

RESPECTING and CARING FOR GOD'S CREATION

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.

Psalm 24:1

Today there is an urgent need for 'ecological conversion' to protect not only the natural environment but also the human quality of life.

CELEBRATE GOD'S PRESENCE IN THE WORLD,

Where I wander—You!

Where I ponder—You!

In every trend, at every end, only You,

You again, always You!

M. Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim*



PSALM 148

All: Hallelujah!

**Praise the Lord from the heavens;
give praise in the heights.**

**Side 1: Praise God, all you angels; give praise, all you hosts.
Praise God, sun and moon; give praise, all shining stars.
Praise God, highest heavens,
you waters above the heavens.**

**Side 2: Let them all praise the Lord's name;
for the Lord commanded and they were created,
Assigned them duties forever,
gave them tasks that will never change.**

**Side 1: Praise the Lord from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deep waters;
You lightning and hail, snow and clouds,
storm winds that fulfill his command;
You mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars;
You animals wild and tame, you creatures that crawl and fly;**

**Side 2: You rulers of the earth and all peoples,
leaders and all who govern on earth;
Young men and women too, old and young alike.
Let them all praise the Lord's name,
for God's name alone is exalted,
majestic above earth and heaven.**

**All: The Lord has lifted high His people;
to the glory of all the faithful,
the people near to their God. Hallelujah!**

SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 1:26-31

Then God said: "Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground." God created man in His image; in the divine image He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them, saying: "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the

fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth."

God also said: "See, I give you every seed-bearing plant all over the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food; and to all the animals of the land, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the ground, I give all the green plants for food." And so it happened. God looked at everything He had made, and He found it very good. The Word of the Lord!

REFLECTION

Man's lordship or dominance however, is not "absolute, but ministerial: it is a real reflection of the unique and infinite lordship of God. Hence men and women must exercise it with wisdom and love, sharing in the boundless wisdom and love of God.

Unfortunately, if we scan the regions of our planet, we immediately see that humanity has disappointed God's expectations. Man, especially in our time, has without hesitation devastated wooded plains and valleys, polluted waters, disfigured the earth's habitat, made the air unbreathable, disturbed the hydro geological and atmospheric systems, turned luxuriant areas into deserts and undertaken forms of unrestrained industrialization, degrading that "flowerbed" which is the earth, our dwelling-place.

We must therefore encourage and support the "ecological conversion" which in recent decades has made humanity more sensitive to the catastrophe to which it has been heading. Man is no longer the Creator's "steward", but an autonomous despot, who is finally beginning to understand that he must stop at the edge of the abyss. "Another welcome sign is the growing attention being paid to the quality of life and to ecology, especially in more developed societies, where people's expectations are no longer concentrated so much on problems of survival as on the search for an overall improvement of living conditions"

At stake, then, is not only a "physical" ecology that is concerned to safeguard the habitat of the various living beings, but also a "human" ecology which makes the existence of creatures more dignified, by protecting the fundamental good of life in all its manifestations and by preparing for future generations an environment more in conformity with the Creator's plan. Pope John Paul II

"All creation is a song of praise to God."

Hildegard of Bingen

PRAYER

God Most High,
by Your Word You created a
wondrous universe,
and through Your Spirit
You breathed into it the breath of life.
Accept creation's hymn of praise from our lips,
and let the praise that is sung in heaven resound
in the heart of every creature on earth,
to the glory of the Father, the Son, and the
Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

