

WEEK 7: CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

iVoteCatholic: During this seventh week, we focus on Care for God's Creation. Beginning with Pope St. John Paul II through Pope Francis, care for creation has been an integral part of Catholic social teaching. When we do things to protect the earth and care for it, we show reverence for God, the creator of all. Under this principle fall issues such as laws governing corporate and individual use of environmental resources - including land, water, and air - which impact all living things



iVoteCatholic
Care for God's Creation

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth 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. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that direct us to an integral ecology that demands care for the earth and care for the most vulnerable among us.

Find out more about this focus of CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION by checking out these sections.



FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP quotes on CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION



CHURCH TEACHING QUOTES:



SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATIONS:



CONVERSATION STARTERS:



FAMILY ACTIVITY:



RELATED SOCIAL ISSUES:



CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH



RESOURCES FROM CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES AND USCCB

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To read the full text of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, go to <https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/upload/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship.pdf>

excerpts on **CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION**

86. Care for Creation is a moral issue. Protecting the land, water, and air we share is a religious duty of stewardship and reflects our responsibility to born and unborn children, who are most vulnerable to environmental assault. We must answer the question that Pope Francis posed to the world: "What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?" (*Laudato Si'*, no. 160). There are many concrete steps we can take to assure justice and solidarity between the generations. Effective initiatives are required for energy conservation and the development of alternate, renewable, and clean-energy resources. Our Conference offers a distinctive call to seriously address global climate change, focusing on the virtue of prudence, pursuit of the common good, and the impact on the poor, particularly on vulnerable workers and the poorest nations. The United States should lead in contributing to the sustainable development of poorer nations and promoting greater justice in sharing the burden of environmental blight, neglect, and recovery. It is important that we address the rising number of migrants who are uprooted from their homeland as a consequence of environmental degradation and climate change. They are not currently recognized as refugees under any existing international convention and are thus not afforded legal protections that ought to be due to them.



CHURCH TEACHING QUOTES:

"Everything is connected. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love of our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society...we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures." (Pope Francis, **On Care for Our Common Home (Laudato Si)**, 91,92, 93.

Respect for life and for the dignity of the human person extends also to the rest of creation, which is called to join man in praising God. St. John Paul II, January **1990 Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All Creation**, no. 16

“The commitment of believers to a healthy environment for everyone stems directly from their belief in God the Creator, from their recognition of the effects of original sin, and from the certainty of having been redeemed by Christ. Respect for life and for the dignity of the human person extends also to the rest of creation, which is called to join man in praising God.” -Pope St. John Paul II, January 1990, **Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All Creation**, 16.

“We human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage woven together by the love God has for each one of his creatures.” Pope Francis, **Laudato Si**, nos. 92,93

The fundamental relation between humanity and nature is one of caring for creation.
Renewing the Earth, U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1991.

God destined the earth and all it contains for all people and nations so that all created things would be shared fairly by all humankind under the guidance of justice tempered by charity.
Gaudium et Spes (“The Church in the Modern World”), Vatican II, 1965, #69.

The Bible, from the first page on, teaches us that the whole of creation is for humanity, that it is men and women’s responsibility to develop it by intelligent effort and by means of their labor to perfect it, so to speak, for their use. If the world is made to furnish each individual with the means of livelihood and the instruments for growth and progress, all people have therefore the right to find in the world what is necessary for them. **Populorum Progressio (“On the Development of Peoples”) Pope Paul VI, 1967, #22.**

The most profound motive for our work is this knowing that we share in creation. Learning the meaning of creation in our daily lives will help us to live holier lives. It will fill the world with the spirit of Christ, the spirit of justice, charity, and peace. **Laborem Exercens (“On Human Work,” Donders translation), Pope John Paul II, 1981, #25.**

Farm owners and farm workers are the immediate stewards of the natural resources required to produce the food that is necessary to sustain life. These resources must be understood as gifts of a generous God. When they are seen in that light and when the human race is perceived as a single moral community, we gain a sense of the substantial responsibility we bear as a nation for the world food system. Meeting human needs today and in the future demands an increased sense of stewardship and conservation. **Economic Justice for All, U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1986, #228.**

[N]atural resources are limited; some are not, as it is said, renewable. Using them as if they were inexhaustible, with absolute dominion, seriously endangers their availability not only for the present generation but above all for generations to come. **Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (“On Social Concern,” Donders translation), Pope John Paul II, 1987, #34.**

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Because of the blessings God has bestowed on our nation and the power it possesses, the United States bears a special responsibility in its stewardship of God's creation to shape responses that serve the entire human family. As pastors, teachers, and citizens, we bishops seek to contribute to our national dialogue by examining the ethical implications of climate change. **Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), 2001 #6**

True stewardship requires changes in human actions—both in moral behavior and technical advancement... A renewed sense of sacrifice and restraint could make an essential contribution to addressing global climate change. **Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), 2001 #18**

In the Catholic tradition, that memory includes biblical and Church teachings about human responsibilities for creation. God, who alone can create, invites people to participate in divine creativity. Thus, humans have a unique role. In the physical universe, they alone are consciously able to be caretakers of creation... They are called to use these understandings to describe, celebrate, develop and care for creation. They are created in the image and likeness of God and are commissioned as stewards of God's created and beautiful universe. The Columbia River Watershed: Caring for Creation and the Common Good, **An International Pastoral Letter by the Catholic Bishops of the Region, 2001, #9.**

The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole...In nature, the believer recognizes the wonderful result of God's creative activity, which we may use responsibly to satisfy our legitimate needs, material or otherwise, while respecting the intrinsic balance of creation. If this vision is lost, we end up either considering nature an untouchable taboo or, on the contrary, abusing it. Neither attitude is consonant with the Christian vision of nature as the fruit of God's creation. Nature expresses a design of love and truth. **Caritas in Veritate ("Charity in Truth"), Pope Benedict XVI, 2009, #48.**

The Church has a responsibility towards creation and she must assert this responsibility in the public sphere. **Caritas in Veritate ("Charity in Truth"), Pope Benedict XVI, 2009, #51.**

It is from [the family] that we learn to take care of others, for the good of the other and to love the harmony of creation and to share and enjoy its fruits, by fostering reasonable, balanced and sustainable consumption. To support and protect the family so that it educates in solidarity and respect, is a decisive step in moving towards a more equitable and humane society. **Message for the World Food Day 2013, Pope Francis, Oct 16, 2013.**

What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up? This question not only concerns the environment in isolation; the issue cannot be approached piecemeal. When we ask ourselves what kind of world we want to leave behind... We need to see that what is at stake is our own dignity. Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us. The issue is one which dramatically affects us, for it has to do with the ultimate meaning of our earthly sojourn. **Laudato Si' ("Praise Be"), Pope Francis, 2015, Chapter 4, #160.**

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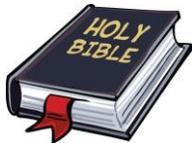
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SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATIONS:

- Genesis 1:31 Goodness of Creation
- Genesis 2:15 Care for the earth
- Hosea 4:1-3 Humans wound the earth
- Romans 8:18-25 All creation awaits redemption



CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- Have you experienced awe and wonder at God’s creation?
- What has your experience with nature taught you about the Creator?
- How is the call to care for God’s creation connected with our concern for the life and dignity of every person—both at home and around the world, now and in future generations?
- In your own community or globally, what examples have you encountered of environmental contamination or climate change affecting vulnerable persons?



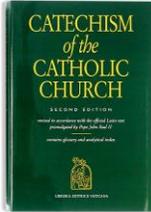
FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Use this resource as a discussion guide:
https://www.crs.org/sites/default/files/usopsresources/17us264_cst_101_care_for_creation_fi nal.pdf
- Activity: • Write a poem about creation using this handout: (insert documents from Andrew and Sr. CJ)
- Find a creative way to garden together as a family using this handout (insert documents from Andrew and Sr. CJ)
- Other Resources: o Check out this website to see how Catholics are making a difference in Climate Change: <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/>
- If you have not already, read Pope Francis’ Encyclical “Laudato Si” here:
http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/pa pa-francesco_20150524_ enciclica-laudato-si.html

TOPICS

RELATED SOCIAL ISSUES:

laws governing corporate and individual use of environmental resources – including:
land, water and air – which impact all living things



CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH EXCERPTS:

These paragraphs are direct quotations from Part Three: "Life in Christ" of the Catechism of the Catholic Church which address humanity's vocation to form conscience in shaping our dignity of the human person. Footnote citations have been removed in this listing.

*To read the entire Catechism... text, refer to
<http://archeparchy.ca/wcm-docs/docs/catechism-of-the-catholic-church.pdf>*

1776 "Deep within his conscience man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Its voice, ever calling him to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, sounds in his heart at the right moment.... For man has in his heart a law inscribed by God.... His conscience is man's most secret core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths."

1777 Moral conscience, present at the heart of the person, enjoins him at the appropriate moment to do good and to avoid evil. It also judges particular choices, approving those that are good and denouncing those that are evil. It bears witness to the authority of truth in reference to the supreme Good to which the human person is drawn, and it welcomes the commandments. When he listens to his conscience, the prudent man can hear God speaking.

1778 Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed. In all he says and does, man is obliged to follow faithfully what he knows to be just and right. It is by the judgment of his conscience that man perceives and recognizes the prescriptions of the divine law: Conscience is a law of the mind; yet [Christians] would not grant that it is nothing more; I mean that it was not a dictate, nor conveyed the notion of responsibility, of duty, of a threat and a promise.... [Conscience] is a messenger of him, who, both in nature and in grace, speaks to us behind a veil, and teaches and rules us by his representatives. Conscience is the aboriginal Vicar of Christ.

1779 It is important for every person to be sufficiently present to himself in order to hear and follow the voice of his conscience. This requirement of interiority is all the more necessary as life often distracts us from any reflection, self-examination or introspection: Return to your conscience, question it.... Turn inward, brethren, and in everything you do, see God as your witness.

1780 The dignity of the human person implies and requires uprightness of moral conscience. Conscience includes the perception of the principles of morality (synderesis); their application in the given circumstances by practical discernment of reasons and goods; and finally judgment about concrete acts yet to be performed or already performed. the truth about the moral good, stated in the law of reason, is recognized practically and concretely by the prudent judgment of conscience. We call that man prudent who chooses in conformity with this judgment.

1781 Conscience enables one to assume responsibility for the acts performed. If man commits evil, the just judgment of conscience can remain within him as the witness to the universal truth of the good, at the same time as the evil of his particular choice. the verdict of the judgment of conscience remains a pledge of hope and mercy. In attesting to the fault committed, it calls to mind the forgiveness that must be asked, the good that must still be practiced, and the virtue that must be constantly cultivated with the grace of God: We shall . . . reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

1782 Man has the right to act in conscience and in freedom so as personally to make moral decisions. "He must not be forced to act contrary to his conscience. Nor must he be prevented from acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters."

1783 Conscience must be informed and moral judgment enlightened. A well-formed conscience is upright and truthful. It formulates its judgments according to reason, in conformity with the true good willed by the wisdom of the Creator. the education of conscience is indispensable for human beings who are subjected to negative influences and tempted by sin to prefer their own judgment and to reject authoritative teachings.

1784 The education of the conscience is a lifelong task. From the earliest years, it awakens the child to the knowledge and practice of the interior law recognized by conscience. Prudent education teaches virtue; it prevents or cures fear, selfishness and pride, resentment arising from guilt, and feelings of complacency, born of human weakness and faults. the education of the conscience guarantees freedom and engenders peace of heart.

1785 In the formation of conscience the Word of God is the light for our path, we must assimilate it in faith and prayer and put it into practice. We must also examine our conscience before the Lord's Cross. We are assisted by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, aided by the witness or advice of others and guided by the authoritative teaching of the Church.

1786 Faced with a moral choice, conscience can make either a right judgment in accordance with reason and the divine law or, on the contrary, an erroneous judgment that departs from them.

1787 Man is sometimes confronted by situations that make moral judgments less assured and decision difficult. But he must always seriously seek what is right and good and discern the will of God expressed in divine law.

1788 To this purpose, man strives to interpret the data of experience and the signs of the times assisted by the virtue of prudence, by the advice of competent people, and by the help of the Holy Spirit and his gifts.

1789 Some rules apply in every case: - One may never do evil so that good may result from it; - the Golden Rule: "Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them." - charity always proceeds by way of respect for one's neighbor and his conscience: "Thus sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience . . . you sin against Christ." Therefore "it is right not to . . . do anything that makes your brother stumble."

1790 A human being must always obey the certain judgment of his conscience. If he were deliberately to act against it, he would condemn himself. Yet it can happen that moral conscience remains in ignorance and makes erroneous judgments about acts to be performed or already committed.

1791 This ignorance can often be imputed to personal responsibility. This is the case when a man "takes little trouble to find out what is true and good, or when conscience is by degrees almost blinded through the habit of committing sin." In such cases, the person is culpable for the evil he commits.

1792 Ignorance of Christ and his Gospel, bad example given by others, enslavement to one's passions, assertion of a mistaken notion of autonomy of conscience, rejection of the Church's authority and her teaching, lack of conversion and of charity: these can be at the source of errors of judgment in moral conduct.

1793 If - on the contrary - the ignorance is invincible, or the moral subject is not responsible for his erroneous judgment, the evil committed by the person cannot be imputed to him. It remains no less an evil, a privation, a disorder. One must therefore work to correct the errors of moral conscience.

1794 A good and pure conscience is enlightened by true faith, for charity proceeds at the same time "from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith." The more a correct conscience prevails, the more do persons and groups turn aside from blind choice and try to be guided by objective standards of moral conduct.

1795 "Conscience is man's most secret core, and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths".

1796 Conscience is a judgment of reason by which the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act.

1797 For the man who has committed evil, the verdict of his conscience remains a pledge of conversion and of hope.

1798 A well-formed conscience is upright and truthful. It formulates its judgments according to reason, in conformity with the true good willed by the wisdom of the Creator. Everyone must avail himself of the means to form his conscience.

1799 Faced with a moral choice, conscience can make either a right judgment in accordance with reason and the divine law or, on the contrary, an erroneous judgment that departs from them.

1800 A human being must always obey the certain judgment of his conscience.

1801 Conscience can remain in ignorance or make erroneous judgments. Such ignorance and errors are not always free of guilt.

1802 The Word of God is a light for our path. We must assimilate it in faith and prayer and put it into practice. This is how moral conscience is formed.



RESOURCES FROM CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES AND USCCB:

- View 3:04 minute you tube on this week's theme CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION <https://youtu.be/wSnXuCxiHXE>
- print one of these handouts to display in a prominent place in your home

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

The Church's social teaching shows us how to build a just society and live lives of holiness in the 21st century.

Each person is **SACRED**,
made in God's image, equal in dignity.

Each person is **SOCIAL**,
called to participate in family and community.

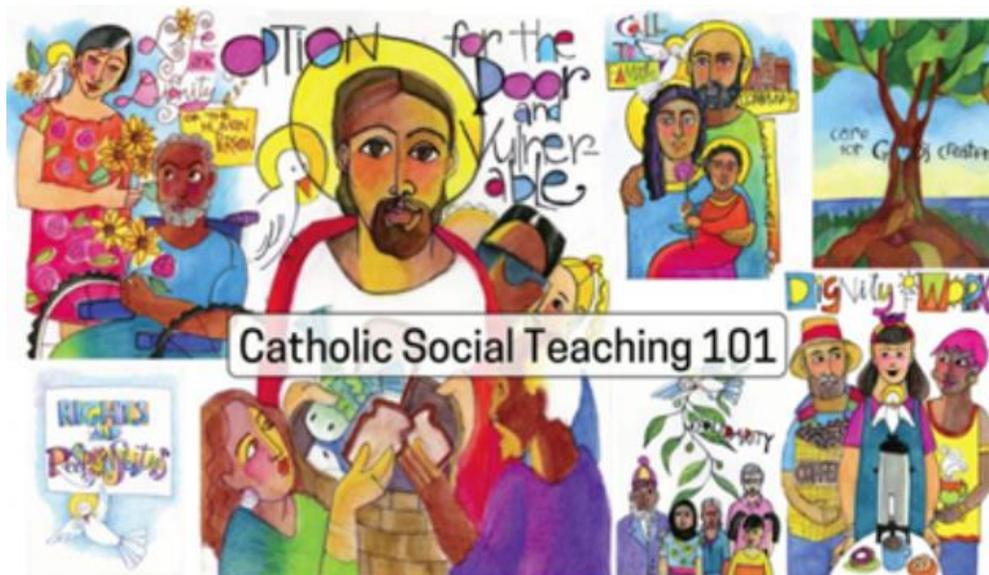
All people have **RIGHTS** and **RESPONSIBILITIES**.
The right to life and its necessities, the responsibility to respect the rights of others and work for the common good.

We care for people who are **POOR** and vulnerable,
before all else.

Workers have rights. **WORK** has dignity.
We are partners with God in creation.

SOLIDARITY is our call.
We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers.

We care for **CREATION**.
We live in interdependence with all God has made.



the seven themes of
**CATHOLIC SOCIAL
TEACHING** for children



1 God made each person, so every life is important and should be protected.



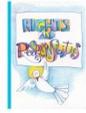
5 Work is important in God's plan for adults and their families, so jobs and pay should be fair.



2 God made us to be part of communities, families and countries, so all people can share and help each other.



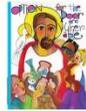
6 God made everyone, so we are all brothers and sisters in God's family wherever we live.



3 God wants us to help make sure everyone is safe and healthy and can have a good life.



7 The world was made by God, so we take care of all creation.



4 God wants us to help people who are poor, who don't have enough food, a safe place to live, or a community.



These Themes are based on United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Evangelical Social Teaching: Challenges and Opportunities*, and Catholic Relief Services. All rights reserved. Photos courtesy of Brother Philip McHenry, CRS.

- View video resources

USCCB Catholic Social Teaching

<http://usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/index.cfm>

USCCB Catholic Social Teaching resources

<https://wearesaltandlight.org/>

USCCB Catholic Social Teaching prayers

<https://wearesaltandlight.org/pray-together/prayers-dignity-and-life>

Connecting Catholic Social Teaching & the Ten Commandments

<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catechesis/catechetical-sunday/human-dignity/teaching-aid-colecchi.cfm>

CRS on Catholic Social Teaching

<https://www.crs.org/resource-center/CST-101>