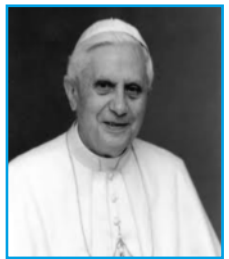


The Popes and Care For Creation



“Respect for life and for the dignity of the human person extends also to the rest of creation, which is called to join man in praising God. We show our respect for our Creator by our care for His creation.....The danger of serious damage to land and sea, and to the climate, flora and fauna, calls for a profound change in modern civilisation’s typical consumer life-style, particularly in the richer countries”. Pope John Paul II

“The ecological crisis shows the urgency of a solidarity which embraces time and space....A great sense of intergenerational solidarity is urgently needed. Future generations cannot be saddled



with the cost of our use of common environmental resources The ecological problem must be dealt with – not only because of the chilling prospects of environmental degradation on the horizon; (but) the real motivation must be the quest for authentic world-wide solidarity, inspired by the values of charity, justice and the common good”.

“The protection of the environment, of resources and of the climate obliges all international leaders, to act jointly and to show a readiness to work in good faith, respecting the law and promoting solidarity with the weakest regions of the planet” Pope Benedict XVI



“Let us be renewed by God’s mercy... let us enable the power of his love to transform our lives too; and let us become agents of this mercy, channels through which God can water the earth, protect all creation and make justice and peace flourish.”
Pope Francis

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Society of African Missions (SMA)



**Living Faith
Means
Living Justly**

**Care for Creation
Teaching of the Church**

Teaching of the Church on Care of Creation



1. God Himself created the visible world in all its richness, diversity and order.... Each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection....all are interdependent. There is "solidarity" among all creatures. Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1993: Numbers 337-344. Cf. also Saint Francis of Assisi: *Canticle of the Creatures*

2. The human person is superior to all other earthly creatures, being endowed with intelligence, free-will and an eternal destiny. The dignity of the human person is rooted in his or her creation in the image and likeness of God. Hence, nature is not to be put above the dignity of the human person. cf. Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church 2005; No.:358. Gaudium et Spes Number 46; 1052.



3. Humans have been made stewards of creation, and they must act responsibly. Nature must not be reduced to being a mere instrument to be manipulated and exploited. The greater man's power becomes (as a result of science and technology), the greater the need to ensure "proper application" for humanity's progress - and not degradation. Hence, the importance for scientists to "truly use their research and technical

skill in the service of humanity".... being able to subordinate them "to moral principles and values, which respect and realize in its fullness, the dignity of man". Pope John Paul II. Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church 2004: No. 458; Gaudium et Spes Number 1053

4. Programmes of economic development must take into account "the integrity and cycles of nature, because natural resources are limited and some are not renewable". The needs for economic development must be balanced with those of environmental protection. Cf. Compendium on the Social Doctrine of the Church 2004: No. 470.



5. Our responsibility for caring for creation extends to future generations. This responsibility also concerns individual States and international community. Cf. Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church 2004: No. 467.

6. As care for creation entails the entire planet, collaboration on an international level is required to control activities that have a negative

effect on the environment, and to protect the common good. This collaboration should be expressed in a binding juridical framework, which will include sanctions. Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church No. 468



7. Concern for creation implies that we should actively work for the integral development of the poorest regions of our world. The principle of the universal destiny of goods offers a fundamental orientation to deal with the complex relationship between ecology and poverty. *The option for the poor* means ensuring that proposed solutions to environmental problems do not end up in consigning millions of people to permanent poverty, while enriching - even further - privileged individuals and nations. cf. Compendium of the Social Doctrine: No 481- 485. Gaudium et Spes Number 69

8. A change of life-style and mentality is required. To build a just society will mean "making important changes in established life-styles, in order to limit the waste of environmental and human resources, thus enabling every individual and all the people of the earth, to have a sufficient share of these resources" (Cf. John Paul II: Encyclical *Centesimus Annus* 1991: 36). These new life-styles should have as



important components, "the quest for truth, beauty, goodness and communion with others, and should be the factors in determining consumer choices, savings and investments. These lifestyles should be inspired by sobriety, temperance and self-discipline at both the individual and social levels". Cf. Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church: 2004: No. 486

9. A spiritual response will accompany the change of life-style and mentality. The fundamental orientation toward the created world will be one of awe, respect and gratitude. The world, in fact, will lead people back to the mystery of God, and to an understanding of His creative action. Without Him, nature is emptied of its deepest meaning; it is left impoverished. Cf. Compendium on the Social Doctrine of the Church: 2004: No. 487.

