

Ashes to New Life: Lent 2009

Ecological Conversion – Ecological Vocation



To pray is not to step outside of history and withdraw into our own private corner of happiness. When we pray properly we undergo a process of inner purification which opens us up to God and thus to our fellow human beings as well ... We must free ourselves from the hidden lies with which we deceive ourselves. Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Hope* 2007 No 33.

The entire life of Christians is an exploration into Christ. Each generation pushes back ever so slightly the envelope of his mystery ... One of the most significant developments in Catholic understanding of the Christian mission in more recent times is its embrace of creation in all its beauty and vitality. Archbishop John Bathersby launching Catholic Earthcare Australia www.catholicearthcareoz.net.au



Ash Wednesday (25 Feb.)

Celebrating the grace to hear God and be converted

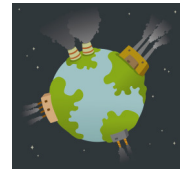
We must therefore encourage and support the 'ecological conversion' which in recent decades has made humanity more sensitive to the catastrophe to which it has been heading. Man is no longer the Creator's 'steward', but an autonomous despot, who is finally beginning to understand that he must stop at the edge of the abyss. Pope John Paul II *General Audience* 17 January 2000



First Sunday Lent (1 March)

Celebrating God's covenant with all the earth, our common home

The family needs a home ... For the human family, this home is the earth, the environment that God the Creator has given us to inhabit with creativity and responsibility ... humanity today is rightly concerned about the ecological balance of tomorrow. Pope Benedict XVI *World Day of Peace Message* 2008 no 8-9.



Second Sunday Lent (8 March)

Celebrating the gift of reconciliation with the earth which we have made to suffer.

In a profound sense the earth is suffering (Hos 4:3) and the greenhouse effect has now reached crisis proportions as a consequence of industrial growth, massive urban concentrations and vastly increased energy needs ... the resulting meteorological and atmospheric changes range from damage to health to the possible future submersion of low-lying lands ... no peaceful society can afford to neglect either respect for life or the fact that there is an integrity to creation. Pope John Paul II *World Day of Peace Message* 1990



Third Sunday Lent (15 March)

Celebrating humanity's mission within Creation as its the most conscious part

In biblical language 'naming' the creatures (cf. Gn 2: 19-20) is the sign of this mission of knowing and transforming created reality. It is not the mission of an absolute and unquestionable master, but of a steward of God's kingdom who is called to continue the Creator's work, a work of life and peace. Pope John Paul II *General Audience* 17 January 2000



Fourth Sunday Lent (22 March)
Celebrating the voice of God in Nature

The two dimensions – Creation and Redemption, earthly life and eternal life, responsibility for creation and responsibility for others and for the future – should be juxtaposed. I also think it is our task to intervene clearly and with determination on public opinion. To be heard, we must at the same time demonstrate by our own example, by our own way of life ... in such a way that our works may credibly convey faith. Pope Benedict XVI August 6, Bressanone, 20 Aug. 2008



Fifth Sunday Lent (29 March)
Celebrating the grace to strip away the pretension that we can do without nature

While the duty to protect the environment should not be considered in opposition to development, it must not be sacrificed on the altar of economic development ... at its core, the environmental crisis is a moral challenge ... It is not hard to see how issues of environmental protection, models of development, social equity and each one's share of the responsibility to care for the environment are inextricably intertwined. Archbishop Migliore, to the UN on Sustainable Development 10 May 2007



Passion Sunday (5 April)
Celebrating our calling to die like the grain of seed to become a source of new life

The 'ecological conversion' spoken of by Pope John Paul II will require courage as believers choose to make sacrifices and change lifestyles to reconnect with nature's rhythms. They will have to empty themselves as God chose to do in taking on flesh in Christ Jesus, but in doing so they will help bring the transformation that leads to the fullness of life God wishes for all peoples and the world in our Cosmic Lord. Let the Son Shine



Easter Sunday Lent (12 April)
Celebrating the grace of ecological vocation – to see, judge, act

The People of God believes that it is led by the Spirit Who fills the earth. Motivated by faith, it labours to decipher authentic signs of God's presence and purpose in the happenings, needs and desires in which this people has a part along with others of our age. For faith throws a new light [see] on everything, manifests God's design [judge] for man's total vocation, and thus directs the mind to solutions which are fully human [act]. Vatican II, Church in the Modern World No 11

Prayer in the time of climate change

**God, Creator and Sustainer,
free us from ignorance about your gift of Earth.
Inspire us to act together in respect for your gift and change our ways
as we relate to Earth's rhythms with humility.
May we welcome the truth when scientists speak of climate change, and
reject false pathways designed to confuse.
Help us to urge our politicians to take moral decisions and urgent action in negotiating sustainable living.
Ground all our thoughts in your revealing Scriptures
and the wisdom of holy women and men who have gone before us
to help cultivate a new creation as followers of your Cosmic Son.
Give us a discerning spirit to work with the ecological and the human,
the social and the economic realities of this world,
and instil in us a spirit of respect and compassion
able to imagine pathways of harmony.
Amen.**

Abstracts taken from *Let the Son Shine: A Catholic Response to Climate Change*, 2009, by Father Charles Rue.

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