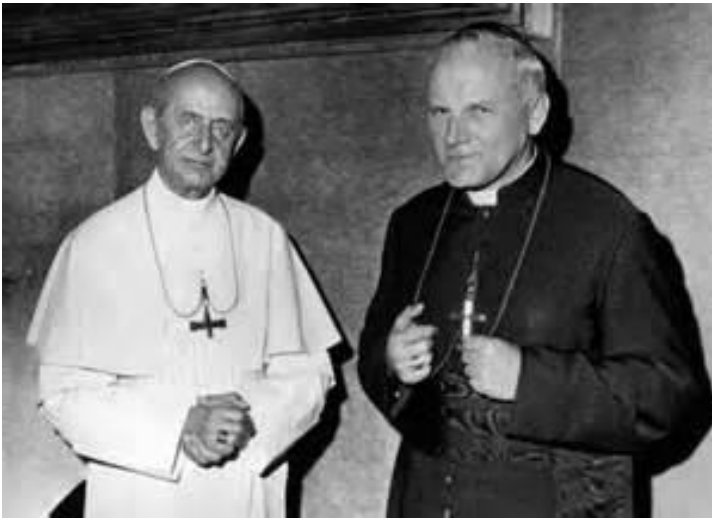


CST tradition on human dignity, human development and human ecology:

Papal statements



Paul VI



1967. (Encyclical) *Populorum Progressio*, nn.22-28. Being stewards of creation is not limited to 'using' the earth's resources, but to complete and perfect God's work. Goods of the earth are for all.

1971. (Apostolic Exhortation) *Octogesima Adveniens*, nn.9 + 21. Irrational exploitation of nature is not only damaging the environment, but it is also a serious human social problem.

1972. Message to the Conference on the Environment, Stockholm, June: We need to preserve, improve and hand over to future generations a healthy environment in which every person is truly at home. Creation is a common good, the use of its resources should benefit the whole human family.

1977. Message for the 5th World Day of the Environment: Praises the UN effort for the protection of the environment. Calls for a change of mentality and a conversion of attitude: more simplicity of life-styles, intelligent conservation of resources, less use and more share of earth's good by the rich. Since all Creation is good and for all people, it must be shared for the common good.

John Paul II



- **1979.** (Encyclical) *Redemptor Hominis*, nn. 8.15.16. Carefully relates the fundamental doctrines of **creation and redemption** to present-day environmental problems.
- **1986.** (Encyclical) *Dominum et Vivificantem*, n.50. The Incarnation of Christ has a **cosmic significance**, since in it the Son of God unites himself with all 'flesh', meaning the whole of humanity and the entire visible and material world.
- **1987.** (Encyclical) *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, nn.26-34. Views positively the increase of an '**ecological concern**', i.e. the greater realisation of the **limits** of available resources, and of the need to respect the integrity and the cycles of nature and to take them into account when planning for development, rather than sacrificing them to certain demagogic ideas about the latter.

Integral and authentic development comprises the human vocation of people, created in the image and likeness of God. The fact that humans are '**masters**' called to 'dominate the earth' means they need '**to cultivate the garden**', or 'to build cities' or develop their skills, in accordance to the Creator's will, and respecting God's gift.

John Paul II



1990. 'Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All Creation', World Peace Day, 1 January

Peace is threatened by disrespect of nature and collective selfishness. **Destroying environmental harmony is a sin**, since it alienates humans from themselves and from the earth.

Emphasises the 'relationship' between humanity and the rest of creation, which needs to be nurtured with love and wisdom. **The environmental crisis is more than scientific and technological; it is fundamentally moral**, and complex.

Addressing it requires respect for all life, especially the dignity of the human person. Given it is a **cosmic issue**, an inter-disciplinary approach is mandatory to preserve our common heritage: the earth, for the benefit of all.

Environmental responsibility should be shared by all nations, for which a **novel understanding of solidarity** is required, one that can address the structural forms of poverty worldwide through courageous structural reforms, as well as new ways of relating among peoples and States. **Environmental education** plays a fundamental role, especially in the family.

John Paul II



- **1991.** (Encyclical) *Centesimus Annus* nn.37-38. Humans must **respect** the original **purpose of creation**, entrusted to him by God. Creation has a natural and a moral structure. Hence, as stewards we must safeguard both **natural and human ecology**.
- **1994.** (Bull of Indiction) *Incarnationis Misterium*, n.12. We must accept responsibility for the development of an economic model that serves the good of all, which needs the participation of all sectors of society and a conversion of heart through a change of life.
- **1994.** (Apostolic Letter). *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, nn. 13.46. Among signs of hopes we can find scientific technological progress and **awareness of environmental responsibility**, alongside efforts for restoring peace and justice wherever they are violated.
- **1995.** (Encyclical) *Evangelium Vitae* n.42. Humans are subject **to moral laws** to **be responsible** towards our environment.

John Paul II



- **1995.** (Apostolic Letter) *Orientale Lumen*, n.11. Recognises the contribution of the Oriental Churches to the one Church of Christ, in particular the relationship between **liturgical prayer and the cosmic reality of creation**.
- **1998.** (Encyclical) *Fides et Ratio*. Disoriented **ethical consciences** call for a philosophical and theological **organic and morally coherent vision** that can allow persons to tackle effectively the many problems related to **peace, justice, the family, the defence of life and the natural environment**.
- **1999.** (Apostolic Exhortation). *Ecclesia in America*, nn.20.25. Questions the effect of the **globalisation process**. Call for equality and unity and the **conversion** of selfish **attitudes and lifestyles** which lead to the depletion of natural resources (e.g. Amazonian forest).
- **1999.** (Apostolic Exhortation). *Ecclesia in Asia*, n.41. Concern for the **balance of the ecosystem**. Denounces the disrespect for the environment as a consequence of immediate use and **consumption in an unbridled desire for profit**. Stresses the **responsibility of leaders**: politicians and business people, and calls for the **participation** of young people.

John Paul II



- 2000. (General Audience, 26/1): **Kinship with the earth** and the need for **ecological conversion**: ‘if nature is not violated, it once again becomes [our] sister.’
- 2001. (Apostolic Letter). *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, n.51. We cannot ‘remain indifferent to the prospect of an ecological crisis which is making vast areas of our planet uninhabitable and hostile to humanity.’
- 2001. (Apostolic Exhortation). *Ecclesia in Oceania*. Nn.28.31. Emphasises the **beauty of creation**. Recognises the example of **indigenous people** who still live in harmony with nature and with one another.

Benedict XVI



2007

'The Human Person, the Heart of Peace'

World Peace Day, 1 January

Natural ecology, human/social ecology coexist (e.g. energy supply and prices). Development is not restricted to a technical-economic dimension, it is also **moral**-religious.

Benedict XVI



2008 'The Human Family, a Community of Peace'

World Peace Day, 1 January

Draws an analogy between **family life**, which needs a home so as to build relationships of **solidarity** among its members (justice and peace among siblings, role of authority through parents, loving concern for the weakest members), and the social planetary human family.

For human family, the earth is our **common home**, created by God and entrusted to us to be protected and cultivated with responsible freedom. As **stewards** of creation, the **responsibility** towards creation applies to the house (earth), and especially to humanity, in particular the poor. A global agreement on a **sustainable model of development** - capable of ensuring the wellbeing of all while respecting environmental balances - is critical. To promote such a **dialogue** and **act** in harmony, costs of environmental protection should be justly distributed, taking into account the different levels of development and technological advancement of countries. Foundational **ethical shared values** (based on natural law) are also needed to respond effectively, through **law** (juridical and moral), to the requirements of a **common good**.

Benedict XVI

2009 (Encyclical) *Caritas in Veritate*, Chapter IV:
The Development of People, Rights and Duties,
The Environment, (nn. 43-52).



- Nature has its own ‘**grammar**’ which sets forth ends and criteria for its wise use, not its reckless exploitation’ (n.48)
- **Duties** set a limit on **rights**: common good and reciprocal duties
- Population growth: inalienable values of **life and the family**
- Economics need people-centred ethics: **humane market society**
- Human activity: based on **human dignity**
- Human development: **person** at the centre, in solidarity
- Responsibility towards the **poor** and **future generations**
- Responsible use of goods to satisfy our legitimate needs
- **Human ecology** correctly understood: nature and culture
- ‘The way humanity treats the environment influences the way it treats itself, and vice versa’ (n.51)
- New lifestyles; new policies; new dialogue
- Moral education
- Energy problem: redistribution of energy resources and renewable energy