



## **Pope Notes Secret to Effective Planet-Saving**

Says Key Is Recognizing Role of Creator

BRESSANONE, Italy, AUG. 20, 2008 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI says initiatives to save the planet are only effective if they are based on the awareness that creation begins with God.

The Pope affirmed this Aug. 6 when he met with priests, deacons and seminarians of the Diocese of Bolzano-Bressanone and answered in German six questions they asked him. The Holy Father was on vacation in the Dolomites, where he stayed at the major seminary of Bressanone.

The director of the Institute for Justice, Peace and the Preservation of Creation, Father Karl Golser, asked the Holy Father how to increase a sense of responsibility for creation among Christian communities, and how to view creation and redemption as more closely united.

The Pontiff affirmed that he thinks the "indissoluble bond" between creation and redemption "should be given new prominence."

"In recent decades the doctrine of creation had almost disappeared from theology; it was almost imperceptible," he contended. "We are now aware of the damage that this has caused. [...] If we do not proclaim God in his full grandeur -- as Creator and as Redeemer -- we also diminish the value of the redemption."

Benedict XVI added that "it is he, the Creator himself, who did and can enter into history and operate in it precisely because he is the God of the whole and not only of a part. If we recognize this it will obviously follow that the redemption, being Christian, and simply Christian faith, also means responsibility always and everywhere with regard to creation."

Subduing the earth

The Pope recalled that more than two decades ago, an accusation against Christians was floated, which said that those truly responsible for the destruction of creation are those who adhere to Genesis and God's command to "subdue the earth."

The opposite is actually the case, the Holy Father affirmed. "As long as the earth was seen as God's creation, the task of 'subduing' it was never intended as an order to enslave it, but rather as the task of being guardians of creation and developing its gifts; of actively collaborating in God's work ourselves, in the evolution that he ordered in the world so that the gifts of creation might be appreciated rather than trampled upon and destroyed."

"The brutal consumption of creation begins where God is not, where matter is henceforth only material for us, where we ourselves are the ultimate demand, where the whole is merely our property and we consume it for ourselves alone," he added. "And the wasting of creation begins when we no longer recognize any need superior to our own, but see only ourselves. It begins when there is no longer any concept of life beyond death, where in this life we must grab hold of everything and possess life as intensely as possible, where we must possess all that is possible to possess.

"I think, therefore, that true and effective initiatives to prevent the waste and destruction of creation can be implemented and developed, understood and lived, only where creation is considered as beginning with God."

Finally, the Bishop of Rome encouraged his listeners to present the teachings of the faith in public, availing of prevailing concern for the future of the planet.

However, he added, the key is that "we ourselves find a new way of living, a discipline of making sacrifices, a discipline of the recognition of others to whom creation belongs as much as it belongs to us who may more easily make use of it; a discipline of responsibility with regard to the future of others and to our own future, because it is a responsibility in the eyes of the One who is our judge and as such is also redeemer but, truly, also our judge."