

Pastoral Aids and Homily Helps for Catholic Social Teaching:

Care for Creation/Stewardship

Terminology to Consider:

Ecology	Creation	Human Life	Human Dignity
Stewardship	Renewing	Reflection	Action
Nature	Responsibility	Timely	Climate Change
Relationship	Human Ecology	Natural Ecology	Common Good
Scriptures	Foundation	Participation	Love and Protect
Moral teaching	Prudence	An Option for the Poor	

Theological Reflection Questions:

- ➔ What does it mean to be a steward of God's earth?
- ➔ What is a steward?
- ➔ How is it our responsibility to care for the earth if we are given dominion over it?
- ➔ When this issue is one that is perpetuated by the media, why are we as Catholics wasting time worrying about this?
- ➔ What does it mean for care for the environment to be a concern for the common good?
- ➔ What is the common good?
- ➔ How can our Catholic Faith help us to find a more satisfying life for ourselves and at the same time make us more socially responsible in achieving it?
 - The cultivation of the natural virtue of temperance
 - The gospel admonitions about the dangers of over consumption and the fundamental requirements of love of neighbor
 - Social teachings of the church based upon the order of nature and the higher demands of gospel living.

Preparing for Homilies:

Helpful Hints from the 1991 USCCB Document, [Renewing the Earth](#).

1. A sacramental view of the universe
 2. Respect for human life
 3. The Global Common Good
 4. An Ethic of Solidarity
 5. Universal purpose of created things
 6. An Option for the Poor
 7. An ideal of Authentic Development
- Identify with the “we” not an “I” or “you”
 - Be aware of people, place and time (current events)
 - Address with care these ideas:
 - Community- care for creation is for all
 - Respect for Creatures (all of God’s creation)- we must encourage all to learn to live in harmony and peace
 - Handling controversies- be honest about tough situations- name the issue
 - Express Gratitude- be thankful for God’s creation

Prayers of the Faithful:

Lord, may we always see the way that you have created and bestowed beauty into our world. Grant us the patience to be thoughtful and ethical stewards of your creation. We pray to the Lord.

Lord, may we continue to work in ways that honor and give glory to your creations on earth. Grant us the ability and grace to always nurture growth and compassion in one another and in your world. We pray to the Lord.

Lord, may we always see your handiwork as pure gift. Help us to remove any selfishness from our hearts. Guide us to be stewards of your beautiful world. We pray to the Lord.

Lord, give us the wisdom to see how important it is to care for our world. Grant us the courage to act prophetically and with wisdom as we encounter the world you created. We pray to the Lord.

Lord, give us the desire to act in solidarity with those most affected by environmental harm and climate change. We pray to the Lord.

Quotes to Consider:

“The liturgy itself teaches us this, when, during the presentation of the gifts, the priest raises to God a prayer of blessing and petition over the bread and wine, “fruit of the earth,” “fruit of the vine” and “work of human hands.” With these words, the rite not only includes in our offering to God all human efforts and activity, but also leads us to see the world as God’s creation, which brings forth everything we need for our sustenance. The world is not something indifferent, raw material to be utilized simply as we see fit. Rather, it is part of God’s plan, in which all of us are called to be sons and daughters in the one son of God, Jesus Christ (cf. EPH1:4-12). The justified concern about threats to the environment present in so many parts of the world is reinforced by Christian hope, which commits us to working responsibly for the protection of creation.”

~Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, [*Sacramentum Caritatis*](#), 2007, § 92

Pope Francis:

“...let us be ‘protectors’ of creation, protectors of God’s plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment.” (Saint Peter’s Square, March 19, 2013.)

“Nature, in a word, is at our disposition and we are called to exercise a responsible stewardship over it. Yet so often we are driven by greed and by the arrogance of dominion, possession, manipulation and exploitation; we do not preserve nature; nor do we respect it or consider it a gracious gift which we must care for and set at the service of our brothers and sisters, including future generations. (World Day of Peace, January 2014.)

[*Renewing the Earth: An Invitation to Reflection and Action on Environment in Light of Catholic Social Teaching*](#). (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1991.)

“Our mistreatment of the natural world diminishes our own dignity and sacredness, not only because we are destroying resources that future generations of humans need, but because we are engaging in actions that contradict what it means to be human. Our tradition calls us to protect the life and dignity of the human person, and it is increasingly clear that this task cannot be separated from the care and defense of all creation.” (§2)

[*Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good*](#). (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2001.)

“At its core, global climate change is not about economic theory or political platforms, nor about partisan advantage or interest group pressures...It is about protecting both ‘the human environment’ and the natural environment.” (pg 1)

Faithful Stewards of God's Creation: A Catholic Resource for Environmental Justice and Climate Change (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2007.)

“Sacred Scripture calls believers to care for God’s creation and all of God’s children. As creation unfolded under God’s loving hand, God saw all that he had made and found it ‘very good’ (Gn 1:31)...God calls us as his stewards to care for the garden he created.” (pg 21)

“...in caring for the environment, we have a special responsibility to the poor and vulnerable, who are most affected and least heard.” (pg 21)

“Global climate change poses one of the greatest threats to the most vulnerable among us. Because of poverty, age, health, and location, the poor are especially susceptible to the potential negative impacts of global climate change.” (pg 22)

“Heat waves, droughts, and storms and their consequent economic costs fall most heavily upon the poor. Since the ‘least of these’ are most at risk from the climate change, Christians have a particular duty to address the moral and human implications of climate change.” (pg 22)

“Every individual and institution must accept responsibility for caring for God’s creation, and it is a responsibility that must mature on the basis of the global dimension of the present ecological crisis and the consequent necessity to meet it on a worldwide level, since all beings are interdependent in the universal order established by the creator.” (pg 22)

“In the case of global climate change, we know enough to understand that scientific arguments for action on the reduction of greenhouse gases cannot be easily dismissed.” (pg 24)

“Environmental Justice cannot be just another ‘to-do’ item to be added to a long list of unfulfilled wishes. Environmental justice will enter the hearts and minds of people only when it helps them integrate their lives.” (pg 52)

“Care for creation is at the heart of the scriptures. Environmental justice is thoroughly embedded in the Church’s social teaching, and it has been a repeated theme of Church teaching.” (pg 53)