

## V. TRANSFIGURATION OF THE UNIVERSE

*Grant us temperate and fruitful weather;  
bestow on the earth moderate rains to bring forth fruit.  
Bless the crown of the year with your goodness...  
Deliver, O Lord... from famine, plague, earthquake, flood, fire.  
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

### A. Responsibility for God's Creation

- 991 Humankind carries responsibility for all creation. This responsibility manifests itself on different levels: in daily personal life, in the use of technical means and various technologies, in the use of natural resources and sources of energy. The environment cannot be reduced to an object of manipulation and exploitation, nor can it be made absolute and placed above the dignity of the human person.<sup>592</sup>
- 992 Every person is called to responsible behaviour in all spheres of life. Ecological responsibility refers to all actions that have an impact on the quality of a person's natural environment. The Christian, as a believer in God, the Creator of the universe, is bound to fulfil responsibly his or her role as steward of the created world, a task delegated by God.

### B.1he Christian and the Natural Environment

- 993 Belief in God the Creator also entails an understanding of the world as God's creation. The word "creation" means that, like humankind, all other living beings as well as inanimate matter have their source, foundation, substance, and perfection in God.
- 994 Our vocation to have dominion in the world does not entail our reckless subjugation of the environment nor its exploitation. Humanity's vocation is to be the crown of creation and to represent creation before the Creator. Humankind can have dominion over the earth responsibly only when it is obedient to God and maintains the order and aims established by him. When we, through the work of our hands and our talents, uncover the secrets of nature and the proper order to things in this world, we come to recognize the greatness and presence of God the Creator.
- 995 When we harm the environment through our actions, we ruin God's creation, of which we ourselves are an integral part. We sin not only

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<sup>592</sup> See Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 463.

as regards creation, but also in relation to our own selves and God. It is in this sense that we speak of ecological sin,<sup>593</sup> which consists of our irresponsible behaviour towards God's creation.' his sin is a grave crime against contemporary civilization and the life of future generations.

### **C. A Christian Ethic of the Environment**

996 Our love for the invisible and omnipresent God is manifested and confirmed by our attitude toward God's visible creatures. We cannot fully realize our love for God if we ignore the value of the world as God's creation.

997 As those who love God the Creator, we also respect his creation, treating the environment responsibly. Creation, on the one hand, serves humanity, but on the other, has a value in and of itself. Respect for creation manifests itself in a protective attitude toward nature, in the preservation of natural resources and in other forms of interaction between creation and ourselves. By respecting God's creation, we give glory to God.

998 An important precondition for human development is the conservation of natural resources and the diversity of plant and animal life.' the future of our civilization is impossible without an awareness of the limits of nature's ability to renew its resources and to neutralize the harmful substances and by-products of manufacturing that pollute it. Vital human activity that adheres to all of the moral demands stemming from the interconnectedness of all creatures is the sole condition for the sustainable development of human civilization.

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593 JOHN PAUL II, *Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in America [the Church in America]*, 25.