

Catholic Social Teachings

THE PRINCIPLE OF CARE FOR CREATION



13th Principle of Catholic Social Teaching

“We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God’s creation.”

USCCB

Scriptural Reference

“How varied are your works, LORD! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures” *PS104:24*.

Homily Hints

“The seventh commandment enjoins respect for the integrity of creation. Animals, like plants and inanimate beings, are by nature destined for the common good of past, present, and future humanity. Use of the mineral, vegetable, and animal resources of the universe cannot be divorced from respect for moral imperatives. Man’s dominion over inanimate and other living beings granted by the Creator is not absolute; it is limited by concern for the quality of life of his neighbor, including generations to come; it requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation” *Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2415*.

“I willingly join in spirit all who are grateful to the Lord for the fruits of the earth and the work of human hands, renewing the pressing invitation to respect the natural environment, a precious resource entrusted to our stewardship.”
Pope Benedict XVI

“The environment must be seen as God’s gift to all people, and the use we make of it entails a shared responsibility for all humanity, especially the poor and future generations.” *Pope Benedict XVI*

“An economy respectful of the environment will NOT have the maximization of profits as its only objective, because environmental protection cannot be assured solely on the basis of financial calculations of costs and benefits.” *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*

“I should like to address directly my brothers and sisters in the Catholic Church, in order to remind them of their serious obligation to care for all of creation. The commitment of believers to a healthy environment for everyone stems directly from their belief in God the Creator...”
St. John Paul II

Prayer Intentions

We pray that the planet’s resources will not be plundered, but shared in a just and respectful manner. —*Let us pray to the Lord...*

That we may take good care of creation—a gift freely given—cultivating and protecting it for future generations. —*Let us pray to the Lord...*

You touch the mountains, and they smoke: help us to seek your wisdom in the natural world and care for your creatures. —*Let us pray to the Lord...*

Open our eyes to the beauty, strength, and fragility of the natural world. —*Let us pray to the Lord...*

Help us to understand, address, and meet the challenges of climate change and weather disasters. —*Let us pray to the Lord...*



Work of Mercy

Forgive Offenses

Have we severed our relationship with creation? Ask for forgiveness, make reparations, and the relationship will be repaired.

Pray

September 1 is the World Day of Prayer for Creation. Take the opportunity to pray and fast.

Learn

Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home is Pope Francis's encyclical on ecology. It is a moral document. Read it. Read it again.

Live

"When we fail to acknowledge as part of reality the worth of a poor person, a human embryo, a person with disabilities – to offer just a few examples – it becomes difficult to hear the cry of nature itself; everything is connected." (LS, #116). Recalibrate your life living as though everything is connected.

Bulletin Reflection

The principle of care for creation is one of the five essential concerns of social teaching. "The Church has a responsibility towards creation, and she considers it her duty to exercise that responsibility in public life, in order to protect earth, water and air as gifts of God the Creator meant for everyone, and above all to save mankind from the danger of self-destruction."
Pope Benedict

Creation Prayer

Good and Gracious God, Source of all Life, all creation is charged with your Divine Energy.

Ignite your Spark within us that we may know ourselves as truly human and holy, irrevocably part of the web of Life.

All creation, each star and every flower, each drop of water and every person, each and every atom, down to its very electrons, explodes with the revelation of your Sacred Mystery.

Our minds alone cannot fathom such splendor.

Our hearts can only respond in awe, praise and gratitude.

May we always walk gently upon this earth, in right relationship, nurtured by your love, taking only what we need, giving back to the earth in gratitude, sharing what we have, honoring all with reverence, reconciling and healing, mindful of those who will come after, recognizing our proper place as part of, not apart from, your creation.

Grant us the strength and courage, we pray, for such radical transformation into your kingdom.

Then we, too, with the very stones will shout, "HOSANNA."

Michelle Balek, OSF

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