

## Peace Towards Creation

"When the tenants saw the son, they said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and acquire his inheritance.' "They seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

What will the owner of the vineyard do to those tenants when he comes?"

"They answered him, 'He will put those wretched men to a wretched death and lease his vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the proper times.'"

Anthony Paz reflected that the tenants responded with extreme violence in the face of repeated good will from the owner of the vineyard." How often do we forget that God "owns" all of creation and we respond with extreme violence under the guise of economic progress?

We have a moral imperative to care for all creation. To quote Pope Francis, this is "an approach to ecology which respects our unique place as human beings in this world and our relationship to our surroundings." *Laudato Si'*

In Pope Benedict's well-known *Message for the 2010 World Day of Peace*, he placed the environmental considerations of the day squarely within the richness of Catholic thought. Quoting, in part, from *Caritas in Veritate*, he wrote, **"The Church has a responsibility towards creation, and she considers it her duty to exercise that responsibility in public life, in order to protect earth, water and air as gifts of God the Creator meant for everyone, and above all to save mankind from the danger of self-destruction."**

"Respect for creation is of immense consequence, not least because 'creation is the beginning and the foundation of all God's works,' and its preservation has now become essential for the pacific coexistence of mankind. Man's inhumanity to man has given rise to numerous threats to peace and to authentic and integral human development – wars, international and regional conflicts, acts of terrorism, and violations of human rights. **Yet no less troubling are the threats arising from the neglect – if not downright misuse – of the earth and the natural goods that God has given us"** (*Pope Benedict XVI, If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation*).

Pope Benedict words echoes similar thoughts spoken 20 years earlier by Saint John Paul II:

**"World peace is threatened** not only by the arms race, regional conflicts and continued injustices among peoples and nations, but also **by a lack of due respect for nature**, by the plundering of natural resources and by a progressive decline in the quality of life" (*1990 World Day of Peace Message, Peace with God the Creator*).

"Indeed, the increasing devastation of the world of nature is apparent to all. **It results from the behavior of people who show a callous disregard** for the hidden, yet perceivable requirements of the order and harmony which govern nature itself" (*1990 World Day of Peace Message, Peace with God the Creator*).

Life and Dignity of the human person is our foundational principle; Care for Creation stands not alone but rests atop this bedrock principle. Good ecological choices respect the dignity of the person and his or her fundamental rights.

Respecting the environment requires us to understand that God owns all creation. It demands that we treat it loving care, not with extreme violence.

The protection of creation is an important element of peace and justice. **If you want peace, work for justice, including creation.**

(Readings for the 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time)

