

Pope Warns Against Ignoring Creator's Plan

Says Humanity Is Threatened by Social Wounds

SYDNEY, Australia, JULY 17, 2008 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Just as there are environmental wounds in nature, there are also wounds in society that threaten the purpose for which humanity was created, says Benedict XVI.

The Pope said this today at the World Youth Day welcoming celebration at Barangaroo in Sydney on Thursday afternoon local time. The youth day celebrations will culminate Sunday with a closing Mass at Randwick Racecourse.

The Holy Father began with a reflection of the natural beauty of Australia, which "evokes a profound sense of awe."

"It is as though one catches glimpses of the Genesis creation story -- light and darkness, the sun and the moon, the waters, the earth, and living creatures," he added, "all of which are 'good' in God's eyes."

"At the heart of the marvel of creation," the Pontiff affirmed, "are you and I, the human family 'crowned with glory and honor.'"

The Pontiff said that just as there are "scars" that mark the earth -- "erosion, deforestation, the squandering of the world's mineral and ocean resources in order to fuel an insatiable consumption" -- there are also "wounds indicating that something is amiss" in our social environment.

"Here too, in our personal lives and in our communities, we can encounter a hostility, something dangerous; a poison which threatens to corrode what is good, reshape who we are, and distort the purpose for which we have been created," he said.

Benedict XVI gave as examples alcohol and drug abuse, violence, and sexual degradation, which are "often presented through television and the Internet as entertainment."

Relativism

The Pope continued, "There is also something sinister which stems from the fact that freedom and tolerance are so often separated from truth. This is fuelled by the notion, widely held today, that there are no absolute truths to guide our lives.

"Relativism, by indiscriminately giving value to practically everything, has made 'experience' all-important. Yet, experiences, detached from any consideration of what is good or true, can lead, not to genuine freedom, but to moral or intellectual confusion, to a lowering of standards, to a loss of self-respect, and even to despair."

Life, the Holy Father said, is not random: "Your very existence has been willed by God, blessed and given a purpose!"

He said we have freedom and we make choices so that we can "search for the true, the good and the beautiful."

"It is in this -- in truth, in goodness, and in beauty -- that we find happiness and joy"; the Pontiff said. "Do not be fooled by those who see you as just another consumer in a market of undifferentiated possibilities, where choice itself becomes the good, novelty

usurps beauty, and subjective experience displaces truth.

"Christ offers more! Indeed he offers everything! Only he who is the Truth can be the Way and hence also the Life."

Secularism

"There are many today who claim that God should be left on the sidelines," Benedict XVI continued, "and that religion and faith, while fine for individuals, should either be excluded from the public forum altogether or included only in the pursuit of limited pragmatic goals."

"This secularist vision seeks to explain human life and shape society with little or no reference to the Creator," he said. "It presents itself as neutral, impartial and inclusive of everyone. But in reality, like every ideology, secularism imposes a worldview. "If God is irrelevant to public life, then society will be shaped in a godless image, and debate and policy concerning the public good will be driven more by consequences than by principles grounded in truth."

The Pope said that experience proves that "turning our back on the Creator's plan provokes a disorder which has inevitable repercussions on the rest of the created order."

"When God is eclipsed," he explained, "our ability to recognize the natural order, purpose, and the 'good' begins to wane. What was ostensibly promoted as human ingenuity soon manifests itself as folly, greed and selfish exploitation."

Dignity

The Pontiff asked, "Do we recognize that the innate dignity of every individual rests on his or her deepest identity -- as image of the Creator -- and therefore that human rights are universal, based on the natural law, and not something dependent upon negotiation or patronage, let alone compromise?"

"And so we are led to reflect on what place the poor and the elderly, immigrants and the voiceless, have in our societies," he continued. "How can it be that domestic violence torments so many mothers and children? How can it be that the most wondrous and sacred human space -- the womb -- has become a place of unutterable violence?"

"God's creation is one and it is good," said Benedict XVI.

"Our world has grown weary of greed, exploitation and division, of the tedium of false idols and piecemeal responses, and the pain of false promises," he continued.

"Our hearts and minds are yearning for a vision of life," the Pontiff affirmed, "where love endures, where gifts are shared, where unity is built, where freedom finds meaning in truth, and where identity is found in respectful communion."