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Pope Francis meets with winegrowers, winemakers and others taking part in an event organiz

Pope Francis meets with winegrowers, winemakers and others taking part in an event organized by Vinitaly -- an international wine and spirits exhibition held in Verona, Italy, every year for industry professionals at the Vatican, Jan. 22, 2024. (CNS/Vatican Media)

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The skills of winegrowers — respect, perseverance and knowing how to prune to produce fruit — are also valuable messages for the soul, Pope Francis said.

"Wine, the land, farming skills and entrepreneurial activity are gifts from God," the pope told winegrowers, winemakers and others taking part in an event organized by Vinitaly — an international wine and spirits exhibition held in Verona, Italy, every year for industry professionals. The event was dedicated to Italian wine and "the economy of Francesco," an economy inspired by St. Francis of Assisi that respects the earth and promotes peace and justice.

"It is good that you find yourselves reflecting together on the ethical aspects and moral responsibilities involved (in wine production) and that you draw inspiration from the 'Poverello' of Assisi," he told the group during an audience at the Vatican Jan. 22.

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The guidelines they have chosen involve care for the environment, work and healthy consumption, which, the pope said, show an attitude of respect for every aspect and process of their industry.

"Respect, perseverance, the ability to prune to bear fruit," he said, are "valuable messages for the soul, which are well learned from the rhythms of nature, the vines and production."

Respect and kindness are important in treating the earth, workers and consumers, he said.

"Indeed, 'genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others,'" he said, quoting from his encyclical, "*Laudato Si*', On Care for Our Common Home."

Pope Francis thanked the group for striving to follow the example of St. Francis of Assisi and knowing the importance of harmony, helping the least and respecting creation.