



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI FOR THE FIFTH WORLD-WIDE DAY OF ENVIRONMENT*

“And God saw everything he had made and behold it was very good” (*Gen.* 1, 31).

This ancient text, so simple and yet so profound, is a reminder to all of us today that the world we live in, this creation, is to be seen and embraced by all people in its totality as good: good because it is a gift from God: good because it is the environment in which all of us have been placed and in which we are called to live out our vocations in solidarity with one another.

In recent years there has arisen around the world an increasing awareness that “the environment conditions in an essential way the life and development of man and that man, in turn, perfects and ennobles his milieu by his presence, his work and his contemplation” (PAUL PP. VI, *Message to the Conference on the Environment*, Stockholm 1972: *Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, 10 (1972) 606).

Because of this, it is very heartening to see the members of the United Nations setting aside a world-wide Day of Environment so that people every-where can take this opportunity to celebrate the good things of this earth and to share them more consciously and more equitably with all their brothers and sisters.

This consciousness of the environment around us is more pressing today than ever. For men who have the means and the ability to construct and ennoble the world about them can also destruct it and squander its goods. Human science and technology have made marvelous gains. But care must be taken that they are used to enhance human life and not to diminish it. Human effort has brought forth much wealth from the earth. But this wealth should not be squandered superfluously by a small minority nor selfishly hoarded for a few at the expense of the rest of mankind in need.

For these reasons, this Day of celebration of the environment we live in should also be a day of appeal to all of us to be united as custodians of God’s creation. It should be a day of re-dedication to the enterprise of preserving, improving and handing over to future generations a healthy environment in which every person is truly at home (Cfr. PAUL PP. VI, *Message to the Conference on the Environment*, Stockholm 1972: *Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, 10 (1972) 607).

The intent of such an appeal demands more than just a renewal of effort. It calls for a change of mentality, for a conversion of attitude and of practice so that the rich willingly use less and share the earth's goods more widely and more wisely. It calls for a simplicity of life style and a society that intelligently conserves rather than needlessly consumes. It calls finally for a universal sense of solidarity in which each person and every nation plays its proper and interdependent role to ensure an ecologically sound environment for people today as well as for future generations.

"Everything created by God is good" wrote the apostle Paul. It is our earnest prayer that this Day of the Environment might be a time in which all people everywhere rejoice in the wisdom of that cry and commit themselves to a fraternal sharing and protection of a good environment, the common patrimony of mankind.

5 June 1977

PAULUS PP. VI

*AAS 59 (1977), p.395-396.

Insegnamenti di Paolo VI, vol. XV, p.561-562.

L'Osservatore Romano, 6-7.6.1977, p.1.

ORa n.24 p.3;.

Paths to Peace p.468-469.