

GREEN CHURCH

Climate, Pope's insults inadmissible

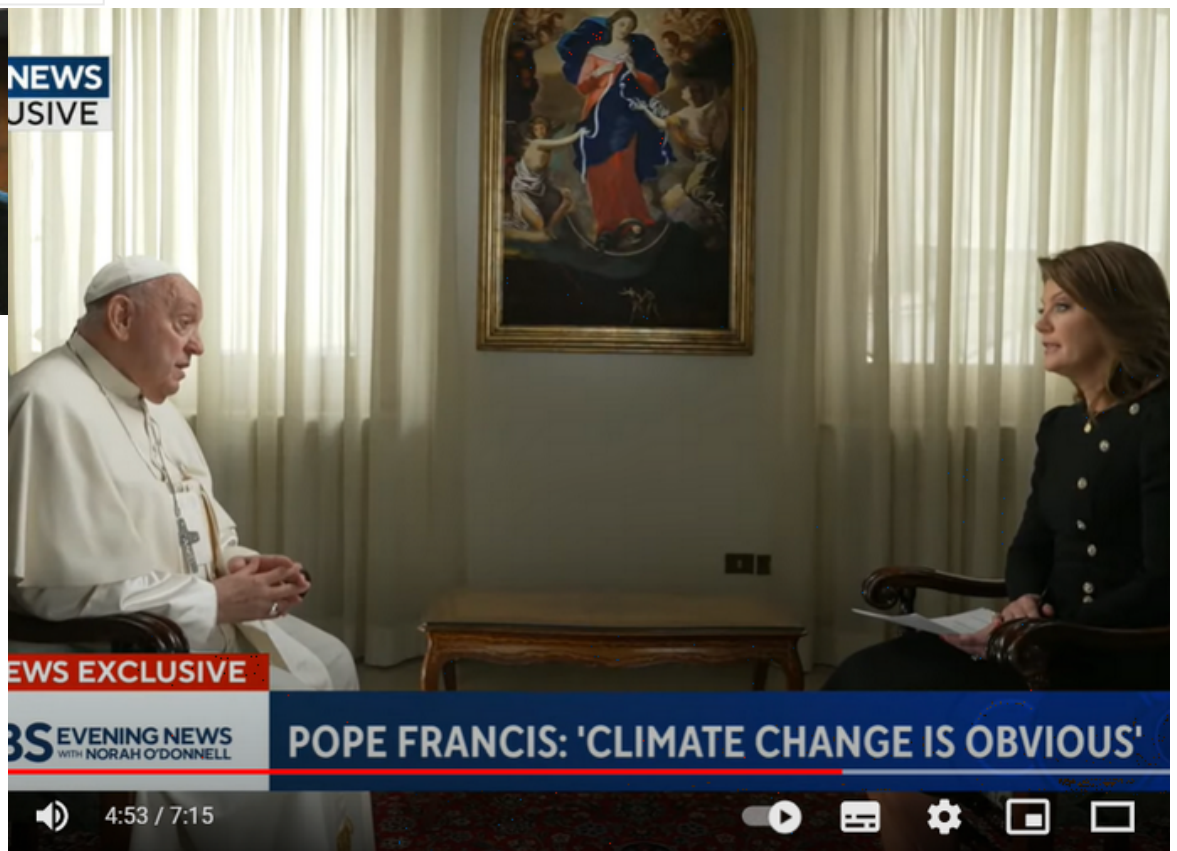
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NEWS
EXCLUSIVE

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The insults hurled by Pope Francis should not come as much of a surprise by now: whether aimed at certain categories of Catholics or other individuals, we are unfortunately used to expressions of contempt that would sit ill on the lips of anyone, let alone a Pope. Yet on some occasions a clarification is necessary, because the

judgments he expresses are dangerously misleading: this is exactly the case of the latest video interview given to the American CBS television, in which he calls "people who deny climate change" "stupid".

In reality, only a few fragments of the interview, which was filmed last week, **were aired on Wednesday evening**, accompanied by a news report that attempts to contextualise the Pope's judgments. The full, hour-long interview will be aired on 19 May on Norah O'Donnell's "60 Minutes" programme, and is in its own way a historic event because it is the first vis-à-vis interview granted by Pope Francis to an American TV station.

In the snippet aired (see from minute 4'53"), Norah O'Donnell asks the Pope: "What do you say to the deniers of climate change?". Pope Francis replies: "There are people who are foolish (he says 'necia' in Spanish, *ed*). And foolish even if you show them research, they don't believe it. Why? Because they don't understand the situation or because of their interests. But climate change exists."

The question itself is already a demonstration of crass ignorance, but the answer is - unfortunately - even worse. That is why it is useful to at least summarise the true terms of the issue.

Just to start, no one denies climate change because climate change is the norm; since the world was created, the climate has always changed, there has never been 'climate stability'. Anyone with a minimum level of education should remember having heard of ice ages and interglacial periods, for example. Paradoxically, it is the climate catastrophists who would have us believe that the climate would have an eternal equilibrium if it were not for human activity that has blown everything up since the industrial revolution. And even on global warming, i.e. an increase of about 1 °C in the average global temperature from about 1870 to the present day, there is essentially no dispute.

Instead, what is disputed is the claim that the current warming phase is unprecedented, that it is the sole (or almost sole) responsibility of mankind, that temperatures tend to rise uncontrollably, and that all this has catastrophic consequences for the planet and for our lives. In short, there are those who support the existence of a climate emergency - and this is the thinking behind climate policies and the urgency with which the ecological and energy transition is being pursued - and there are those who deny that there is any emergency concerning the climate, and who warn against investing billions of dollars or euros for measures that would not change the

evolution of the climate in any case, but instead would drive hundreds of millions of people into poverty.

Pope Francis obviously stands with the former and has fully espoused not only the thesis of the climate emergency but also the catastrophism that accompanies it. From this point of view, the [encyclical *Laudato Si'*](#) (2015) and, even worse, the apostolic exhortation [Laudate Deum](#) (2023) are proof of how the Pontiff could easily receive an honorary membership card from WWF or Greenpeace. What is more, in *Laudate Deum*, no. 58, Pope Francis also winks at the extremists of Last Generation, Just Stop Oil or Extinction Rebellion, those, to be precise, who block traffic or vandalise works of art and other symbolic places: 'In reality,' writes Francis, 'they occupy a void in society as a whole, which should exercise healthy pressure, because it is up to each family to think that the future of their children is at stake'.

So this is what Pope Francis is referring to in his reply to Norah O'Donnell: the 'fools' would then be the many scientists and experts, including several Nobel Prize winners, who deny, data in hand, the catastrophist theses and denounce the instrumentalisation of science for political ends.

They do not need to be shown research, they do it themselves and come up with results that are completely different from those imposed by the dominant thinking, including in the Church. And it is simply ridiculous that a Pope, with no competence in the matter, should tell them that they "do not understand the situation" or even insult them by saying that they deny it because they are thinking of "their own interests": we are talking about people who have dedicated their lives to study and research, who do not need to show off to gain benefits from it, indeed they put their careers at risk precisely because they believe in true science in times of totalising ideologies.

These simple observations would be enough to advise the Pope to avoid rash judgments on people and to remember that - even if it is not the Magisterium - in interviews it is important to know what you are talking about. And also to try to listen to the arguments of those scientists who deny the existence of a climate emergency: he would certainly learn something.

But the real problem is the one already emerged with *Laudato Si'*, namely the elevation of a scientific thesis - by its very nature subject to correction or denial - to a truth of faith, which therefore requires immediate moral action. Today, any truth proclaimed by the Church for two thousand years can be questioned, but a controversial and contested scientific thesis such as Anthropogenic (i.e. man-made)

Global Warming is absolute truth; and ecological transition is a moral duty, on pain of being publicly insulted by the Pope himself.

And here it is no longer a matter of differing opinions or verbal intemperance, it is the very mission of the Church that is being questioned.