

ZE11060908 - 2011-06-09

Permalink: <http://www.zenit.org/article-32805?l=english>

"Green Pope" Reiterates Call for "Human Ecology"

Reflects on Proper Role of Technology

VATICAN CITY, JUNE 9, 2011 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Speaking to envoys from six nations representing four continents, Benedict XVI today affirmed that creation needs to be respected, and that a "human ecology" is imperative.

The Pope said this in a French-language address to the new ambassadors to the Holy See from Moldova, Equatorial Guinea, Syria, Ghana, Belize and New Zealand, who have presented their letters of credence to the Pontiff.

Human ecology is a term the Holy Father has used on various [occasions](#), referring to a holistic defense of human life, including in regard to protecting life from conception to natural death, but also in defending marriage and aiding the poor.

The Pope brought up the theme by noting the "innumerable tragedies that have affected nature, technology and people" in the first half of this year. "The magnitude of these catastrophes challenges us."

"It is good to remember that before all else, the person comes first," he said. "Humanity, to whom God has entrusted the stewardship of nature, cannot be dominated by technology and become its subject. This awareness should lead states to reflect together on the short-term future of the planet, given their responsibilities with regard to our lives and technology. Human ecology is an imperative."

Benedict XVI said that political and economic priorities must include research on clean energy and the adoption of policies that respect our surroundings.

Nature, he said, is not for amusement or exploitation: "It is, rather, the place where man was born; his "home," so to speak. It is essential for us. A change in mentality in this realm, even with the contradictions it entails, must make it possible to quickly arrive at a global lifestyle that respects the covenant between humanity and nature, without which the human family risks disappearing."

The Bishop of Rome said the United Nations is the appropriate framework for this discussion, so that partisan politics and economic interests don't get in the way, "in order to give priority to solidarity over private interest."

The real answer

Benedict XVI also asked about the right place for technology.

"The wonders it is capable of go hand in hand with social and ecological disasters," he observed.

Technology is accelerating globalization, but it is only a human creation, he explained. Progress depends on man, the subject of work.

"To bet on [technology] unreservedly or to believe it is the exclusive agent of progress or happiness, entails a reification of humanity that leads to blindness and misery when he himself attributes and delegates to it the powers it does not have," the Pope cautioned. "It is enough to see the 'ravages' of progress and the dangers that an all-powerful and ultimately uncontrolled technology poses to humanity."

He spoke of a pride engendered by technology that leads to hedonistic behavior; that weakens the importance given to man and "leads to existential confusion and the loss of the meaning of life"; it "impoverishes his very identity."

The Pontiff said it is urgent to combine technological progress with ethics.

"Technology should help nature develop along the lines envisioned by the Creator," he said.

"Solutions based on this principle will protect human life and its vulnerability, as well as the rights of the present and future generations," the Pope continued. "And humanity will be able to continue to benefit from the progress that man, by his intelligence, is able to realize."

He warned against seeing technology as the answer, rather than political will or "patient educational efforts to civilize customs." Faced with this, leaders must promote "a humanism that respects the spiritual and religious dimension of human persons."

The dignity of the human person, Benedict XVI affirmed, "does not vary with the fluctuation of opinions." And the natural tendency to the true and good gives rise to a "will to collaborate in bringing about the common good."

"Life in society," the Pope stated, "must be considered above all as a reality of a spiritual order."

On ZENIT's Web page:

Full text: www.zenit.org/article-32804?l=english

| [More](#)

© Innovative Media, Inc.

Reprinting ZENIT's articles requires written permission from the [editor](#).