

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY
5 June 2009

UNite to combat
CLIMATE CHANGE



World Environment Day (WED) was established by the UN General Assembly in 1972 to mark the opening of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. Commemorated yearly on 5 June, WED is one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action. The day's agenda is to:

1. Give a human face to environmental issues;
2. Empower people to become active agents of sustainable and equitable development;
3. Promote an understanding that communities are pivotal to changing attitudes towards environmental issues;
4. Advocate partnership which will ensure all nations and peoples enjoy a safer and more prosperous future.

The theme for WED 2009 is ***'Your Planet Needs You-UNite to Combat Climate Change'***. It reflects the urgency for nations to agree on a new deal at the crucial climate convention meeting in Copenhagen later in the year, and the links with overcoming poverty and improved management of forests.

St Francis:

St Francis wanted people to understand that all of nature was made by God and that nature was God's gift to them. In what could be the first "ecological statement" outside the Bible, Francis said this: *"These creatures minister to our needs every day; without them we could not live and through them the human race greatly offends the Creator every time we fail to appreciate so great a blessing."* - Legend of Perugia 43. He certainly demonstrated an affinity with ecology.

Many of the old medieval legends about St Francis speak of his ability to communicate with nature in an extraordinary way. For example, the story of how he tamed the wolf that terrorised the citizens of the small village of Gubbio and the occasion when near the village of Bevagna he preached to the birds. His regard was not just for animals.

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He prayed, "My Brother Fire, that surpasses all other things in beauty, the Most High created you strong and beautiful and useful. Be kind to me in this hour; be courteous." It was during this period, in his last days while he lay sick and dying, that this great 13th Century mystic composed that most famous poem dedicated to God and Nature, The Canticle of All Creatures.

We pray on World Environment Day to protect the sacred Earth community and to respect the entire web of life, honoring the dignity and value of every member: one planet with freedom, justice, and peace for all.

Leader: *God, eternal Father and loving Creator of Nature, We give you thanks for life, because you have given of yourself and you have created out of love.*

All: *We give you thanks, Lord.*

Leader: *Your spirit rested on the waters, and by your word you formed the sun, the moon, the stars and the infinite universe above our head.*

All: *Praised may you be for them, Lord.*

Leader: *You made the earth, humble, small and beautiful, as a prelude of what would be, and you opened the skies above, that they might be generous and give the earth water and light.*

All: *Blessed may you be, Lord of the sky and the land.*

Leader: *you determined that colors and sounds become plants, fruits and flowers, insects and fish and mammals of all sizes and kinds.*

All: *Glory to you, Lord of all living beings.*

Leader: *As the crown of all Creation, you made us, human beings, in your image and likeness, and gave us the capacity to walk and talk with you, enjoying your company.*

All: *We are happy to be united as your family.*

Leader: *You were generous with our earth and with our peoples. You formed Earth that brings us closer to the greatness of your mystery.*

All: *You alone are great and holy.*

Sources: <http://www.unep.org/wed/2009/english/>
<http://www.midwestaugustinians.org/justpaxworldenviropray.html>