



His Holiness Pope Francis  
Sua Santità Francesco  
Casa Santa Marta  
00120 Città del Vaticano

31 March 2021

Your Holiness,

Greetings from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), our international affiliates, and our combined millions of supporters around the world. Thank you for your message for Lent, in which you said, “The time of Lent is made for hope, to turn our gaze to the patience of God, who continues to take care of his Creation, while we have often mistreated it.”

We respectfully ask you to go further by making it clear to all that the ways in which animals are abused on factory farms and inside slaughterhouses in today’s meat industry are un-Christian. Sensitive beings are [branded](#) and castrated, [parts of their beaks are chopped off](#), [their sensitive horn tissue is carved out of their heads](#), [metal pipes are rammed down their throats](#), and they are denied everything that’s natural and important to them. They are [beaten](#), [kicked](#), [sexually assaulted](#), tossed [around](#), and – scared out of their wits – [shocked with electric prods](#) to force them onto the lorries bound for the slaughterhouse, where [their throats will be slit](#).

As you know, St Francis of Paola took a vow of non-violence, as part of which he refused to eat animals or take from them what was theirs, such as eggs or milk. He asked his followers to do the same. We are told that God rewarded Francis’ faith in Him with the gifts of prophecy, healing, and miracle working and that Francis used them to help animals as well as humans. Often accompanied by a lamb he called Martinello, Francesco resurrected him after some workers stole him to eat him during the construction of the Monastery. For this reason, the saint is often depicted in the company of a lamb. St Francis of Paola and the Minims were some of the earliest ethical vegans.

Today, many of the faithful seem to celebrate Easter by spending the morning singing of the Lamb of God, only to celebrate the killing of a lamb later that day to fulfill their desire to eat flesh. With encouragement from Your Holiness, Christians will spend this Easter rejoicing in Jesus’ triumph over death by showing reverence for life. As Your Holiness wrote in *Laudato Si’: On Care of Our Common Home*, “We are not God. ... [W]e must forcefully reject the notion that our being created in God’s image and given dominion over the earth justifies absolute domination over other creatures.” Please, Your Holiness, encourage Christians to reject the domination, oppression, and abuse that are the hallmarks of the violent and cruel animal agriculture industry.

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PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL  
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Cannon Place, 78 Cannon Street,  
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Registered in England and Wales  
as charity number 1056453,  
company number 3135903.

#### Affiliates

- PETA US
- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands



Respectfully yours,



Ingrid Newkirk  
Founder  
PETA

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