



POPE CALLS FOR SOLIDARITY WITH THE FUTURE

Warns That World's Great Rivers Are in Danger

VATICAN CITY, OCT. 22, 2009 (Zenit.org).- Benedict XVI made a call for "intergenerational justice" and actions of solidarity with the world's future generations, as they are also entitled to enjoy the beauty of creation.

The Pope stated this in a letter he sent to Orthodox patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew I on the occasion of the Eighth International Symposium on Religion, Science and the Environment titled "Restoring Balance: The Great Mississippi River."

The symposium, organized under the patronage of Bartholomew I, is under way through Sunday in Memphis, Tennessee.

In his note, the Pontiff expressed his appreciation for the patriarch's "continued efforts to promote respect for God's gift of creation and a sense of global solidarity for its wise and responsible stewardship."

"Water has always been acknowledged as a primary human good and an indispensable natural resource," the Holy Father noted. "Around the great rivers of the world, like the Mississippi, great cultures have developed, while over the course of the centuries the prosperity of countless societies has been linked to these waterways.

"Today, however, the great fluvial systems of every continent are exposed to serious threats, often as a result of man's activity and decisions."

"Concern for the fate of the great rivers of the earth must lead us to reflect soberly on the model of development which our society is pursuing," said Benedict XVI. "A purely economic and technological understanding of progress, to the extent that it fails to acknowledge its intrinsic limitations and to take into consideration the integral good of humanity, will

inevitably provoke negative consequences for individuals, peoples and creation itself."

Inheritance

The Pope called for "intergenerational justice and practical solidarity with the men and women of the future, who are also entitled to enjoy the goods which creation, as willed by God, is meant to bestow in abundance upon all."

The Pope affirmed that at the heart of environmental issues lies the question of ethics: "The solution to the ecological crisis of our time necessarily calls for a change of heart on the part of our contemporaries.

"Nature, in fact, is prior to us, and, as the setting of our life, it must be used responsibly, with respect for its inbuilt equilibrium."

"By virtue of their faith," the Pope added, "Christians are called to join in offering the world a credible witness of responsibility for the safeguarding of creation, and to cooperate in every way possible to ensure that our earth can preserve intact its God-given grandeur, beauty and bounty."

Benedict XVI made a special mention of the tragic aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, "which caused such great devastation to New Orleans and surrounding areas" in 2005.

"My thoughts and prayers," he added, "are with all those, especially the poor, who experienced suffering, loss and displacement, and all those engaged in the patient work of rebuilding and renewal."

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