

## **True Environmentalists Are Pro-Life, Says Pope**

### **Affirms Ecology Issue Should Be Set in Larger Framework**

VATICAN CITY, JAN. 11, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI says efforts to protect the environment cannot be opposed to human life and safeguarding the dignity of the person.

The Pope took up this theme today when he delivered his traditional New Year address to the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See.

The Holy Father's address for 2010 centered on the issue of respect for creation and the environment, the same theme he highlighted in his Jan. 1 World Day of Peace message.

He noted not humanity in this new year "continues to be marked by the dramatic crisis of the global economy and consequently a serious and widespread social instability."

The "deeper causes" of this situation, the Pontiff contended, "are to be found in a current self-centered and materialistic way of thinking which fails to acknowledge the limitations inherent in every creature."

This same way of thinking, Benedict XVI proposed, also endangers creation.

He explained: "Each of us could probably cite an example of the damage that this has caused to the environment the world over. I will offer an example, from any number of others, taken from the recent history of Europe. Twenty years ago, after the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of the materialistic and atheistic regimes which had for several decades dominated a part of this continent, was it not easy to assess the great harm which an economic system lacking any reference to the truth about man had done not only to the dignity and freedom of individuals and peoples, but to nature itself, by polluting soil, water and air? The denial of God distorts the freedom of the human person, yet it also devastates creation.

"It follows that the protection of creation is not principally a response to an aesthetic need, but much more to a moral need, in as much as nature expresses a plan of love and truth which is prior to us and which comes from God."

The Pope said because of this, he shares the "growing concern" caused by "economic and political resistance to combatting the degradation of the environment."

"The issue is all the more important in that the very future of some nations is at stake, particularly some island states," he said.

Great challenges

Nevertheless, the Bishop of Rome affirmed that concern and commitment for the environment "should be situated within the larger framework of the great challenges now facing mankind."

"If we wish to build true peace," he said, "how can we separate, or even set at odds, the protection of the environment and the protection of human life, including the life of the unborn? It is in man's respect for himself that his sense of responsibility for creation is shown."

Citing St. Thomas Aquinas, the Holy Father said that "man represents all that is most noble in the universe."

"Furthermore," he affirmed, "as I noted during the recent FAO World Summit on Food Security, 'the world has enough food for all its inhabitants' provided that selfishness does not lead some to hoard the goods which are intended for all."