

People must live morally, ethically, to save environment, says pope

CASTEL GANDOLFO, Italy - The only way to put an end to environmental degradation is for people to live more simply and ethically, said Pope Benedict XVI.

All of creation represents “an enormous gift from God to humanity” so people have a responsibility to “protect this treasure” and dedicate themselves “against an indiscriminate use” of the earth’s resources, he said.

The pope made his comments during a Sept. 27 audience with members of the Italian Tourist Youth Center and the Belgium-based International Bureau of Social Tourism.

The audience also marked World Tourism Day which is sponsored by the U.N. World Tourism Organization. It was dedicated this year to the theme “Responding to the Challenge of Climate Change.”

“Environmental degradation can only be stopped by spreading an appropriate culture of behavior that includes more sober lifestyles,” the pope said.

“Without adequate ethical and moral limits, human behavior can, in fact, become a threat and challenge,” he said.

A responsible use of the world’s resources should also be part of “a healthy and sustainable economy” of the tourism industry, he said, noting that hurting the environment and local cultures also inflicts damage on the tourism industry.

“Learning to respect the environment also teaches respect for others and for ourselves,” he said.