



Pontiff: Respect God, Respect Nature

Offers Reflection on Protecting Environment

CASTEL GANDOLFO, Italy, AUG. 26, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Where God is respected, so is nature, affirms Benedict XVI.

The Pope said this today at the general audience, which gathered pilgrims in the courtyard of the papal summer residence of Castel Gandolfo.

Noting the gift of nature, and the "phenomena of environmental degradation and natural calamities," the Pontiff recalled the need for mankind to enter into "a correct relation with the environment."

"A new sensitivity to these topics is being developed, which arouses the correct concern of the authorities and of public opinion," he noted, "which is also expressed in the multiplication of meetings at the international level."

Benedict XVI called the earth "a precious gift of the Creator," and said "we must hold ourselves as stewards of his creation."

"From this awareness, the Church considers questions linked to the environment and its safeguarding as profoundly linked with the topic of integral human development," he said.

The Pope explained that he touched on the issue in his most recent encyclical, "Caritas in Veritate." In that document he recalled "the pressing moral need for renewed solidarity" not only for political issues, but also regarding the environment.

"Experiencing the shared responsibility for creation, the Church is not only committed to the promotion of the defense of the earth, of water and of air, given by the Creator to everyone, but above all is committed to protect man from the destruction of himself," the Pontiff explained.

The Pope added that "when 'human ecology' is respected in society, environmental ecology also benefits," noting that "inconsiderate use of creation begins where God is marginalized."

He continued: "Creation, matter structured in an intelligent manner by God, is entrusted to man's responsibility, who is able to interpret and refashion it actively, without regarding himself as the absolute owner.

"Man is called to exercise responsible government to protect it, to obtain benefits and cultivate it, finding the necessary resources for a dignified existence for all."

Benedict XVI said that with a little work and creativity, "humanity is able to assume the grave duty to hand over to the new generations an earth which, in turn, the latter will be able to inhabit worthily and cultivate further."

But, for this to happen, man must act in a way that acknowledges that "we come from God and we are all going back to him.

"Together we can build an integral human development beneficial to present and future peoples, a development inspired by the values of charity in truth," the Pope affirmed. "For this to happen it is indispensable that the present model of global development be transformed through a greater and shared responsibility for creation: This is demanded not only by environmental emergencies, but also by the scandal of hunger and poverty."

ST. AUGUSTINE IN EASTERN AND WESTERN TRADITION

VATICAN CITY, 4 SEP 2009 (VIS) - Made public yesterday afternoon was a Message from Benedict XVI to Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and participants in an inter-Christian symposium on St. Augustine being held in Rome from 3 to 5 September.

The symposium has been promoted by the Franciscan Institute of Spirituality at Rome's Antonianum Pontifical Athenaeum, and by the Orthodox Theological Faculty of the University of Aristotle in Salonika, Greece.

In his Message the Pope notes how the theme chosen for the meeting - "St. Augustine in Western and Eastern Tradition" which is being examined in co-operation with the Augustinianum Patristic Institute in Rome - is of "great interest" and may "promote more profound study of Christian theology and spirituality in East and West".

"The saint of Hippo, a great Father of the Latin Church, is of fundamental importance for the theology and for the very culture of the West", writes the Holy Father, noting how "the reception of his ideas in Orthodox theology has proved to be somewhat problematic. Hence, it is indispensable to understand - with historical objectivity and fraternal cordiality - the doctrinal and spiritual wealth that form the heritage of the Christian East and West, not only to evaluate them better, but also to promote greater mutual appreciation among all Christians".

Benedict XVI concludes his Message by expressing the hope that the symposium may prove fruitful in "discovering common doctrinal and spiritual ground which may help to build the City of God where His children can live in peace and fraternal charity".

MESS/INTER-CHRISTIAN SYMPOSIUM/KASPER

VIS 090904 (280)