

10 Guiding Principles for the Environment

From the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church

Summarized from a presentation by Bishop Giampaolo Crepaldi, Secretary Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

(See Zenit, [Ten Commandments for the Environment. A Christian View of Man and Nature](#))

- 1. *The human person is superior to all other creatures on earth.***
 - all creatures are to be used responsibly.
 - Jesus' humanity and Gospel tell us that... nature is part of God's plan of creation and redemption in Christ.
- 2. *Nature must not be exploited or exalted above human dignity.***
 - these are two fundamental points from Catholic Social Teaching.
- 3. *The "environment" means the whole planet, shared by all peoples.***
 - ecological responsibility concerns the good of present and future generations.
- 4. *Science and technology must be used in ways that respect human dignity.***
 - human persons must also treat other creatures with respect.
- 5. *Nature is God's gift to use wisely – it is not divine itself.***
 - human persons are free to use or modify creation – in intelligent and morally responsible ways.
- 6. *Economic development must respect creation.***
 - creation's integrity, rhythms and limited resources must be respected.
 - the cost of economic development must include protecting the environment.
- 7. *Concern for the environment means helping the world's poorest regions develop.***
 - this is the principle of the Universal Destination of Goods:
 - the goods of the earth are God's gift for all to share and use wisely.
- 8. *Worldwide agreements and laws are needed to protect the environment.***
 - these agreements and laws must be guided by the principle of the Common Good:
 - everyone has a right to all they need to live a fully human life (e.g., food, safety, work, shelter, clean water, education, free association, religious liberty).
- 9. *Production and lifestyles should be guided by sobriety, temperance and self discipline (not consumerism).***
 - production must satisfy everyone's basic needs and protect the created order.
 - more awareness of our human interdependence will help us escape the consumerist lifestyle.
- 10. *Environmental questions need a spiritual response.***
 - creation is God's gift to use responsibly, with loving care.
 - thankfulness should be our first attitude toward God for the gift of creation
 - our truest, deepest meaning lies in God, Who made and sustains creation & humanity.
 - nature's elements can be rich symbols pointing us to God, their Creator.

The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church can be accessed at: <http://www.vatican.va>