

THE PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING:

Seventh of Seven: Care for Creation

Contemporary environmental consciousness in the Church received a strong kick-start with Saint Pope John Paul's 1990 World Day of Peace Message *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation* and in a number of recent statements from conferences of bishops. While there had been some environmental activism from the Catholic Rural Life Conference and other grassroots Catholic groups and local, national, and international Church leaders prior to 1990, it intensified afterwards.

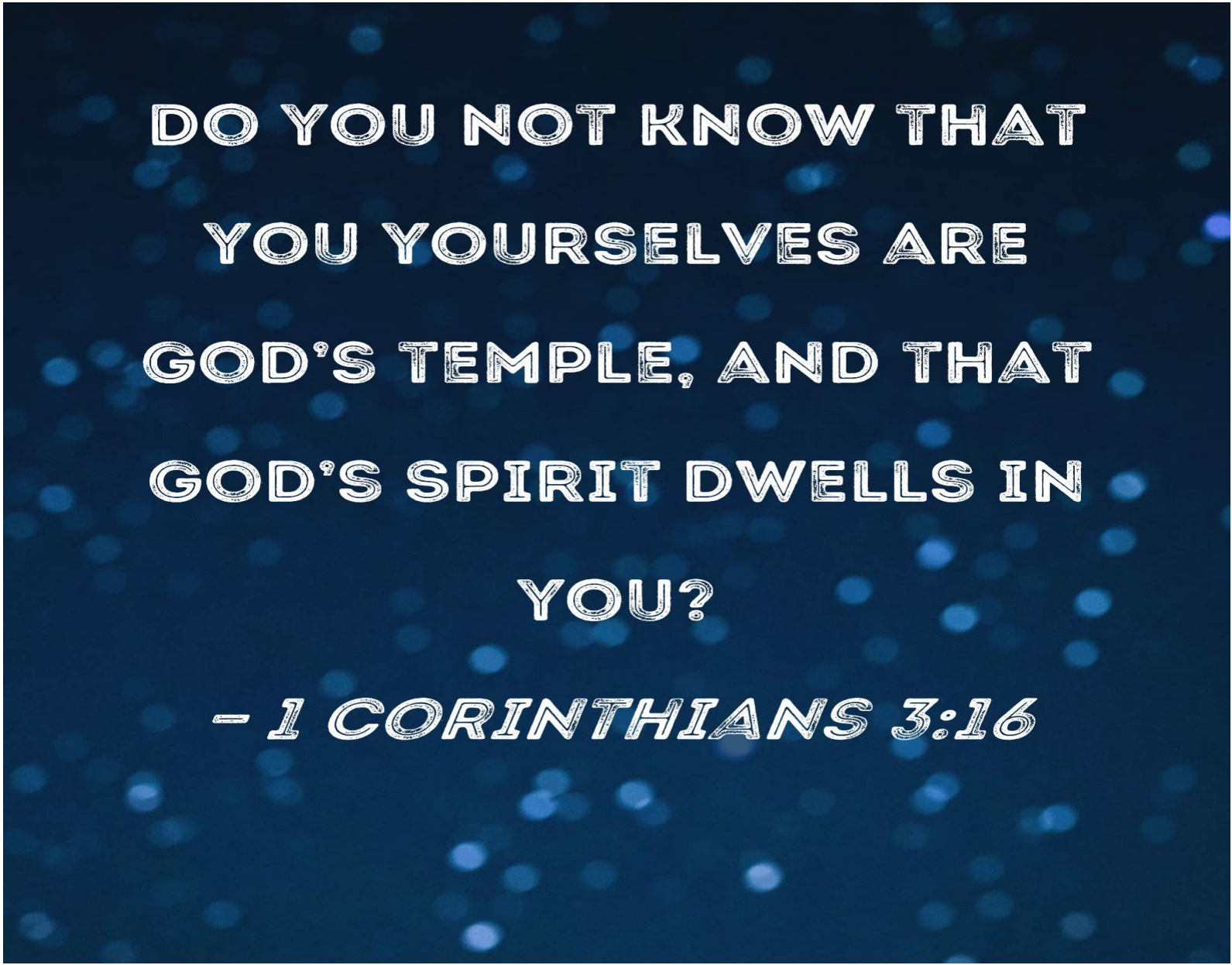
A strong component of that consciousness focused on stewardship of the environment, inspired by Scripture. John Paul argued that, through the *Genesis* work mandate “to subdue the earth,” humans image their Creator and share God’s creative action. With the Lord, we become co-creators of the earth and the ways humans have developed society over time, what we might call “creation given” and “creation enhanced.”

In his 2008 World Day of Peace Message *The Human Family, A Community of Peace*, Pope Benedict XVI introduced the concept of a “covenant between human beings and the environment.” In his 2009 encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, the Holy Father developed a three-fold environmental responsibility: “a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations, and towards humanity as a whole.” Benedict, in framing environmental concerns in terms of covenant took a giant step beyond the “stewardship model”—which positions humans over-against the rest of creation—to a more comprehensive approach founded upon the solidarity of the human species with other forms of life and their habitats.

The pope decried hoarding of energy and stockpiling that gives rise to exploitation and frequent conflicts between and within nations. He urged solidarity between developing countries and those highly industrialized, reduced energy consumption, increased research into alternative forms of energy, and redistribution. He emphasized responsible stewardship, duties to future generations, international cooperation, changing our lifestyles, accountability for using up shared resources, and strengthening the “covenant between human beings and the environment.” He lamented how many of the world’s resources are “squandered by wars!”

In 2015 with *Laudato Si’*, the first encyclical focused primarily on the environment, Pope Francis ties environmental concern closely to concern for the poor. He presents the scientific consensus on climate change and other environmental threats and how environmental degradation affects human life and society. For Francis, the poor usually pay the highest price for environmental destruction, whether it is desolation of natural habitats, erosion of farmlands, coastal flooding, or poisoning from polluting factories. Working from the biblical account of creation, Francis teaches that the universe reveals the divine and that, woven together in God’s love for all creatures, we humans are united as sisters and brothers on a wonderful pilgrimage.

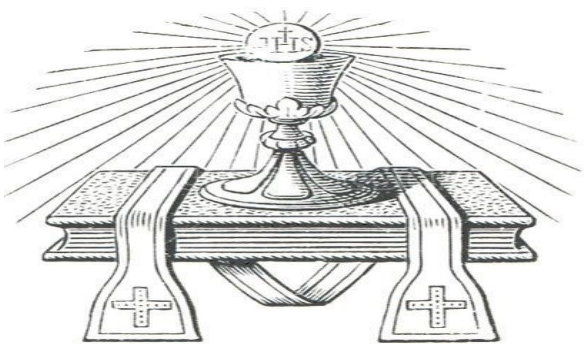
The pope argues that we are consuming the planet’s limited resources, enthralled with a technocratic paradigm that promises unlimited growth and is based on a false belief in an infinite supply of the earth’s goods. As such we have no interest in more balanced levels of production, better distribution of wealth, environmental concern, or the rights of future generations. Maximizing profits drives these patterns. We need an integral ecology which, understanding that the social and environment crises are one, demands a coordinated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and protecting nature. We must hear together “the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.”



Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome~ November 9, 2025

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Immaculate Conception Church is a Black Catholic Church
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Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil Mass: 4:00 PM
Sunday Mass: 8:00 AM and 10:30 AM

Weekday Masses: MLK Chapel
12:10 PM
Mon., Tues., Wed., Thurs., Fri.

Monetary contributions will be used to purchase gift cards for Thanksgiving turkeys and to assist families with rent and utility support. Thank you, as always, for your kindness, compassion, and care for our neighbors in need.