

GAUDIUM ET SPES AND THE ECOLOGICAL AWARENESS OF OUR TIME

Moris Polanco
Universidad Francisco Marroquín
mp@ufm.edu.gt

Gaudium et Spes sees man as the “master of all earthly creatures,” and, accordingly, considers that “all things on earth should be related to man as their center and crown.” Many of today’s environmental movements, however, see the increment of human population as the main threat to the environment and the ecological equilibrium. The main thesis of this paper is that all of us are in need of an “ecological conversion” (Pope John Paul II) that should take us to cherish life — specially, human life— as a gift from the Creator. The sins against human life and its laws (abortion, contraception), and the sins against the natural environment are interconnected. The solution to the environmental crisis of our time, consequently, is more moral than technical.

1. Introduction

Although the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* offers a view of “the place and role of man in the universe” (No. 3) which can certainly be taken as a the starting point for the solution of the ecological crisis of our time, few scholars and political activists seem to have taken it into account. Much of the present literature on ecology, environmental ethics, and environmental policy runs in a direction that is at odds with the most fundamental Christian truths and values, despite of the efforts of many Catholic institutions and theologians to shed light on the issue. An example of this new sensibility can be found in the *Earth Charter Initiative*; a Christian may agree on the problems it points out, but would feel disappointed about the proposed solutions, since they completely ignore God and the transcendental destiny of man. Why is the Christian message about the place of man in cosmos ignored? What can the Church do to explain her message more clearly? Is the concept of stewardship correctly understood by Christians and non-Christians in our age?

On the other hand, some Catholic thinkers seem to be leaning towards an ecological radicalism, which amounts to a new form of paganism. Man is no longer seen as the center and apex of Creation but only as a more complex form of life, that has the power to exterminate other forms of life. Paradoxically enough, philosophers and theologians from other religions (particularly, Orthodox and Muslims) show a view about the relationship between human beings and the natural environment that is closer to the teachings of the Church. What constitutes the essence of the teaching of the Church in relation with the ecological crisis? Is it true that the Christian vision of man and nature has contributed to the ecological crisis of our time? Is it the case that the vision of man and nature implicit in other religions (Buddhism, Islamism) surpass Christianity in their capacity to solve the ecological crisis?

Finally, an often heard argument about the ecological crisis of our time is that it is closely related to overpopulation. International organizations very often condition economic assistance to developing countries to the implementation of policies that violate the sacredness of human life and attack the foundations of the Christian view of family and marriage. Is it not true that the cause of environmental deterioration is poverty and not people? What can the Church do to prove that “respect for creation stems from respect for human life and dignity”, and to show that “it is on the basis of our recognition that the world is created by God that we can discern an objective moral order within which to articulate a code of environmental ethics”¹?

This paper will address the above questions and problems, in light of the Catholic social thought. The main reference will be the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, although serious attention will be given to the teachings of Pope John Paul II on ecology and related issues. Dialogue with the main currents of contemporary environmental philosophy and ethics will be sought, as well as with the theological thinking of environmentalists from other religions.

2. The New Sensibility and the Christian Outlook

Global concern for the environment is one of the signs of the times that the Church has the duty to scrutinize and to interpret in the light of the Gospel.² *Prima facie*, this concern must be seen as positive, as Pope John Paul II said in his message for the celebration of the World Day of Peace, January 1, 1990: “a new ecological awareness is beginning to emerge which, rather than being downplayed, ought to be encouraged to develop into concrete programs and initiatives.”³ The position adopted by the United States Catholic Conference goes along with the recommendation of the Pope: “We find,” the bishops say, “much to affirm in and learn from the environmental movement: its devotion to nature, its recognition of limits and connections, its urgent appeal for sustainable and ecologically sound policies. We share considerable common ground in the concern for the earth, and we have much work to do together.”⁴ But, at the same time, they are keenly aware that “there may also be some areas of potential confusion and conflict with some who share this common concern for the earth.”⁵

First of all, we must say that concern for the earth, for a Catholic, is inseparable from concern for man. As the American bishops say, “[o]ur mistreatment of the natural world diminishes our own dignity and sacredness, not only because we are destroying resources that future generations of humans need, but because we are engaging in actions that *contradict what it means to be human*.”⁶ Maybe one of the best outcomes of the ecological awareness of our time, for our tradition, is the recognition that the protection of “the life and dignity of the human person . . . cannot be separated from the care and defense of all of creation.”⁷ It is time that we, Catholics from diverse cultural and ethnic origin, realize, with *novitate sensus*,⁸ that “[our] responsibility within creation and [our] duty towards nature and the Creator are an essential part of [our] faith.”⁹ Why is that so? There is much more involved here than a mere problem of scarcity of resources. For Catholic theology, it touches the heart of the doctrine of creation: What is the value of this world? Is it just a passageway to Heaven? Or, to use the words of *Gaudium et Spes*: “What is the ultimate significance of human activity throughout the world?”¹⁰ Some theologians like Charles Murphy claim that “there is no point to a religious ethic of the environment unless we believe that our home is on earth and not somewhere else.”¹¹ This thesis has profound

implications. For instance: this world is good, because it was created by God, and because it was (it is!¹²) his home. “If the world was worthy of being the home of God, it is worth of being our home too.”¹³ Although it is true that “we have here no lasting city”¹⁴, as the letter to the Hebrews reminds us, it is also true that this world—and our body, made of earth— will be transformed, not destroyed, at the end of time. Jesus himself promises the earth to the humble.¹⁵ Consequently, as Murphy says, “the earth, our home, has a future that we can responsibly determine.”¹⁶ It follows, then, that protecting the world, embellishing it and making it more productive, for the sake of love to our brothers and sisters, can be considered a sacred duty.¹⁷

In a second place, although it is true that we, Catholics, are in need of an ecological conversion—I am using the words of John Paul II¹⁸—, it is also true that for us man is the “master of all earthly creatures,”¹⁹ and, accordingly, that “all things on earth should be related to man as their center and crown.”²⁰ This is one of the areas of “potential confusion and conflict” which the American Bishops refer to, “with some who share this common concern for the earth”.

According to Michel Schooyans, professor emeritus at Louvain University, for the new ecological movement,

“the big whole, ... (let us call it, for the sake of simplification, Mother Earth or Gaïa), transcends man. He must bend himself to the imperatives of ecology, to that which suits Nature. ... Man must accept, not only no longer emerging from the world about him, but he must also accept no longer being the center of the world. Judeo-Christian anthropocentrism, reinforced by that of the Renaissance, must be not only abandoned but combated.”²¹

In the *Earth Charter*, a document that pretends to set forth “an inclusive and integrated ethical vision that can provide individuals, organizations, corporations, and governments with much needed guidance in making the transition to sustainable living and sustainable development,”²² we actually read that “humanity is part of a vast evolving universe.”²³ As Schooyans points out, for this vision “man is but an embodiment of the evolution of matter. Man has no reality except by reason of his belonging to matter and, upon death, he will return definitively to matter. The destiny of man is to be doomed to death, that is to disappear inevitably into Mother Earth whence he came.”²⁴

To these materialistic and holistic views of man and nature, Catholic teaching has always opposed an optimistic vision, based on the truth about man, which is revealed to us in the man Jesus Christ.²⁵ Man is not a simple part of nature, “doomed to ... disappear inevitably into Mother Earth,” but “the image of God,”²⁶ the only creature “able to know and love his creator.”²⁷ “He alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in God's own life.”²⁸ In accordance with these revealed truths, we Catholics hold that man can improve nature, not only for his own benefit, but as stewards of Creation, sharing God's providence toward other creatures. The dominion of man over nature must not be seen, consequently, as a right to use and misuse, but as a responsibility for the world God has entrusted him.²⁹

Without reference to a transcendental God, Creator of the universe and its ultimate *raison d'être*, justification of man's action over nature turns problematic. What are man's relationships to other beings and on what bases are they set? And who sets up those bases? What exactly does it mean

to “care for Earth”?³⁰ How do we know that our caring is not actually slowing down the process of evolution of matter? Who has given us “universal responsibility” towards “the greater community of life”³¹? If the end on the new global ethics is “the greater community of life,” what is the value of individual human beings? These fundamental issues are left aside with incredible shallowness by the subscribers of *The Earth Charter*, among many other proponents of the new ‘global ethics.’ In my opinion, dialogue among Catholics and the radical ecologists should be carried on in the metaphysical and anthropological grounds, more than in the social or economical ones. Many Catholics of good will could end up supporting positions which contradict essential parts of our dogma, without realizing it, thinking that they are supporting ‘global justice.’

3. A World in Need of Redemption

Another important issue called into question by this shift in the ecological movement of our time is the reality of the fallenness of creation. *Gaudium et Spes* reminds us that the Christian sees this world as “as created and sustained by its Maker’s love, fallen ... into the bondage of sin”, but that it will be “fashioned anew according to God’s design and reach its fulfillment.”³² For Andrew Linzey, this implies that “[t]he concept of the fall —whether it be deduced from Genesis, or by implication from *Romans* 8^[33] or *Isaiah* 11^[34]— ... constitutes a composite rejection of the idea that the creation as it now is —is —at least in this respect— God’s original will.”³⁵ From Scripture we know that “creation is developing toward a final state of perfection. This is not to say that God’s creation was imperfect at the beginning, but that creation is not finished and will achieve its final perfection as it progresses through stages of development until it reaches that end for which creation was intended.”³⁶ Unfortunately, few theorists of ecology seem to take seriously the reality of sin and the original fall. What are the implications of ignoring the fall for an ethics of ecology? For Andrew Linzey, rejecting the fall means at least four things: a) “There is no evil in the natural world.”³⁷ b) “There is no possibility of redemption for nature, animals in particular.”³⁸ c) “There is no human obligation to cooperate with God in the redemption of nature, animals in particular.”³⁹ d) “There is no morally just God.”⁴⁰ In synthesis, that nature cannot be redeemed.

Is it a categorical mistake to try to find evil in the natural world? Is ‘morality’ a word that belongs only to the human realm? It is becoming increasingly common to consider all kinds of predatory actions as ethically neutral, and even as beautiful.⁴¹ The belief underlying this conception seems to be the *dictum* “nature knows best,” meaning that “the earth —untouched by human hands— is the ideal.”⁴² But, as the *Cornwall Declaration* notices, “[s]uch romanticism leads some to deify nature or oppose human dominion over creation.”⁴³ It is important to make clear, as the *Cornwall Declaration* does, that

“[o]ur position, informed by revelation and confirmed by reason and experience, views human stewardship that unlocks the potential in creation for all the earth’s inhabitants as good. Humanity alone of all the created order is capable of developing other resources and can thus enrich creation, so it can properly be said that the human person is the most valuable resource on earth. Human life, therefore, must be cherished and allowed to flourish. The alternative —denying the possibility of beneficial human management of the earth— removes all rationale for environmental stewardship.”⁴⁴

“There is no possibility of redemption for nature, animals in particular.”⁴⁵ If nature is seen as lacking the ethical dimension, or—even worse—the human realm is considered only a part of the natural world, this thesis follows logically. Needless to say, this position has serious consequences for the Christian view. As Linzey comments,

“[g]one is the operation of the Holy Spirit within creation leading to its rescue from bondage to decay. Absent is the whole eschatological frame of reference, so central to early Christian reflection upon nature, that creation can only properly be interpreted from the standpoint of its eventual consummation. Nature cannot be redeemed because there is nothing to be improved upon: no evil to be overcome, no pain to be healed, and no new heaven and earth for which all creatures long.”⁴⁶

This state of affairs seems to have an important antecedent in Darwinism, which, among its theses, holds that “the world is not constant or recently created nor perpetually cycling, but rather is steadily changing, and that organisms are transformed in time.”⁴⁷

“There is no human obligation to cooperate with God in the redemption of nature, animals in particular.”⁴⁸ The question here can be stated as follows: does the gospel of Jesus have “implications for the life of each and every sentient being,”⁴⁹ or only for human beings? Proponents of radical ecological movements—like deep ecology, eco-feminism, eco-centrism, and eco-philosophy—see religions, at most, like possible allies in their basic goal (“protecting natural phenomena from human destruction”⁵⁰), but don’t even consider the need or the meaning of ‘redemption of nature’. In any case, it is man himself who is in need of a radical *metanoia*, in order to experience “a profound connection with nature” and learn to appreciate “nature’s inherent worth or sacredness.”⁵¹ So, there is nothing to redeem in nature; man must cooperate with God to preserve natural diversity, “heal the Earth”⁵² (eco-philosophy), work “against the interconnected oppressions of gender, race, class and nature”⁵³ (eco-feminism), or advance morality into a new state, which will “[regulate] the conduct between humans and the environment” and enlarge “the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land”⁵⁴ (Aldo Leopold’s eco-centrism). Other movements (particularly, the Deep Ecology, inspired by Arne Naess and George Sessions), seem to care little about religion, since, for them, “Nature provides the ultimate measure by which to judge human endeavors.”⁵⁵

At the end of his essay, Linzey draws the conclusion that “to reject absolutely the possibility of a transformed new heaven and earth in which all sentients will be redeemed is logically tantamount to denying the possibility of a morally good God. A non-redeeming God in relation to nature is worse than a no-God; it is to endorse the common despair that all life is morally hopeless because there is no moral justifiability for its existence.”⁵⁶ These are hard words for modern ecologists’ ears. For them, there is no need of a moral justification of the existence of animals or plants. GS 29, in which we read that God made creation “on man’s account”, seems to be alien to present day’s sensibility. As Arne Naess and George Sessions hold in the Deep Ecology Platform, “[t]he well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth have value in themselves ... These values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes.”⁵⁷ Something very similar can be found in The Green Cross Earth Charter

Philosophy: “[t]he Earth and its biodiversity, including the atmosphere, seas, fresh water, soils and forests, all have intrinsic value.”⁵⁸ A Catholic may agree that all beings of the universe have intrinsic value, since we read in the book of Genesis that on the sixth day of Creation, “God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good;”⁵⁹ the problem arises, however, when some ecologists adduce that all beings (including human beings, of course) have *the same* intrinsic value. No wonder, Arne Naess and George Sessions thought that “[t]he flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of nonhuman life requires such a decrease.”⁶⁰ This position is unacceptable for a Christian. We know that we “are worth more than many sparrows.”⁶¹ “The opening pages of Scripture also repeatedly emphasize that the Creator looked upon his creation and “saw that it was good” (Gen. 1:4; 1:10; 1:12; 1:18; 1:21; 1:25). Of all his good creation, it is God’s creation of mankind that completes the created order in such a way that he pronounces it to be “very good” (Gen. 1:31).”⁶² The psalmist also sings: “you have made him little less than a god, /with glory and honor you crowned him, /gave him power over the works of your hand, /put all things under his feet.”⁶³ It is certainly a challenge for Catholic thought to hold at the same time the intrinsic value of nonhuman beings, and the superior worth of man. The solution to the challenge may be found in the concept of stewardship, properly understood.

4. Stewardship: For the Good of Nature and the Good of Man

Man is God’s steward, not the dominator, of creation. The Lord placed him in the Garden of Eden “to cultivate and care for it.”⁶⁴ Man has to cultivate nature in order to find remedy to his original nakedness, but he must do so in such a way as not to destroy the original good and beauty of creatures. Responsible stewardship means, hence, to “serve the good of human beings and all of creation as well.”⁶⁵ But, is it possible to serve the good of creation? In what way? Wouldn’t nature be better off if man refrained of exercising dominion over it, as some environmentalists think? “Nowhere does revelation suggest (as do some contemporary religious and secular environmentalists) that creation, undisturbed by human intervention, is the final order God intended.”⁶⁶

Catholic theology sees history as a linear process aiming to a final state of perfection. Time is not static or circular. “This is not to say that God’s creation was imperfect at the beginning, but that creation is not finished and will achieve its final perfection as it progresses through stages of development until it reaches that end for which creation was intended.”⁶⁷ Creation is not finished, and God calls us to be co-creators with Him, through our intelligent and responsible cultivation and care of nature. No other creature has “the power, intelligence, and responsibility to help order the world in accord with divine providence.”⁶⁸ On the other hand, nature itself only releases its full potentiality if it is put at the service of human progress: “[t]he human creature receives a mission to govern creation in order to make all its potential shine.”⁶⁹ In summary, the good of nature is the good of man, and vice versa.

While some radical environmentalists long for a pre-industrial (or even pre-agricultural) society, where man did not endanger creation to the levels we see in our day, other groups (particularly, some Christian fundamentalists) think that destruction of the environment is justified for human flourishing. After all —they reason, following a literal interpretation of the Book of Revelations, or maybe of Chapter 3 of 2 Peter—, our planet *has* no future, since in the End Time (which many

believe we are actually living in), Christ will make all things new.⁷⁰ This is the context of the declaration that President Reagan's first secretary of the interior, James Watt, gave to the U.S. Congress in 1981, about the protection of natural resources. In light of the imminent return of Jesus Christ—he apparently reasoned—, protecting the environment was unimportant: “God gave us these things to use. After the last tree is felled, Christ will come back,” he was reported to say.⁷¹

If any thing characterizes the Catholic outlook, in contrast with radical environmentalism and Christian fundamentalism, it is the positive and optimistic view of the relationship of man and nature. “[M]an's harmony with his fellow beings, with creation and with God is the plan followed by the Creator.”⁷² Nature is not evil, but weak; it is damaged, but is waiting to “set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God.”⁷³ The Catholic outlook carefully avoids the extreme mistakes of naturalism (materialism), and Manichaeism. “The materialist cares only for this world: the Manichean despises this world.”⁷⁴ The Christian loves creation as he loves his body: as an instrument that will help him to be counted among the “heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only [he] suffer[s] with him so that [he] may also be glorified with him.”⁷⁵ Nature is good and beautiful, and certainly, for a Catholic, “the protection of Earth's vitality, diversity, and beauty”⁷⁶ is a duty; but God made nature for man and not man for nature, and that good and beauty would turn meaningless if it not were for the Creator's praise: “For from the greatness and the beauty of created things their original author, by analogy, is seen.”⁷⁷

All that has been said is not meant to deny that in the present time, we may be endangering creation. John Paul II certainly traces a sad picture, when he says that “[m]an, especially in our time, has without hesitation devastated wooded plains and valleys, polluted waters, disfigured the earth's habitat, made the air unbreathable, disturbed the hydrogeological and atmospheric systems, turned luxuriant areas into deserts and undertaken forms of unrestrained industrialization, degrading that ‘flowerbed’ —to use an image from Dante Alighieri (Paradiso, XXII, 151)— which is the earth, our dwelling-place.”⁷⁸ But this only means that “[m]an is no longer the Creator's “steward”, but an autonomous despot.”⁷⁹ We know that “[m]an's dominion over inanimate and other living beings granted by the Creator is not absolute; it is limited by concern for the quality of life of his neighbor, including generations to come; it requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation.”⁸⁰

In order to exercise a responsible stewardship, man must practice the virtues, especially temperance, which will allow him to avoid the vice of consumerism. But consumerism is not only a moral flaw. In a major scale, it is a consequence of

“an anthropological error, which unfortunately is widespread in our day. Humankind, which discovers its capacity to transform and in a certain sense create the world through its own work, forgets that this is always based on God's prior and original gift of the things that are. People think that they can make arbitrary use of the earth, subjecting it without restraint to their wills, as though the earth did not have its own requisites and a prior God-given purpose, which human beings can indeed develop but must not betray. Instead of carrying out one's role as a cooperator with God in the work of creation, a person sets

himself up in place of God and thus ends up provoking a rebellion on the part of nature, which is more tyrannized than governed by him.”⁸¹

People of our time, especially in the developed countries, need to recover a sense of gratitude, in order to be able to recognize God’s original gift of the things that are. And for this, we need to cultivate the habit of contemplation. GS forewarned about the risk, present in modern society, of loosing the “faculties of contemplation and observation which lead to wisdom.”⁸² Certainly, “[i]t is... through the gift of the Holy Spirit that man comes by faith to the contemplation and appreciation of the divine plan,”⁸³ but it is not less true that “the human spirit, being less subjected to material things, can be more easily drawn to the worship and contemplation of the Creator.”⁸⁴

5. Stewardship in Other Christian Churches and Islam

I have already mentioned that some Christian fundamentalists sustain that stewardship of the environment is not necessary, in light of the prophesied destruction of the natural order on doomsday. It may be the case that “most of the roughly 50 million right-wing fundamentalist Christians in the United States believe in some form of End-Time theology.”⁸⁵ These Christians are convinced that we are already living in the End Time, and consequently it becomes necessary to prepare—or to facilitate—Christ’s second coming. The foundation of the State of Israel, the natural or human catastrophes (like the hurricanes in Florida, the 9/11 attacks, or the recent tsunami in Southeastern Asia), or even changes in law and morals, like gay marriages, are seen as signs of the imminent coming of Jesus for Christian Zionists, dispensationalists or dominionists, among other groups. It seems clear enough that “[p]eople under the spell of such potent prophecies cannot be expected to worry about the environment”⁸⁶.

But not all the Evangelical churches or movements disregard environmental issues. The Baptist Church of America, for in stance, has issued a statement on ecology that keeps close resemblance with the Catholic position: Here is what they say:

“[w]e are called to cooperate with God in the transformation of a fallen world that has not fulfilled its divinely given potential for beauty, peace, health, harmony, justice and joy (Isa. 11:6-9, Micah 4:3-4, Eph. 2:10, Rev. 21:1-5). Our task is nothing less than to join God in preserving, renewing and fulfilling the creation. It is to relate to nature in ways that sustain life on the planet, provide for the essential material and physical needs of all humankind, and increase justice and well-being for all life in a peaceful world.”⁸⁷

Another interesting Evangelical initiative is the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN). The EEN presents itself as “a unique evangelical ministry whose purpose is to ‘declare the Lordship of Christ over all creation’ (Col. 1:15-20).” For them, “many ‘environmental’ problems are fundamentally spiritual problems.”⁸⁸ Their position on religion and ecology is similar to the Catholic perspective, with some differences that will be pointed out later on.

In their “Declaration on the Care of Creation”⁸⁹, the EEN affirms the following: 1) “Because we worship and honor the Creator, we seek to cherish and care for the creation.” 2) “Because we have sinned, we have failed in our stewardship of creation.” 3) “Because we await the time when

even the groaning creation will be restored to wholeness, we commit ourselves to work vigorously to protect and heal that creation for the honor and glory of the Creator...”⁹⁰

EEN also regrets the fact that many concerned people look for resources for the healing of earth in ideologies or religions others than Christianity. They believe, on the contrary, that the Bible treasures enough wisdom as to teach us how to care for the creation. In their outlook, the Bible calls Christians to respond to environmental problems in four ways: 1) “Repent of attitudes which devalue creation,” since the earth belongs to the Lord. 2) “Resist both ideologies which would presume the Gospel has nothing to do with the care of non-human creation and also ideologies which would reduce the Gospel to nothing more than the care of that creation.” 3) “Learn all that the Bible tells us about the Creator, creation, and the human task,” keeping in mind that “creation... is still waiting ‘with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God,’ (Rom. 8:19).” 4) Try to understand what creation and its order reveals us about God’s divinity, sustaining presence and power.

The thesis that Redemption extends to all creatures, and not only to human beings, is also affirmed by the EEN in these principles: “God’s purpose in Christ is to heal and bring to wholeness not only persons but the entire created order”⁹¹... We believe that in Christ there is hope, not only for men, women and children, but also for the rest of creation which is suffering from the consequences of human sin.” They also refer to the problem of consumerism in terms similar to the ones employed by John Paul II.

Although the Evangelical Platform is an only-Bible based approach, its conclusions about the stewardship of creation are surprisingly close to the Catholic doctrine. Two related matters, however, are left behind in their approach: first, the enhancement of creation through human work; and second, the idea of human beings as co-creators with God. Also, the Catholic approach sees science and human ingenuity as very positive, and, in fact, as the better means to solve ecological problems and at the same time care for the life of millions of people. The Evangelical outlook does not seem to have too much confidence in science or in human reason. On the other hand, they claim to have a ‘holistic ethic’, since “creation-care does not just mean caring for ‘nature,’ nor does it just mean caring for humanity; it means caring for both.”⁹² Perhaps, the Catholic approach, with its confidence in man’s reason, is too ‘anthropocentric’ for them. Or is it just a matter of words?

As for the Orthodox Church, the coincidence couldn’t be greater. There is even a joint Declaration on the Environment, signed by Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, on June 10, 2002⁹³. In this Declaration, some things are worth noticing: 1) “Respect for creation stems from respect for human life and dignity.” We must care for nature because human life and dignity demand such a care. 2) Ecological irresponsibility is at heart a moral problem. What is required to solve that problem “is an act of repentance on our part and a renewed attempt to view ourselves, one another, and the world around us within the perspective of the divine design for creation.” 3) Science is a good instrument for making the world a better place, but “the findings of science have always to be evaluated in the light of the centrality of the human person, of the common good, and of the inner purpose of creation.” 4) There is no single answer to the question of how to live in this world, or what to change and what to leave

unchanged. Consequently, we Christians must “commit ourselves to respect the views of all who disagree with us.”

On the occasion of the Fifth Symposium on Environment which took place on a boat down the Baltic Sea, on June, 2003, the Holy Father sent a Message to His Holiness Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. On that message, the Pope said that “it is imperative... that the true nature of the ecological crisis be understood.”⁹⁴ For him, at the bottom of the ecological crisis lies an anthropological error, “which arises when man forgets that his ability to transform the world must always respect God’s design of creation.”⁹⁵ What is needed, then, is an inner change of heart, an ecological conversion, which should lead us to the rejection of “unsustainable patterns of consumption and production,” and to live in accordance with the principles of justice and solidarity.

Maybe —and I say just ‘maybe’— the main difference between the Roman Catholic outlook and the Orthodox one is, if we can say so, a difference of emphasis. While the Orthodox emphasizes the inner conversion, the Catholic approach pays more attention to justice and solidarity among people. Take, for instance, these words of His All Holiness Bartholomew:

“in relation to the environment, we are to display what the *Philokalia* and other spiritual texts of the Orthodox Church call *enkrateia*, ‘self-restraint.’ That is to say, we are to practice a voluntary self-limitation in our consumption of food and natural resources. Each of us is called to make the crucial distinction between what we want and what we need. Only through such self-denial, through our willingness sometimes to forgo and to say, ‘no’ or ‘enough’ will we rediscover our true human place in the universe.”⁹⁶

If the Patriarch pays more attention to ‘self-restraint,’ the Pope prefers to speak of a ‘human’ ecology that “will render the life of creatures more dignified, protecting the radical good of life in all its manifestations and preparing an environment for future generations that is closer to the plan of the Creator.”⁹⁷ This is not to say, of course, that the Pope does not see consumerism as an anthropological error, as we have seen. But the *enkrateia*’s goal, for John Paul II —I dare to say—, is not only to discover our true place in the universe, but to exercise justice and solidarity with our fellow beings. It is through the practice of a voluntary self-limitation, made for the sake of love that we find our place in cosmos. In any case, the Orthodox vision adds to the Catholic doctrine on ecology a much needed emphasis: the need of the cross. Bartholomew I makes no concession on this point: “Such is the foundation of any environmental ethic. The Cross must be plunged into the waters. The Cross must be at the very center of our vision. Without the Cross, without sacrifice, there can be no blessing and no cosmic transfiguration.”⁹⁸

Finally, in what remains of this section, I will summarize and comment the paper “An Islamic Approach to the Environment,”⁹⁹ by Ibrahim Ozdemir, professor at the Divinity School of Ankara University, Turkey.

The Islamic view of the environment, according to Ozdemir, emphasizes God’s dominion over all creatures, but it also recognizes that man is God’s ‘vicegerent’ on earth. Nature speaks out the greatness of its creator; the whole universe is a book that makes us know our Sustainer, and it

has been “entrusted to us to preserve and protect.” It follows that we must show respect for the trust, trying to preserve carefully its natural resources.

Reflecting upon a passage of Qu’ran¹⁰⁰ that brings to our memory God’s discourse in the final chapters of the Book of Job, Prof. Ozdemir comments that man is nothing compared to God, and that “as God’s vicegerent on earth, at the Last Judgement man will be called to account for how he acted towards the trust, and how he treated it.” Caring for the environment, consequently, is not just a matter of convenience for human beings; is a sacred duty.

An original contribution of Islamism to environmental ethics is the concept of ‘unity.’ “The concept of Divine unity is the basis and essence of Islam,” explains Prof. Ozdemir. “Divine unity is apparent in the unity of humanity and of nature. God’s vicegerents on the earth, the holders of His trust, are therefore primarily responsible for preserving the unity of creatures, the integral wholeness of the world, the flora and fauna, and wildlife and natural environment.”¹⁰¹ The holistic approach that we saw present in the Evangelical Network is akin to this view.

Another element much cherished for contemporary society is cleanliness. For Muslims, “cleanliness is half of belief.” They must care not only for personal cleanliness (of body parts¹⁰²), but for the cleanliness of the common environment. The Prophet Muhammad “forbade the dirtying of the roads and paths people used, and the places they sat and rested.” The universe, for Muslims, is clean, and it’s the sacred duty of believers to keep it that way.

6. Environmental Justice

For what has been said so far, we can conclude that man’s relationship to the environment is a matter of justice. It may be the case, as Charles Murphy argues, that concern for the environment will be “the next step in the church’s still-evolving social doctrine. That doctrine already takes very seriously the good ordering of our earthly life and makes it an essential part of our religious obligations. Now that teaching must demonstrate a full commitment to environmental concerns.”¹⁰³ Actually, GS already states that “man is able to love the things themselves created by God, and ought to do so” (No. 37), and the new *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* dedicates an entire chapter to environmental issues.¹⁰⁴

It is a matter of justice, also, to share the earth’s goods, since God created the goods of the earth to be used by all, and GS reminds us that “[W]hatever the forms of property may be, as adapted to the legitimate institutions of peoples, according to diverse and changeable circumstances, attention must always be paid to this universal destination of earthly goods. In using them, therefore, man should regard the external things that he legitimately possesses not only as his own but also as common in the sense that they should be able to benefit not only him but also others” (No. 69). Sharing the earth’s goods also means sharing care for the environment. Ecological problems nowadays occur in a global scale, and international cooperation is necessary.

Ecological problems are also connected with poverty. Very frequently, specially in third world countries, poor people is unable to cope with problems such as the erosion of farming lands, due to the lack of proper technology —consequence, in turn, of economic limitations. People living

in urban slums also contaminate the environment. “In such cases hunger and poverty make it virtually impossible to avoid an intense and excessive exploitation of the environment.”¹⁰⁵ Catholic Social Doctrine, however, has always held that the answer to these problems is not population control, since policies of that sort do not respect the dignity of the human person.

As I see the issue, this lack of respect for the environment and the people —this injustice, in sum— is a symptom of an illness of our culture. I would call that illness ‘alienation.’ Modern man is estranged from nature —and that includes his body. What else if not injustice toward nature and toward his body is the use of artificial methods of birth control? In such cases (pills, preservatives, etc.), nature does not receive its due. The very name of ‘preservative’ or ‘protection’ that is given to condoms is symptomatic. What are we protecting from? Nature and its course? A contemporary writer notices that

[t]here is an uncanny *resemblance* between our behavior toward each other and our behavior toward the earth. Between our relation to our own sexuality and our relation to the reproductivity of the earth, for instance, the resemblance is plain and strong and apparently inescapable. By some connection that we do not recognize, the willingness to exploit one becomes the willingness to exploit the other. The conditions and the means of exploitation are likewise similar. The modern failure of marriage that has so estranged the sexes from each other seems analogous to the “social mobility” that has estranged us from our land, and the two are historically parallel. It may even be argued that these two estrangements are very close to being one, both of them caused by the disintegration of the household, which was the formal bond between marriage and the earth, between human sexuality and its sources in the sexuality of creation.¹⁰⁶

In my opinion, the ecological crisis of our time, as I said before, is a simply a manifestation of a great injustice, of an indiscriminate use of technology against nature, against our own bodies, and against the law of God. Peace between us, and between us and nature, will not be achieved by the use of more technology and planning. Our action toward creation must be characterized by gratitude and appreciation¹⁰⁷, and that includes gratitude and appreciation for the gift of life —human life included, of course.

From this perspective, abortion is the worst ecological injustice of our time. I am not going to repeat the figures, but it is a fact that abortion kills more human beings every year than famines, wars and natural disasters, taken together. It does not make sense to claim for the survival of whales, when we do not care about the life millions of members of our kind. And the argument that fetuses are not persons does not count. Even assuming that —which is not true—, fetuses are human fetuses, a kind of life that deserves respect.

I am not speaking of irresponsible procreation. I am speaking of living in accordance with the laws of nature, and with a sense of gratitude and profound respect for life. We can call that attitude ‘benevolence’: to effectively desire the good for all beings, which implies to help them to achieve their proper end, and not to use them merely as means to our interests. The categorical imperative, which commands us to treat people always as ends and not merely as means, can be extended to include all sentient beings: “Act so as to use *life*, whether in your own *body* or in other forms of *life*, always as an end, and never merely as a means.”

Benevolence towards nature makes us contemplate the mystery of life and the cosmic order as something well ordered and endowed with ends. Through that fascinating order we glimpse the Supreme Being who is its cause. When we adopt this attitude, man is seen not only as the improver of himself, but also as the improver of Nature. Work, that noble creative toil of human beings, is then assumed and incorporated in the prodigious act of Creation¹⁰⁸, as a part of it, as something which adds perfection and beauty to it.

7. Conclusions

In 1854, Chief Seattle, of the Suquamish tribe, gave a famous speech, in which he compared the Western view of the relationship of man and nature, with the view of his people, the natives of North America. Among other things, he said the following:

“Your dead cease to love you and the land of their nativity as soon as they pass the portals of the tomb and wander away beyond the stars. They are soon forgotten and never return. Our dead never forget this beautiful world that gave them being. They still love its verdant valleys, its murmuring rivers, its magnificent mountains, sequestered vales and verdant lined lakes and bays, and ever yearn in tender fond affection over the lonely hearted living, and often return from the happy hunting ground to visit, guide, console, and comfort them.”¹⁰⁹

It is possible that in the mid 19th century, Chief Seattle’s vision of nature seemed too naturalistic to the Christian mind. But after a hundred and fifty years of industrialization and technological improvements, things have changed, and we can say that today, in general terms, the Christian sensibility is more open to ecological values than ever.

To be open to ecological values, for the Christian doctrine, means—in my opinion—to accept the validity of the claims of some environmental movements with respect to the defense of endangered species, and the cleanliness of the environment. It also means recognizing that its message about the stewardship of creation has not always been correctly understood by Christians and non-Christians, provoking the accusation that Christianity inculcates a specifically ‘exploitative’ attitude toward nature and consequently that Christianity bears a great burden of guilt for the current environmental crisis.¹¹⁰

But the most interesting side of this new sensibility—at least from my point of view—is the realization that perhaps Chief Seattle was right, and that we, Christians, have not loved properly the land of our nativity. To long for the vision of God must not imply to despise this world, on the grounds that in the other world we’ll find all the good things of earth, purified from the corruption of sin. On the other hand, we know that creation as it is now is not God’s original will. The redemption that Christ brought us has consequences for the whole universe, and not only for our souls. Perhaps the social doctrine of the Church should put more emphasis on this point, in order to make Catholics realize that when we destroy or mistreat the natural world, we are engaging in actions that *contradict what it means to be human*, and, consequently, are not acting as good Christians.

Catholics, in particular, need to feel *at home on earth*, remembering that “activity in this world is the irreplaceable beginning place of the next world,”¹¹¹ and that God loves his creation. The danger of materialism or naturalism is avoided if we recall, with Saint Josemaría Escrivá, that “authentic Christianity, which professes the resurrection of all flesh, has always quite logically opposed ‘dis-incarnation’, without fear of being judged materialistic. We can, therefore, rightfully speak of a ‘Christian materialism’, which is boldly opposed to that materialism which is blind to the spirit.”¹¹²

To be open to ecological values does not imply, however, to abandon the defense of the dignity of the human person, which has been the main characteristic of our social doctrine, in favor of a pretended holism, in which nature, Mother Earth or Gaïa is the Supreme Being. This is a non-negotiable point. We cannot deny the right of life to unborn children in the name of the ecological equilibrium. To be ‘ecological’ should mean, for man in our century, to accept the gift of life, and to respect its laws. The change should take place in our habits of consumption. As the Pope says, “the followers of Jesus [should] resist the allure of wastefulness and over consumption by making personal lifestyle choices that express humility, forbearance, self restraint and frugality.”

On the other hand, science and technology are legitimate conquests of the human mind, and it is right to use them to improve our lives, and to use them to palliate any kind of ecological damage. The view of GS cannot be more positive in this respect:

When man develops the earth by the work of his hands or with the aid of technology, in order that it might bear fruit and become a dwelling worthy of the whole human family..., he carries out the design of God manifested at the beginning of time, that he should subdue the earth, perfect creation and develop himself.¹¹³

The dominion over earth and earthly creatures made possible by technology has its justification in the development of man and the perfection of creation. When man uses that technology in such a way that he contradicts the laws of nature, as in the case of medical research used in favor of abortion or contraception, he opens a gap between him and nature; he becomes alienated from nature, and either glorifies her, or despises her.

The origin of this ‘ecological injustice’ lies in a wrong vision of man and his relation to nature. If we see our relation to nature as one of exploitation, instead of one of responsible stewardship, we feel authorized to treat all things, including our own bodies, as instruments for our egotistical interests, instead of seeing them as creatures of God. The correct attitude toward nature is benevolence: give our assent to the real,¹¹⁴ and try to use *life*, whether in our own *bodies* or in other forms of *life*, always as an end, and never merely as a means.

In 1989, Monsignor Charles Murphy wrote that that concern for the environment would be “the next step in the church’s still-evolving social doctrine.” He even dared to say that “the church may perhaps one day feel she has the right to call herself also expert on life on earth.”¹¹⁵ As a matter of fact, the new *Compendium of the Social Doctrine* of the Church dedicates a full chapter to ecology. The recent declarations of the Episcopal Conferences of Guatemala (January) and the Philippines (last month) on the issue of mining activities in their respective countries is a token

of the ‘ecological awareness’ that is beginning to find a place in the social teaching of the Church.

Finally, the ecumenical way must not be forgotten in the process of incorporation of ecology to the Catholic social doctrine. Fortunately, there is great coincidence among Christian churches on this issue, and joined declarations (such as the *Declaration on the Environment*, signed by Pope John Paul and the Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, in 2002) should be celebrated.

¹ *Declaration on the Environment*, Signed by Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, June 10, 2002, <http://conservation.Catholic.org/declaration.htm>, visited Jun 15, 2004.

² Cf. GS, No. 4

³ Pope John Paul II, *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation*. Message for the celebration of the World Day of Peace, January 1, 1990, No. 1.

⁴ United States Catholic Conference, *Renewing the Earth. An Invitation to Reflection and Action on Environment in Light of Catholic Social Teaching*, November 14, 1991, <http://www.usccb.org>, visited Dec 22, 2004.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Cf. *Rom.* 12:2.

⁹ Pope John Paul II, *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation*, No. 15.

¹⁰ GS, No. 11.

¹¹ Charles Murphy, *At Home on Earth. Foundations for a Catholic Ethic of the Environment* (Crossroad, NY: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 1989), p. xx.

¹² Consider the Eucharist.

¹³ Charles Murphy, p. xx.

¹⁴ *Heb.* 13:14.

¹⁵ Cf. *Mat.* 5:5.

¹⁶ Charles Murphy, p. 3.

¹⁷ GS anticipates this doctrine, in No. 21: the Church “teaches that a hope related to the end of time does not diminish the importance of intervening duties but rather undergirds the acquittal of them with fresh incentives.”

¹⁸ Pope John Paul II’s General Audience Address, January 17, 2001.

¹⁹ GS, No. 12.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Michel Schooyans, “Globalization’s Dark Side. Would a One-World Government Protect Real Human Rights?,” <http://www.zenit.org>, Sept 8, 2001, visited Dec 20, 2004.

²² Rockefeller, “The Earth Charter.”

²³ *The Earth Charter*, “Preamble,” <http://www.earthcharter.org>, visited Dec 20, 2004.

²⁴ Schooyans, “Globalization’s Dark Side.”

²⁵ “Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself” (GS, No. 22)

²⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 355.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, No. 356.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, No. 356.

²⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, No. 373.

³⁰ *The Earth Charter*, “The Challenges Ahead.”

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- ³¹ *Ibid.*, “Universal Responsibility,” and “Preamble.”
- ³² GS, No. 2.
- ³³ *Rom.* 8:22-23: “We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.”
- ³⁴ *Isa.* 11:6-9: “Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; The calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them. The cow and the bear shall be neighbors, together their young shall rest; the lion shall eat hay like the ox. The baby shall play by the cobra’s den, and the child lay his hand on the adder’s lair. There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord, as water covers the sea.”
- ³⁵ Andrew Linzey, “Unfinished Creation: The Moral and Theological Significance of the Fall,” *Ecotheology* 4 (1998), p. 22.
- ³⁶ Acton Institute, “The Catholic Church and Stewardship of Creation,” http://www.acton.org/ppolicy/environment/theology/m_Catholic.html, visited Jan. 20, 2005.
- ³⁷ Linzey, p. 23.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 25.
- ⁴¹ *Vid.* Richard Cartwright Austin, *Beauty of the Lord: Awakening the Senses* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988).
- ⁴² Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship, *The Cornwall Declaration on Environmental Stewardship*, no. 2, http://conservation.Catholic.org/cornwall_declaration.htm, visited Dec 31, 2004.
- ⁴³ *The Cornwall Declaration*, No. 2.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁵ Linzey, p. 23.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.
- ⁴⁷ Joel Hanes, “What is Darwinism?,” <http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/darwinism.html>, visited Jan 18, 2005.
- ⁴⁸ Linzey, p. 24.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁰ Bron Taylor and Michael Zimmerman, “Deep Ecology,” *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, www.religionandnature.com/bron/ern/Taylor+Zim--DeepEcology.pdf, visited Jan 17, 2005.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁵² Eco-philosophy, “About the EPC,” <http://www.ecophilosophy.org/>, visited Jan 17, 2005.
- ⁵³ “What is Ecofeminism?,” <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/staff/twine/ecofem/whatisecofeminism.html>, visited Jan 17, 2005. See, also, www.ecofem.org.
- ⁵⁴ “Environmental Ethics,” [http://www2.univ-reunion.fr/~duban/EvIm\(on site\)/Environmental ethics/evl.ethics.Leopold.html](http://www2.univ-reunion.fr/~duban/EvIm(on%20site)/Environmental%20ethics/evl.ethics.Leopold.html), visited Jan 17, 2005.
- ⁵⁵ Foundation for Deep Ecology, “Mission statement,” <http://www.deepecology.org/mission.html>, visited Jan 17, 2005.
- ⁵⁶ Linzey, p. 25.
- ⁵⁷ Arne Naess and George Sessions, “Deep Ecology Platform,” <http://home.ca.inter.net/~greenweb/DE-Platform.html>, visited Jan 19, 2005.
- ⁵⁸ <http://www.gci.ch/GreenCrossPrograms/earthcharter/proposedtexts/EarthCharterPhilosophy.html>, visited Dec 19, 2004.
- ⁵⁹ *Gen.* 1:31. See also *Pro.* 8:29-31, Cf, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 36: “The faithful, therefore, must learn the deepest meaning and the value of all creation, as well as its role in the harmonious praise of God.”
- ⁶⁰ Arne Naess and George Sessions, “Deep Ecology Platform.”
- ⁶¹ *Mt.* 10:31, *Mt.* 6:26, *Luk.* 12:7.
- ⁶² Acton Institute, “The Catholic Church and Stewardship of Creation.”
- ⁶³ *Ps.* 8:3-8
- ⁶⁴ *Gen.* 2:15.
- ⁶⁵ Acton Institute.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

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- ⁶⁹ Pope John Paul II, "God made man the steward of creation," General Audience - January 17, 2001, <http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP2STWRD.HTM>, visited Jan 21, 2005.
- ⁷⁰ *Rev.* 21-22. 2 Pe. 3, particularly, vv. 7, 10-13.
- ⁷¹ Cited by Glenn Scherer, "The Godly Must Be Crazy. Christian-right views are swaying politicians and threatening the environment," *Grist Magazine*, Oct 27, 2004, <http://www.grist.org/news/maindish/2004/10/27/scherer-christian/>, visited Jan 21, 2005.
- ⁷² Pope John Paul II, "God made man the steward of creation."
- ⁷³ *Rom.* 8:21.
- ⁷⁴ John Cardinal Wright, "Introduction," in Christoher Derrick, *The Delicate Creation. Towards a Theology of the Environment* (Old Greenwich, Conn.: The Devin-Adair Company, 1972), p. x.
- ⁷⁵ *Rom.* 8:17.
- ⁷⁶ *The Earth Charter.*
- ⁷⁷ *Wis.* 13:5. See, also, *Rom.* 1: 19.
- ⁷⁸ Pope John Paul II, "God made man the steward of creation."
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 2415.
- ⁸¹ Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, No. 37.
- ⁸² GS, No. 56.
- ⁸³ GS, No. 15.
- ⁸⁴ GS, No. 57.
- ⁸⁵ Glenn Scherer, "The Godly Must Be Crazy."
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁷ "American Baptist Policy Statement on Ecology: An Ecological Situational Analysis," <http://www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/ecology.htm>, visited Jan 22, 2005.
- ⁸⁸ Evangelical Environmental Network & Creation Care Magazine, "Welcome," <http://www.creationcare.org/>, visited Jan 25, 2005.
- ⁸⁹ Signed by nearly 500 leaders, including Robert Sieple, former President of World Vision, Steve Hayner, former President, Intervarsity, Bishop Kevin Mannoia, former President, National Association of Evangelicals, President of Evangelicals for Social Action Ron Sider, David Neff, Executive Editor of Christianity Today, and Fuller Seminary President Richard Mouw.
- ⁹⁰ Evangelical Environmental Network & Creation Care Magazine, "On the Care of Creation. An Evangelical Declaration on the Care of Creation," <http://www.creationcare.org/resources/declaration.php>, Jan 23, 2005.
- ⁹¹ They cite here Col. 1:19-20: "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross."
- ⁹² Evangelical Environmental Network & Creation Care Magazine, "Scripture," <http://www.creationcare.org/resources/scripture.php>, visited Jan 23, 2005.
- ⁹³ *Declaration on the Environment, Signed by Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople*, June 10, 2002, <http://conservation.Catholic.org/declaration.htm>, visited Jun 15, 2004.
- ⁹⁴ Pope John Paul II, "To the Fifth International Environmental Symposium." <http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP2ENVSY.HTM>, visited Jan 23, 2005.
- ⁹⁵ Cf. *Centesimus Annus*, No. 37.
- ⁹⁶ Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, "Address on Environmental Ethics," <http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/articlesprint/BartolomeosEnvironmentP.shtml>, visited Jan 24, 2005. (The address was delivered in the Ducal Palace in Venice by Patriarch Bartholomew prior to signing the joint declaration with John Paul on protection of the environment.)
- ⁹⁷ Pope John Paul II, General Audience Address, January 17, 2001, http://conservation.Catholic.org/john_paul_ii.htm, visited Jan 24, 2005.
- ⁹⁸ Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, "Address on Environmental Ethics."
- ⁹⁹ http://www.crescentlife.com/spirituality/islamic_approach_to_environment.htm, visited Jan 24, 2005.
- ¹⁰⁰ "And you certainly know already the first form of creation: why then do you not celebrate His praises? /See you the seed that you sow in the ground?/ Is it you that cause it to grow, or are We the cause?/ Were it our will, We could crumble it to dry powder, and you would be left in wonderment,/ [Saying], "We are indeed left with debts [for nothing];/ "Indeed are we shut out [of the fruits of our labour]."/ See you the water which you drink?/ Do you bring it down [in rain] from the cloud or do We?/ Were it our will, We could make it salt [and unpalatable]; then why do

you not give thanks?/ See you the fire which you kindle?/ Is it you who grow the tree which feeds the fire, or do We grow it? / It is We Who make it a means to remind [you of Us], and an article of comfort and convenience for the denizens of deserts./ Then celebrate with praises the name of your Sustainer, the Supreme!" (Qu'ran, 56:62-74.)

¹⁰¹ Compare this view with the following, by another Muslim writer: "The primary basis of an Islamic world view is the idea of Tauhid, or the oneness of God. A world view based on tauhid sees this universe as originating from God, returning to Him, and centered around Him. It is a world created and sustained by God with a purpose, and a design." Atiya and Irshaad Hussain, "Man and Ecology: An Islamic perspectiva," *Islam – From the Inside Out*, <http://members.rogers.com/islamfrominside/Pages/Articles/Ecology%20Environment%20and%20Islam.html>, visited Jan 28, 2005.

¹⁰² The Koran commands that at least five times a day Muslims must wash those parts of the body that may become dirtied.

¹⁰³ Ch. Murphy, *At Home on Earth*, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ Zenit News Agency, service 2005-02-12.

¹⁰⁵ Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, No. 482, cited in Zenit, service 2005-02-12.

¹⁰⁶ Wendell Berry, "The Body and the Earth," *Recollected Essays, 1965-1980* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1981), pp. 304-5, quoted in Charles Murphy, p. 14

¹⁰⁷ Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, chapter on environmental issues, cited in Zenit, service 2005-02-12.

¹⁰⁸ Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, *Conversaciones* (Madrid: Rialp, 1980), No. 10.

¹⁰⁹ "Chief Seattle's 1854 Oration," <http://www.halcyon.com/arborhts/chiefsea.html>, visited March 4, 2005.

¹¹⁰ Elspeth Whitney, "Lynn White's Thesis," [www.clas.ufl.edu/users/bron/ PDF--Christianity/Whitney--White%20Thesis.pdf](http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/bron/PDF--Christianity/Whitney--White%20Thesis.pdf), visited March 4, 2005.

¹¹¹ Charles Murphy, *At Home on Earth*, p. 141, paraphrasing Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 315-316.

¹¹² Josemaría Escrivá, *Conversaciones*, No. 115.

¹¹³ GS, No. 57.

¹¹⁴ Ricardo Yepes and Javier Aranguren, *Fundamentos de Antropología. Un ideal de la excelencia humana* (Pamplona: EUNSA, 1998), p. 95. The authors take this definition from Robert Spaemann, *Felicidad y Benevolencia* (Madrid: Rialp, 1990.)

¹¹⁵ Ch. Murphy, *At Home on Earth*, p. 126.