

World Environment Day: God's creation, ecology, and the Ten Commandments for the Environment



"Although individual decisions may seem small in the face of global threats and trends, when billions of people join forces in common purpose, we can make a tremendous difference."

-U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon

World Environment Day, sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme, has been observed annually since 1972 on June 5. It was established to "raise global awareness to take positive environmental action to protect nature and the planet Earth."

Focusing this year on sustainable consumption and production, the 2015 slogan is "Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care." Dozens of nations across the globe are sponsoring programs and events in their schools and other organizations to promote action plans for taking care of the environment, since embracing more sustainable lifestyles is imperative to our grandchildren's futures.



"By 2050, if current consumption and production patterns remain the same and with a rising population expected to reach 9.6 billion, we will need three planets to sustain our way of life. Living well within planetary boundaries is the most promising strategy for ensuring a healthy future."

-The U.N. Environment Programme

Pope Francis and ecology:

This year's global call to action comes at a perfect time as people around the world await the June 18 release of "*Laudato Sii*" (Praised Be You), Pope Francis' encyclical on ecology and the environment. The title was revealed last weekend by the director of the Vatican Publishing House, Fr. Giuseppe Costa, and refers to St. Francis of Assisi's "Canticle of the Sun."

Citizens across the globe will be reading this encyclical as they await the Holy Father's September 25th visit to the United Nations to address the Special Summit on Sustainable Development.

"Respect for creation, then, is a requirement of our faith: The 'garden' in which we live is not entrusted to us to be exploited, but to be cultivated and tended with respect."

-Pope Francis, May 24 homily on the Solemnity of Pentecost

The Green Pope:

Pope Benedict XVI spoke out frequently on our responsibility to care for God's creation, earning him the label the "Green Pope."

Journalist Woodeene Koenig-Bricker gleaned the Holy Father Emeritus' comments on ecology from his writings and addresses and published them, along with her own commentary, in "Ten Commandments for the Environment: Pope Benedict XVI Speaks Out for Creation and Justice" (Ave Maria Press, 2009).



Ave Maria Radio, an affiliate of EWTN, has published Koenig-Bricker's "ten commandments" from Pope Benedict XVI.

Read more about her commentary on the following ten themes here on their website:

1. *Use, Don't Abuse*
2. *Little Less Than A God*
3. *One For All, All For One*
4. *It's Not A Brave New World*
5. *Gaia Isn't God*
6. *What Price Progress?*
7. *Flowing Like A River*
8. *We're All In The Same Boat*
9. *Discipline Is Not A Four-Letter Word*
10. *It's All Gift*

How will you observe World Environment Day?

Go, make a difference!!