

PEACE AND JUSTICE



Article – 14

The following is an excerpt from: <https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship-title>

Laudato Si', "our common home." We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of God's creation because "every creature is . . . the object of the Father's tenderness, who gives it its place in the world" (*Laudato Si'*, no. 77). **Care for creation** is a duty of our faith and a sign of our concern for all people, especially the poor, who "both everyday experience and scientific research show" suffer "the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment" (no. 48). Pope Francis underscores that environmental degradation can often force the poor "to leave their homes, with great uncertainty for their future and that of their children" (no. 25). The threats to the environment are many. Pope Francis, consistent with both St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI (World Day of Peace Message in 1990 and 2010), has recently lifted up pollution, climate change, lack of access to clean water, and the loss of biodiversity as particular challenges. He speaks of an "ecological debt" (no. 51) owed by wealthier nations to developing nations and he laments the weakness of many responses to the ecological challenges rooted in "complacency and a cheerful recklessness" (no. 59). In the face of this, we should aim for "a new lifestyle" (no. 203-208), one that strives to live simply to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, and one that brings "healthy pressure to bear on those who wield political, economic and social power." (no. 206). We have a moral obligation to protect the planet on which we live-to respect God's creation and to ensure a safe and hospitable environment for human beings, especially children at their most vulnerable stages of development. As stewards called by God to share the responsibility for the future of the earth, we should work for a world in which people respect and protect all of creation and seek to live simply in harmony with it for the sake of future generations. Fully embracing this task amounts to what Pope Francis calls an "ecological conversion" (no. 219), by which "the effects of [our] encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in [our] relationship with the world around [us]" (no. 217). Such a conversion "can inspire us to greater creativity and enthusiasm in resolving the world's problems and in offering ourselves to God 'as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable' (Rom 12:1)" (no. 220).

In Christ,
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