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## Vatican's World Tourism Day Message Has 'Green' Theme

### **Ppontifical Council Urges Lifestyle Change to Reduce Energy Consumption**

By Junno Arocho

VATICAN CITY, JULY 24, 2012 (Zenit.org).- World Tourism Day 2012 is scheduled for Sept. 27, and the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Travelers released its statement for the day.

The Holy See regards the day as "an opportunity to dialogue with the civil world and offers its concrete contribution, based on the Gospel."

It was also presented as an opportunity to "sensitize" the Church on the importance of the initiative from not only an economic and social standpoint, but also in the context of the new evangelization.

The celebration, which began in 1980, is sponsored by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (WTO) as a means of raising awareness on the role of tourism within the international community. The theme of this year's World Tourism Day is "Tourism and Sustainable Energy: Powering Sustainable Development."

While detailing the rise in international tourism, the Holy See warned that although the growth in tourism has positive effects, it can also lead to serious environmental impacts such as increase in pollution and immoderate consumption of energy. The statement, however, said that despite contributing to global warming, the growth is also a victim of it.

"The concept of 'sustainable development' is already ingrained in our society and the tourism sector cannot and must not remain on the margin," the statement read.

"When we talk about 'sustainable tourism', we are not referring to one means among others, such as cultural, beach or adventure tourism. Every form and expression of tourism must necessarily be sustainable and cannot be otherwise."

Although the Secretary General of the WTO stated that tourism has paved the way for sustainable development initiatives, the Holy See said that there is still more work to be done. The Holy See

then offered to contribute by releasing several ethical guidelines that emphasizes the importance of the human being and the common good with the growth in tourism.

"We cannot separate the theme of environmental ecology from concern for an appropriate human ecology in the sense of interest in the human being's integral development. In the same way, we cannot separate our view of man and nature from the bond which unites them with the Creator. God has entrusted the good stewardship of creation to the human being," the statement read.

Among the guidelines suggested by the Pontifical Council was an effort to educate to promote a shift in mentality and lifestyle changes and acknowledgement that there exists a greater ecological sensitivity.

The Holy See detailed the necessity "to cultivate the ethics of responsibility and prudence and to ask ourselves about the impact and consequences of our actions."

"It will be important to encourage both entrepreneurs and tourists to consider the repercussions of their decisions and attitudes." In the same way, it is crucial "to encourage more sober lifestyles, while reducing their energy consumption and improving its efficiency," the message stated.

The message concluded urging all to promote tourism in a respectful and responsible manner "with the certainty that in contemplating the beauty of nature and peoples we can arrive at the encounter with God."

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