"The language of fraternity and beauty" ("Laudato si", n.11)
2018 LETTER TO THE TOURISTS

Welcome to all of you who are going to spend the holy days in our lands of Alicante. I'm sure you feel attracted by the natural beauty of this land and by the welcoming nature of its people. Thank you for visiting us, for staying with us; we are happy to have and serve you.

By coming to this place, you remind us of God's generosity who gives us this privileged habitat. By the way, it would be an unpardonable paradox that many people would travel from afar to enjoy for few days our climate, our sun, our mountains, our beautiful Mediterranean views , while others, accustomed to its everydayness, wouldn't pay any attention to them . For this reason I would like to use this opportunity to emphasize those elements and be grateful to God for this blessed land, given to us for the work of our hands.

Reflecting on this gifts, our Pope Francis, on his Encyclical "Laudato si", reminds us that through them "God speaks to us and they reflect a little bit His beauty and kindness: Through the greatness and beauty of creation we are able to know, by analogy, its creator" (LS 12), and "His eternal power and divinity are visible through His works, since the creation of the world" (Rm. 1,20), (LS 12). Benedict XVI, on the occasion of the International Congress of Pastoral Tourism in Cancun (Mexico), pointed out that the "Via Pulchritudinis" (beauty's way) is an evangelizing tool for tourism. It is necessary for us to admirer and contemplate in awe, to be able to pass from nature to creation. It is important to capture the love's message the Creator placed in his creation. Furthermore, the creation is the place of His presence (LS 88).

On the other hand, the environment we have and enjoy is everyone's patrimony, of the ones living here as well as the visitors. All of us must take care of and protect it. Sometimes it seems as we, the human beings, perceive only the language of our immediate interests, of our own satisfaction or of our consumeristic attitudes. In opposition to these, Pope Francis invites us to develop not only the *"ecologic virtues"* but to live what he calls the *"ecologic spirituality",* as people who sanctify ourselves in every activity, including those that ere lived with an "evangelical sense" in our everyday environment. (GE 28).

I would also like to point out that, besides the natural landscape that we just have emphasized, our land possesses also a very rich human landscape that is visible through the whole year ,but in a very especial way during our Fiestas, many of them celebrated during the summer months. We, the people of this land, are very sociable, especially on the occasion of our *"Fiestas";* all of them –in one way or the other- are rooted in our Christian faith, inherited from the faith and piety of our ancestors, and from their creativity and joyfulness. Please, get to know and enjoy our Fiestas, they

are an exponent of our devotions and traditions, they reflect a kind of people that, at the same way as they love their work and natural initiative, they also love to show their feelings and share their happiness. We open the doors to you.

Finally, I would like to express my desire   that the richness or our relationships be always filled of affection and mutual respect. The tourists bring to us, among other things, prosperity and liveliness, at the same time you receive, besides our culture and traditions, the attention and services that you need for your well deserved rest. It is important that we keep our mutual gratefulness and fraternal behavior to each other. In a very especial way I would also like not to forget those   who spend the summer time working   so   hard, some times in difficult situations, so that others could enjoy tourism, or simply   rest. For them our especial gratitude.

May the Blessed Mary, Mother of our Lord and our Mother, intercede for us, so that we have a pleasant and restful summer.

Happy holy days! Happy summer to all!

✠ **The Most Reverend Jesús Murgui Soriano.**
Bishop of Orihuela-Alicante.