



<p><i>Catholic Social Teaching</i></p>	<p>“As we seek the path of sustainable community based on the oneness of land and people, it is helpful to remember that all creation is itself creative, for it reveals the creative word of God. It is not itself the incarnate word like Jesus, and it is not itself God. But all creation is nonetheless a revelation of God to us.”</p> <p>“If we fail to care for our precious Earth, And for the poor, Then creation itself will rebel against us.”</p> <p>“Modern society will find no solution to the ecological problem unless it takes a serious look at its life-style. In many parts of the world, society is given to instant gratification and consumerism while remaining indifferent to the damage which these cause. It is manifestly unjust that a privileged few should continue to accumulate excess goods, squandering available resources, while masses of people are living in conditions of misery at the very lowest level of subsistence.”</p>	<p>Catholic Bishops of Appalachia, <i>At Home in the Web of Life</i>, Appalachian Pastoral Letter, 1995</p> <p>Pope John Paul II, <i>Centesimus Annus</i>, [# 30].</p> <p>Pope John Paul II, <i>Peace With God the Creator, Peace With All of Creation</i>, 1990 World Day of Peace Message, [# 13].</p>
<p><i>Facts</i></p>	<p>Care for creation comes from experiencing creation in its own unique nature:</p> <p>“Positive direct experience in the out-of-doors and being taken outdoors by someone close to the child — a parent, grandparent, or other trusted guardian — are the two factors that most contribute to individuals choosing to take action to benefit the environment as adults.” (Chawla, 2006).</p> <p>A sign of a spiritual reality, <b>sacrament</b> in the Catholic tradition is most readily recognized as one of the seven through which we apprehend the presence of God. Roman Catholic spirituality also recognizes the “sacramental” character of nature. The sacramental theologian, Monsignor Kevin W. Irwin, writes, “...the incarnate God is disclosed and discovered” through, with, and in creation.</p>	<p>Cheryl Charles, Richard Louv, Lee Bodner, &amp; Bill Guns, <i>Children and Nature 2008: A Report on the Movement to Reconnect Children to the Natural World</i>, January 2008. <a href="http://www.cnaturenet.org">www.cnaturenet.org</a></p> <p>John F. Haught, <i>Ecology and Eschatology</i> in <b>And God Saw That It Was Good</b>, USCCB, 1996.</p>

<p><b><i>Bulletin Clips</i></b></p>	<p>"Respect for life and for the dignity of the human person also extends to the rest of creation, which is called to join man in praising God."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pope John Paul II, <i>Peace With God the Creator, Peace With All of Creation</i>, 1990 World Day of Peace Message, [# 16].</li> </ul> <p>"Christians, in particular, realize that their responsibility within creation and their duty towards nature and the Creator are an essential part of their faith."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pope John Paul II, <i>Peace With God the Creator, Peace With All of Creation</i>, 1990 World Day of Peace Message, [# 15].</li> </ul> <p>"When man turns his back on the Creator's plan, he provokes a disorder which has inevitable repercussions on the rest of created order. If man is not at peace with God, then earth itself cannot be at peace..."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pope John Paul II, <i>Peace With God the Creator, Peace With All of Creation</i>, 1990 World Day of Peace Message, [# 5].</li> </ul> <p>Creation has its own goodness and proper perfection, but it did not spring forth complete from the hands of the Creator. The universe was created "in a state of journeying" (<i>in statu viae</i>) toward an ultimate perfection yet to be attained, to which God has destined it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>The Catechism of the Catholic Church</i> [# 302].</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Things to Do Now</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go outside this week and take a child.</li> <li>• Record the number of miles you drive this week and try to reduce them by 50 next week.</li> <li>• Walk or ride your bike on one errand rather than drive</li> <li>• Sit outside and reflect on the sounds, the smells, and the colors that are all around you.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Things to Do Long-term</i></b></p>	<p>Find one ecological issue affecting your community. Learn about it and how it is supported by Catholic social teaching. Seek out any groups working on the justice issue. Write a letter or email your legislative representative or a person who has power to make decisions around your issue.</p> <p>Form an Ecological Working Group in your parish or region to begin learning more about ecological issues and making changes individually, family, parish and community. [See the handout, <i>A Roadmap to a Green Parish</i>, available from the Appalachian Office of Justice and Peace. Contact Susan Hedge at (540) 725-2197 or &lt;shedge@richmonddiocese.org&gt;.]</p>

## *Prayers*

### **Prayer of Petition**

Oh, Lord, Open our eyes to understand the sacredness of your creation and our call to care for it. [*Lord, hear our prayer*]

Oh, Lord, fill us with wonder and zeal for all you have created. [*Lord, hear our prayer*]

Oh, Lord, grant us the grace to respect and care for your creation. [*Lord, hear our prayer*]

### **Prayer of Confession**

God of all Creation, we come to you in a moment of personal and corporate confession. We participate in a system which is exploitative and violent and which separates humanity from the rest of Creation. By acts of omission and commission we cause harm to other. At times we are guilty of complicity, passivity and denial, at other times of abuses of power. We hear the cries of both our fellow humans, who are already living in the midst of extreme poverty and hunger, and the cries of all creation. We know we bear responsibility for the plight of both, and we know the impact one has on the other. We confess our complicity in the plight of all of your Creation, and beg your forgiveness and mercy, that we may do better to follow in the way of You who creates. Amen.

### **Prayer of Gratitude**

“Join me now sitting quietly with eyes closed. Remember a time when you had an awesome experience of nature. Where were you? What did you see? What did you hear? Remember it as if you were there once again. [Period of quiet] You are now invited to share your experience in a word or simple sentence as we move around the group and follow it with a word of gratitude. I will begin.” [Leader gives an example and ends with “for this I am grateful” or “thank you”.]

If your parishes would like other assistance on Earth Stewardship or would like to plan a retreat or other program on this topic, contact **Susan Hedge** in the Appalachian Office of Justice and Peace at (540) 725-2197 or <[shedge@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:shedge@richmonddiocese.org)>.