

Care for Creation

Pope urges faithful to protect the environment God created. Says Christians have a 'responsibility' to care for the earth by helping it 'grow according to its laws'



Set to finish his encyclical on the environment next month, Pope Francis said during his daily Mass at the Vatican on Monday that Christians who fail to safeguard nature do not care about God's handiwork.

“A Christian who does not protect creation, who does not allow it to grow, is a Christian who does not care about God's labors” which are borne out of God's love for us, the pope said.

His remarks were based in part on the day's first reading from Genesis 1:1-19, comparing God's creation of the universe with the Jesus' “re-creation” of that which “had been ruined by sin”.

Pope Francis announced to journalists on his way to the Philippines last month that plans to have his much-anticipated encyclical on man's relationship with creation finished in March.

A year ago this month, the Vatican had announced the pope's plans to write on the theme of “human ecology” — a phrase that was originally coined by retired pontiff Benedict XVI.

This expression, spokesman Father Federico Lombardi said at the time, describes not only how the faithful must respect the environment, but also how the nature of the person — masculine and feminine as created by God — must also be defended.

Pope Francis' first encyclical, entitled “Lumen Fidei,” or “Light of Faith,” was released in 2013. It was written by the pontiff as a completion of the work initiated by his predecessor, Benedict XVI, who resigned before the document was finished.

During his homily on Monday, the pope turned to the day's Gospel reading from Mark 6:53-56, reflecting on the account of Jesus curing the sick, with those receiving healing simply by touching is cloak.

This healing marks the “second creation” the pope said, which “is even more wonderful than the first”.

But while the “second creation” is more important, Pope Francis said that God has given the faithful the “responsibility” to care for the “first” creation — the earth — by helping it “to grow according to its laws”.

That said, “we are the lords of creation, not its masters,” and are therefore called to protect it.

With regard to the “second creation” brought about by Jesus, Pope Francis said we are told by Saint Paul in the Bible to become “reconciled to God” — adding that “reconciliation is the work of Christ”.

Pope Francis explained that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all engaged “in this re-creation.” In response, we are “to safeguard and nurture Creation,” allowing “ourselves be reconciled with Jesus”.

Original story: If you care about God's handiwork you'll protect nature, Pope says

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