Vatican
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A large group of people wearing walking clothing move along a sidewalk at the side of a stone

A large group of tourists walk near the Vatican in Rome in this file photos from June 17, 2021. (CNS/Paul Haring)

Carol Glatz

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Those working in the field of tourism have a great opportunity to offer people a "different kind of vacation" that is less consumerist and more respectful of creation, the Vatican said.

An invitation for tourism "to be designed in a manner that respects people and the environment, opens the way to receiving the goodness of the Father who reaches out to all with his love," said the Vatican's message for the Sept. 27 celebration of World Tourism Day.

"Tourism operators hold in their hands the opportunity to offer valid and effective avenues for rediscovering a different kind of vacation: more supportive and less consumerist; more respectful of nature and capable of contemplating beauty in its manifold expressions," it said.

The message, signed by Archbishop Rino Fisichella, pro-prefect of the first section of the Dicastery for Evangelization, was published in several languages May 26.

"The church has always recognized and supported the value and importance of art, culture and their preservation in order to allow people to know God and keep Christian roots alive," the message said.

Beauty is an essential part of the mission to proclaim the Gospel and promote the spiritual growth of believers, it said. For this reason, it is important that investments in tourism and infrastructure do not lead to a "loss of cultural and religious identity" or neglect the needs and dignity of people working in tourism.

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"In caring for the works of art that have been the heritage of humanity for centuries and become a destination for tourists from around the world, it is worthwhile to reiterate that their protection is everyone's responsibility. Therefore, any form of violence that undermines their preservation must be firmly condemned," the message said.

The theme of the 2023 celebration, which was chosen by the U.N.'s World Tourism Organization, is "Tourism and green investments."

The Vatican's message also highlighted how a sustainable economy and respecting human dignity are linked.

"Concern for creation also enables Christians to promote a form of economy that does not have profit maximization as its goal, which often leads to violence against nature, with severe repercussions on the dignity of the person," it said.

"The primacy of ethics cannot be overshadowed by the thirst for profit. That is not to say that technological progress or economic development should be stifled," it said.

"It is especially important for politicians to support with conviction and confidence the paths that are being discovered, in order to wisely discern the most suitable projects, which aim for a common good and which increase the quality of life, especially of people belonging to the more disadvantaged societal groups," the message said.