

**WORLD DAY OF PEACE *1 January 2010***  
**“If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation”**

Thomas Berry once said, “we cannot have well humans of a sick earth”. The ideal is a mutually enhancing relationship where humans become integral with the community that brings them into existence.

This year the Holy Father made a deliberate decision to write on the theme of ecology for the World Day of Peace, as 2010 is the 30th anniversary of Pope John Paul II's Easter proclamation of St. Francis as the patron saint of the environment. In his message, Benedict XVI notes how "man's inhumanity to man" has caused "numerous threats to peace and to authentic and integral human development," including wars, terrorism and violations of human rights. "Yet," the Pontiff continues, "no less troubling are the threats arising from the neglect -- if not downright misuse -- of the earth and the natural goods that God has given us."

"Can we remain indifferent before the problems associated with such realities as climate change, desertification, the deterioration and loss of productivity in vast agricultural areas, the pollution of rivers and aquifers, the loss of biodiversity, the increase of natural catastrophes and the deforestation of equatorial and tropical regions?" Benedict XVI asks. "Can we disregard the growing phenomenon of 'environmental refugees,' people who are forced by the degradation of their natural habitat to forsake it? [...] Can we remain impassive in the face of actual and potential conflicts involving access to natural resources?" He affirmed that all of these issues impact human rights, "such as the right to life, food, health and development."

The Pope said that it is "more and more evident" that the degradation of the environment requires a re-examination of lifestyle. It is important to note that the protection and care of the environment is everyone's responsibility. As we begin assessing our impact on the environment throughout the Province, it is important for everyone to be committed at their level, working to overcome over consumption and production that is leading to unsustainable models.

Benedict XVI said "a correct understanding of the relationship between man and the environment will not end by absolutizing nature or by considering it more important than the human person." He encourages us to take up the Church's mission of cultivating peace and affirms that this also means protecting creation.

### ***Composing the Canticle of the Creatures***

*St. Francis said to his companions, "if an emperor were to give his entire kingdom to one of his servants, wouldn't that servant be filled with joy? And if, in addition, he gave him his whole empire, wouldn't the servant be even happier?" And he continued, "Then I too should rejoice in my infirmities and troubles, and take comfort in the Lord and give thanks always to God the Father, and to his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit for the great grace they've given me: namely, to know for certain, even while I am still clothed in the flesh, that I am assured of the kingdom, I an unworthy servant.*

*"So, for God's praise, for our consolation, and for the edification of others, I want to compose a new song, a canticle to the Lord through his creatures, whom we use every day, and without whom we cannot live and through whom the human race greatly offends its Creator. We are constantly ungrateful for his gifts and blessings, and we do not praise the Lord, Creator, and Giver of all good gifts, as we should."*

*Then he sat down and began to meditate for a while. And afterward he began to sing, "Most High, all-powerful, good Lord, etc.," and he taught his companions the words and the melody.*  
(*Mirror of Perfection, 100*)

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| <b>Peace</b> | <b>Pace</b>  | <b>Paz</b> | <b>Shalom</b>   | <b>Mir</b>    | <b>Paix</b> | <b>der friede</b> |
| <b>Damai</b> | <b>Pokoj</b> | <b>Pax</b> | <b>Hoa Binh</b> | مآل س (salām) | 和平 (héping) |                   |

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#### **PAPAL MESSAGE FOR WORLD PEACE DAY**

can be found at <http://www.zenit.org/article-27852?l=english>