

## Young girl begins fundraising for John Paul II Great Green Wall Forest

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[United States](#)

August 24, 2020



A young girl from the United States is seeking funds in growing a forest of 100,000 trees along 8,000km across the African continent, from Dakar to Djibouti.

"Each tree is US\$10. Please think of it as an eternal and life-giving candle. A candle in a Church will burn for a few hours and then die. But a tree will grow and offer hope for many generations," says Vivienne Harr.

Each tree is US\$10, which includes the cost of the seedling, its planting, care, the digging of wells, community education and the care of migrants and refugees, through the John Paul II Foundation and the International Catholic Migration Commission, she said in the fundraiser appeal.

The forest is to be named Pope John Paul II Great Green Wall Forest.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of St. Pope John Paul's first pastoral journey to Africa, during which he from the Cathedral of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, raised the alarm regarding the plight of people of the Sahel region devastated by drought.

"From here, from the middle of one of these countries we can call the countries of thirst, may I be allowed to launch to everybody, in Africa and beyond this continent, a solemn appeal not to close our eyes to what's happening in the Sahelian region", John Paul said.

Pope Francis in May has also lauded her initiative for the 'Laudato Tree' Initiative to grow the forest.

"I congratulate the group of young people for the launch of the 'Laudato Tree' Initiative", he said explaining that "The aim is to plant at least one million trees throughout the region of the Sahel, which will become part of the "Great Green Wall of Africa".

The Sahel region lies between Sudan's Savanna to the south and the Sahara Desert to the north, across West and Central Africa. It has long experienced terrible droughts that have had an adverse impact on the local environment, society and people.

The 'Laudato Tree' Initiative is a response to Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* and aims be a living and life-giving expression of that letter.

It is an initiative of young people, begun in the United States, in solidarity with the youth of the Sahel.

It is led by 16-year-old Vivienne Harr, who at the age 8 made national headlines when she began to make homemade lemonade to combat child slavery across the world.

Vivienne, with the help of her boyfriend, Sidney Diosdado, 17, have created a website [www.laudatotree.org](http://www.laudatotree.org) to help drive the initiative.

While Vivienne has chosen to champion Africa's Great Green Wall to combat desertification her brother, Turner Harr, 10, is an Associate Producer on the award-winning feature documentary 'The Great Green Wall' by Make Waves Productions.

The 'wall' when complete, will traverse 11 countries of the Sahel.

The project was formally adopted by the African Union in 2007 and is supported by the United Nations.

The concept of the Great Green Wall was first developed in the mid-1980s by Thomas Sankara, president of Burkina Faso from 1983 to 1987.

In 1984 the papal foundation, the John Paul II Foundation for the Sahel, was established.

Vivienne has chosen to work with the John Paul II Foundation for the Sahel that is committed to helping Africa grow the Great Green Wall through the engagement of its youth and local communities in the Sahel.

The aim of Vivienne's movement is to inspire young people, beginning in the United States, to support the youth of the Sahel in growing at least 1,000,000 trees on the Great Green Wall.