

TERRA MALA

Journey into the Land of Fires



With the exhibition "Terra Mala: Journey into the Land of Fires," the Tridentine Diocesan Museum opens a reflection on an environmentally relevant theme, **seemingly** distant from the aims of an ecclesiastical museum, which typically deals almost exclusively with historical and artistic heritage. As Pope Francis states in the **encyclical** Laudato Si', "When we speak of the environment, we also refer to a particular relationship: that between nature and the society that inhabits it. This prevents us from considering nature as something separate from us or as a mere **backdrop** to our lives. We are included in it, we are part of it, and we are intertwined with it." In its vibrant, dynamic, and **participatory** sense, culture is an integral part of this relationship, an indispensable starting point in analyzing the relationship between humans and the environment.

For these reasons, the Diocesan Museum has chosen to exhibit for the first time to the public "Terra Mala: Journey into the Land of Fires," a reportage by Stefano Schirato, a photographer engaged for years in an extensive project on the link between pollution and **diseases** caused by unhealthy environmental conditions. The artist - already known internationally for his effective collaborations with publications such as The New York Times, CNN, Vanity Fair, Al Jazeera, Le Figaro, and National Geographic - has selected forty iconic images for the Diocesan exhibition that expose the degradation of the "Land of Fires." In this area, for over thirty years, millions of tons of toxic waste have been illegally dumped, causing the largest environmental disaster in Italy. The consequences on the **soil**, agricultural products, **aquifers**, but above all on the population, have been devastating.

Thanks to the valuable assistance of Father Maurizio Patriciello - parish priest of San Paolo at Parco Verde di Caivano and one of the main **activists** in the area - Stefano Schirato has collected the testimonies of those citizens who fight **to ensure** that the poisoning of the "Land of Fires" is not forgotten. He has met and photographed dozens of families aware of the risks to their health, who have opened their doors to him. He has portrayed the abandonment of the territory, authorized nomad camps on piles of garbage, **illegal landfills**, and piles of underground poisons just meters from homes.

GLOSSARY

Seemingly: If something is seemingly the case, you mean that it appears to be the case, even though it may not really be so.

Encyclical: A papal letter sent to all bishops of the Roman Catholic Church, in this context referencing Pope Francis' letter on environmental issues.

Backdrop: background.

Participatory: Involving active participation or engagement from individuals.

Disease: an unhealthy condition in a person, animal, or plant which is caused by bacteria or infection.

Soil: in the sense of earth.

Aquifers: Underground layers of water-bearing rock that supply wells and springs.

Activists: Individuals who actively campaign to bring about social or political change.

To ensure: in the sense of make certain.

Illegal landfills: Sites where waste is disposed of in an unauthorized or prohibited manner.