



CALL FOR PAPERS

A Catholic Consultation on Environmental Justice and Climate Change: Assessing Pope Benedict XVI's Ecological Vision for the Catholic Church in the United States

November 8-10, 2012 at the Catholic University of America, Washington, DC

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change and the Catholic University of America and its Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies are cosponsoring a scholars' conference to explore:

- the substance and implications of recent papal teaching—particularly Pope Benedict XVI, building on the witness of his predecessors—on environment and creation, especially the links between natural ecology and human ecology, solidarity and environmental justice, care for creation and care for the poor and vulnerable, and between worship of the Creator and care for creation;
- Catholic contributions (cosmology, sacramental vision of Creation) to issues of environment, environmental justice and climate change, and;
- interpretations of these relationships for the Catholic Church in the United States in its preaching, liturgy, catechesis, and social ministries.

Scholars across academic disciplines (especially from theology, religious studies, philosophy, and economics, as well as public health, history, biology and other sciences) are encouraged to submit paper proposals addressing the implications of Pope Benedict XVI's ecological vision, particularly for the Catholic Church in the United States. [Please see suggested topic explorations below.]

Conference organizers are currently exploring options for publication of papers presented at this conference to assist in the on-going strategic thinking of the sponsoring Catholic organizations and beyond.

Conference format

It is anticipated that the conference will begin with an evening keynote followed by a full day exploring three or four themes and closing on the third day with liturgy and a luncheon. The format is intended to allow scholars to engage each other's work.

Paper proposal format

Proposals should include the following information.

1. Name
2. Curriculum Vitae
3. Institutional affiliation

4. Email
5. Snailmail
6. Proposed paper title
7. A detailed abstract of one or two pages describing the focus of the paper, a sense of the state of the question, what unique contribution the paper will offer, and the relationship of this paper to the broader discourse surrounding Catholicism's theological, philosophical and/or ethical engagement with environmental issues.
8. A list of up to 6 scholarly sources

Deadline for submissions

Proposals should be submitted no later than **March 31, 2012**.

Proposals should be sent electronically in Microsoft Word format to: Dan Misleh, Executive Director of the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change:

danmisleh@catholicsandclimatechange.org.

Scholars will be notified of the status of their proposals by May 15, 2012. No person may submit more than one proposal for consideration.

For questions, call Dan Misleh at 301-322-1180 or danmisleh@catholicsandclimatechange.org or Cecilia Calvo at 202-541-3188 or ccalvo@usccb.org.

Examples of desired topics include:

- Pope Benedict XVI on the appropriate interaction between, and interdependence of, human ecology and natural ecology. What is humanity's proper role vis-à-vis the rest of creation? How should the notions of stewardship/dominion/cultivation/care be explored?

Alongside the ecology of nature, there exists what can be called a "human" ecology, which in turn demands a "social" ecology. All this means that humanity, if it truly desires peace, must be increasingly conscious of the links between natural ecology, or respect for nature, and human ecology. Experience shows that disregard for the environment always harms human coexistence, and vice versa. It becomes more and more evident that there is an inseparable link between peace with creation and peace among men. (World Day of Peace Message, 2007, no. 8)

"Just as human virtues are interrelated, such that the weakening of one places others at risk, so the ecological system is based on respect for a plan that affects both the health of society and its good relationship with nature." Papal Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 51)

- Pope Benedict XVI on the linkages between the protection of human life and dignity and care for creation. How do we look beyond our own immediate needs and consider the needs of the poor, the unborn, future generations and the common good in an age of globalization? What does it mean when Benedict XVI says: "Man can destroy the foundations of his existence?"

If we wish to build true peace, how can we separate, or even set at odds, the protection of the environment and the protection of human life, including the life of the unborn? It is in man's respect for himself that his sense of responsibility for creation is shown. (Address to the Diplomatic Corps, January 2010)

- Pope Benedict XVI on solidarity, justice, and the preferential option for the poor. What are the demands of justice when it comes to environmental degradation and climate change? How can justice for humankind and justice for Creation be best advanced? This includes particular attention to the impacts of environmental degradation on poor and vulnerable people and to the consumptive patterns of wealthy and developed nations vs. poor and developing nations.

If the protection of the environment involves costs, they should be justly distributed, taking due account of the different levels of development of various countries and the need for solidarity with future generations. (World Day of Peace Message, 2008, no. 7)

Further international agencies may need to be established in order to confront together the stewardship of this "home" of ours; more important, however, is the need for ever greater conviction about the need for responsible cooperation. (World Day of Peace Message, 2008, no. 8)

- Pope Benedict XVI on the role of the Catholic Church in promoting public policy and sustainable development, examining consumption patterns, and the responsible use of technological solutions to reduce environmental harm and protect the human family. What roles (pastoral, educational, advocacy) must Catholic leaders play to promote these prudent responses?

Our present crises – be they economic, food-related, environmental or social – are ultimately also moral crises, and all of them are interrelated. They require us to rethink the path which we are travelling together. (World Day of Peace Message, 2010, no. 5)

I would advocate the adoption of a model of development based on the centrality of the human person, on the promotion and sharing of the common good, on responsibility, on a realization of our need for a changed life-style, and on prudence, the virtue which tells us what needs to be done today in view of what might happen tomorrow. (World Day of Peace Message, 2010, no. 9)

Man, to whom God entrusted the good stewardship of nature, cannot be dominated by technology or subjected to it. An awareness of this must bring States to reflect together on the future of the planet in the short term, facing their responsibility for our life and for technology. A human ecology is an imperative need. One of our political and economic priorities must be to adopt in every way a manner of life that respects the environment and

supports the research in and use of forms of energy that preserve the patrimony of creation and are that safe for human beings. (Address welcoming new ambassadors, June 9, 2011)

- Pope Benedict XVI on the sacramentality of, and inherent value in, Creation and the cosmos and the implications of these orientations for believers and for the liturgical life of the Church.

Seeing creation as God's gift to humanity helps us understand our vocation and worth as human beings . . . Contemplating the beauty of creation inspires us to recognize the love of the Creator. (World Day of Peace Message, 2010, no. 2).