

MAKE ME AN INSTRUMENT OF YOUR PEACE

Care for God's creation

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Last in a series

We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. Perhaps a first memory of a creation story is from Genesis or Matthew 6:26 "Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them."

Is life this simple?

Pope Saint John Paul II's 1990 World Day of Peace message is: "When man turns his back on the Creator's plan, he provokes a disorder which has inevitable repercussions on the rest of the created order. If man is not at peace with God, then earth itself cannot be at peace: 'Therefore the land mourns and all who dwell in it languish, and also the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and even the fish of the sea are taken away' (Hos 4:3)."

This can be confusing.

In one passage (Matthew), the birds do not sow or reap yet the heavenly Father feeds them but in Hosea, the birds are taken away when the land mourns.

So, what is this connection between humans and creation - how does one affect

the other?

Let's turn to the popes to see how they explain the connection.

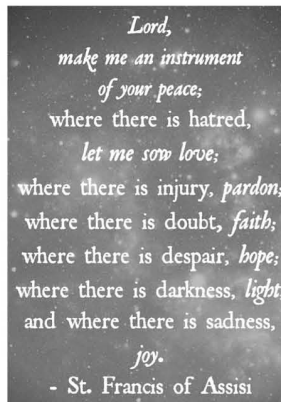
Humans and Nature

Saint John Paul II (*Centesimus Annus*) states: "Not only has God given the earth to man, who must use it with respect for the original good purpose for which it was given to him, but man too is God's gift to man. He must therefore respect the natural and moral structure with which he has been endowed" (No. 38) "We cannot interfere in one area of the ecosystem without paying due attention both to the consequences of such interference in other areas and to the well-being of future generations" (No. 6).

"The seriousness of the ecological issue lays bare the depth of man's moral crisis. If an appreciation of the value of the human person and of human life is lacking, we will also lose interest in others and in the earth itself. Simplicity, moderation and discipline, as well as a spirit of sacrifice, must become a part of everyday life, lest all suffer the negative consequences of the careless habits of a few." (No. 13)

Pope Benedict XVI (*Caritas in Veritate*) states that "Our duties towards the environment are linked to our duties towards the human person, considered in himself and in relation to others. It would be wrong to uphold one set of duties while trampling on the other. Herein lies a grave contradiction in our mentality and practice today: one which demeans the person, disrupts the environment and damages society." (No. 51)

"The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsi-



bility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole. When nature, including the human being, is viewed as the result of mere chance or evolutionary determinism, our sense of responsibility wanes." (No. 48)

Human Ecology

We must be careful when caring for the earth that we do not neglect the human person. So, when we hear "Love the Earth, don't give birth" this should be alarming.

Pope Benedict VI (*Caritas in Veritate*) raises this caution: "But it should also be stressed that it is contrary to authentic development to view nature as something more important than the human person...the natural environment is more than raw material to be manipulated at our pleasure; it is a wondrous work of the Creator containing a 'grammar' which sets forth ends and criteria for its wise use, not its reckless exploitation." (No. 48)

"The Church has a responsibility towards creation and she must assert this responsibility in the public sphere. In so doing, she must defend not only earth, water and air as gifts of creation that belong to everyone. She

must above all protect mankind from self-destruction. There is need for what might be called a human ecology, correctly understood. The deterioration of nature is in fact closely connected to the culture that shapes human coexistence: when 'human ecology' is respected within society, environmental ecology also benefits. Just as human virtues are interrelated, such that the weakening of one places others at risk, so the ecological system is based on respect for a plan that affects both the health of society and its good relationship with nature." (No. 51)

"If there is a lack of respect for the right to life and to a natural death, if human conception, gestation and birth are made artificial, if human embryos are sacrificed to research, the conscience of society ends up losing the concept of human ecology and, along with it, that of environmental ecology.

"It is contradictory to insist that future generations respect the natural environment when our educational systems and laws do not help them to respect themselves. The book of nature is one and indivisible: it takes in not only the environment but also life, sexuality, marriage, the family, social relations: in a word, integral human development. Our duties towards the environment are linked to our duties towards the human person, considered in himself and in relation to others. It would be wrong to uphold one set of duties while trampling on the other. Herein lies a grave contradiction in our mentality and practice today: one which demeans the person, disrupts the environment and damages society." (No. 51)

Birth Control and Nature

A connection between humans and nature which many are not aware of is the effects of artificial birth control on our ecosystem. Not only do they pollute the body (class A carcinogen), but once excreted, our waters are polluted and chemically changed.

The environment cannot handle the chemical waste of women taking birth control. Estrogen-filled birth control (pills, patch, etc) enter into our waste water and have horrible effects on the fish population too.

Controlling creation by manipulating reproduction with artificial means, results in nature itself being changed. We must remain open to life, allowing the flow of nature and the circle of life in its natural state.

Overpopulation Myth

Perhaps you've heard the myth that the earth is overpopulated. Population Research Institute has three easy steps to debunk this myth:

<https://www.pop.org/debunking-the-myth-of-overpopulation/>.
Pope Benedict (*Caritas in Veritate*) said that "On this earth there is room for everyone: here the entire human family must have the resources to live with dignity, through the help of nature itself—God's gift to his children—and through hard work and creativity. At the same time we must recognize our grave duty to hand the earth on to future generations in such a condition that they too can worthily inhabit it and continue to cultivate it." (no. 50)

Pope Francis (*Laudato Si*) "Authentic human development has a moral character. It presumes full respect for the human person, but it

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