



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO BRAZILIAN BISHOPS FOR THE 2011 BROTHERHOOD CAMPAIGN

*To my Venerable Brother
Archbishop Geraldo Lyrio Rocha of Mariana (MG)
President of the CNBB*

It is with deep satisfaction that I once again join the entire Church in Brazil, which proposes to travel the penitential journey of Lent, in preparation for the Lord Jesus' Passover, into which the *Brotherhood Campaign* fits. This year the theme is "Brotherhood and Life on the Planet", appealing for a change in mentality and attitude for the preservation of creation.

Recalling the Campaign's motto: "Creation groans and is in agony" which echoes the words of St Paul in his Letter to the Romans (8:22). We can include the damage caused to creation by human egoism to the reasons for such groans. But it is also true that "creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God" (Rom 8:19). Thus as sin destroys creation, the latter is restored when "the sons of God" are present and take care of the world that God may be everything to every one (*cf.* I Cor 15:28).

The first step for a just relationship with the surrounding world is precisely the recognition, on the part of human beings, of our condition as creatures: humans are not God, but are his image. We should therefore strive to become more attentive to the presence of God all around us. In all of creation and, especially in human beings, there is a kind of epiphany of God. "Those who can recognize in the cosmos the reflections of the Creator's invisible face, tend to have greater love for creatures" (Benedict XVI, *Homily for the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God*, 1 Jan. 2010).

Men and women will be capable of respecting creation, to the extent in which they have a full appreciation of life; otherwise they will be inclined to condemn themselves and their surroundings, to respect neither the environment they live in nor creation. Thus, the first ecology that is in need of defence is "human ecology" (*cf.* Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in veritate*, n. 51). It is

also important to say that without clearly defending human life, from conception until natural death; without defending the family, based on marriage between a man and a woman; without truly defending those who are excluded and marginalized from society, without forgetting in this context those that have lost everything, victims of natural disasters, we could never speak of an authentic defence of the environment.

In recalling that the duty to safeguard the environment is an obligation that is born of the awareness that God trusts his creation to us, not to exercise arbitrary dominion over it, but so that we may preserve and take of it as a son cares for the inheritance of his father, and God entrusted Brazilians with a great inheritance, I willingly impart a propitiatory Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 16 February 2011

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI