

Vatican Sums Up Christian Vision of Creation

Publishes 10 Commandments of the Environment

By Inmaculada Álvarez

VATICAN CITY, JUNE 5, 2008 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Showing its support for the U.N.-sponsored World Environment Day, the Vatican has released the Ten Commandments of the environment, inspired by the Christian vision of creation.

Bishop Giampaolo Crepaldi, secretary of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, presented the 10 points on the opening day of Milan's first festival of the environment, which began Wednesday.

The secretary told Vatican Radio today that the document is an attempt "to explain in 10 points the most important aspects of the chapter on the environment in the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church."

He added that is an effort to enlighten Christian communities, groups and movements on "the very rich social magisterium of the Church on the specific question of the environment and its protection."

Bishop Crepaldi expressed his appreciation for the U.N.'s initiative in establishing the world day, although he commented that this year's theme -- "Toward a Low Carbon Economy" -- should take other variables into account, involving the relationship between the rich and poor world.

"The objective and perspective delineated by the social magisterium of the Church, confirmed many times by [Benedict XVI], is that of a just and unified economy. It is good to decrease the rate of carbon, but it is also necessary to add other things," he continued.

Reality check

In regard to the debate on the use of alternative energies, the prelate encouraged the development of the latter. "However, one must be realistic, given that at present it is not possible to sustain the existing economic systems solely with alternative energies."

The Vatican official said an answer must be given to "the poverty and underdevelopment of so many areas of the planet, and when we speak of underdevelopment, we are speaking of millions and millions of poor, of people who have nothing."

Regarding the will of the international community to reduce carbon emissions in order to combat global warming, Bishop Crepaldi said that it is a "very complex and controversial" issue, which calls for "greater commitment at the scientific level" to "clarify the terms of this issue, in an effort to evaluate the long-term effects."

He noted the need for greater commitment "from the political point of view, because the policies implemented by governments to control so-called global warming are policies that are difficult to sustain from the economic point of view; they are too costly. Both scientists as well as politicians, evidently with the participation of civil society, must continue to work in this field."

On nuclear energy the bishop clarified that the Church "condemns its military use," but has "no objection to its civil use."

"Evidently, we are faced with a very delicate issue," said Bishop Crepaldi, "because in this case we have a cultural and political problem when it is stated that nuclear energy will be used for civil needs, but in reality, some are planning to use it for military objectives."