



PEACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE
Environmentalism is Catholic

"Man must not make arbitrary use of the earth, subjecting it, without restraint, to his will, as though it did not have its own requirements and a God-given purpose.

When he acts in this way, instead of carrying out his role as a cooperator with God in the work of creation, man sets himself in place of God and thus provokes a rebellion on the part of nature..."

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church

The bottom line is that our rich social doctrine advocates strongly for the environment and more specifically, sustainable development. Sustainable development focuses on improving the quality of life for all citizens of the earth without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Environmental resources can and should be supplied indefinitely. While this concept appears to be common sense, it requires an understanding that inaction going forward can have dire consequences.

Sustainable development is not a new idea. Many cultures over the course of human history have recognized the need for harmony between the environment, society and economy. What is new is an articulation of these ideas in the context of a global industrial and information society.

As Catholics, we must find innovative ways to change institutional structures and influence individual behavior. Sustainable development is about taking action, changing policy and practice at all levels, from the individual to the international.

As we are a church that values life on ALL levels, we are reminded that *"the environment is a collective good."* *"The goods of the earth were created by God to be used wisely by all, shared equitably, in accordance with justice and charity."*

Yet, uncontrolled and rampant use of natural resources such as forests, land, water, and fisheries-often by the powerful few-have caused alarming changes in our natural world in recent decades. For example, human activities are causing losses in biodiversity at a rate 50 to 100 times faster than would otherwise be expected.

"The dovetailing of environmental and developmental concerns with commercial and industrial policymaking will surely lead to a safer, more prosperous future for all." (Archbishop Migliore, Vatican Representative to the U.N.)

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Learn More:

- [Commit to sustainable development, Vatican tells U.N. \(www.catholic.org\)](http://www.catholic.org)
- www.environmenttimes.net

Next Meeting: Thursday, 6/22/06; 7:30-9:30, Room 227