together. “It’s like a choir,” he says. “We have to sing together. And right now unity means saving Mother Earth, saving biodiversity, saving ourselves and our children.”

“We’re proud to partner with Off the Fence (OTF) to bring this intimate and compelling view of our Earth to PBS,” said Bill Gardner, Vice President, Multiplatform Programming and Head of Development, PBS. “In a truly gripping and enlightening journey like no other, our audiences will experience the Pope’s urgent call to action to all citizens of the planet and view climate change through the lens of the humans and wildlife most impacted.”

**THE LETTER: A MESSAGE FOR OUR EARTH** will be available to stream on all station-branded PBS platforms, including [PBS.org](http://pbs.org/) and the [PBS Video app](https://www.pbs.org/pbs-video-app/), available on iOS, Android, Roku, Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV, Android TV, Samsung Smart TV, Chromecast and VIZIO.

Produced in full collaboration with the Laudato Si’ Movement and the Vatican, **THE LETTER** is written and directed by Nicolas Brown *(H2O: The Molecule That Made Us; The Serengeti Rules; Human Planet*), produced by Ellen Windemuth *(My Octopus Teacher)* and executive produced by Off The Fence’s CEO Bo Stehmeier.

**About PBS**

[PBS](http://www.pbs.org/), with more than 330 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and digital content. Each month, PBS reaches over 120 million people through television and 26 million people online, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS’ broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry’s most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to PBS for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. Decades of research confirms that PBS’ premier children’s media service, PBS KIDS, helps children build critical literacy, math and social-emotional skills, enabling them to find success in school and life. Delivered through member stations, PBS KIDS offers high-quality educational content on TV – including a 24/7 channel, online at [pbskids.org](http://pbskids.org/), via an array of mobile apps and in communities across America. More information about PBS is available at [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org/), one of the leading dot-org websites on the internet, or by following [PBS on Twitter](https://twitter.com/pbs), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/pbs) or through our [apps for mobile and connected devices](http://www.pbs.org/anywhere/home/). Specific program information and updates for press are available at [pbs.org/pressroom](http://pressroom.pbs.org/) or by following [PBS Communications on Twitter](https://twitter.com/PBS_PR).

– PBS –

CONTACTS:

Chelsie Pope, PBS, cepope@pbs.org

Cara White / Mary Lugo, CaraMar, Inc.

cara.white@mac.com; lugo@negia.net

*For images and additional up-to-date information on this and other PBS programs, visit PBS PressRoom at* [*pbs.org/pressroom*](http://pressroom.pbs.org/)*.*