

Pope Francis on the Environment

The World's natural environment has been seriously damaged by human behavior. This has affected all living things and has disproportionately affected the poor and powerless.

The way that humans live today has created a World system of production and consumption that is not sustainable. It is getting worse and has been and will be the source of ever greater problems and disasters.

To have any hope of reducing or resolving the conditions and problems we have created, WE will have to change. The behavior of individuals, groups, communities, businesses, governments, and nations all share responsibility and all must change if we are to stabilize and heal our environment.

Much of what is damaging is done heedlessly and unconsciously by people and businesses as they go about their day to day activities.

We need to become more caring and conscious of the impact of our own behavior and that of the organizations, communities and political entities that we are a part of.

He goes on to say that this is our responsibility toward each other and toward God.

He lists and describes many of the things that must be done personally, nationally and internationally to bring about these needed changes.

We need to repent of our greedy and wasteful ways, change both what we do and how we do it, and learn to more fully appreciate the World that we live in and care for.

He reminds us that Jesus "was completely present to everyone and to everything, and in this way he showed us the way to overcome that unhealthy anxiety which makes us superficial, aggressive and compulsive consumers". That we should be grateful for life and for the basic things that give it real meaning.

Jesus said that we should love God and love one another. In doing so, our caring, love and gratitude then should extend to not just humans, but to all of life and to His Creation -- the World in which we live.

From ***Laudato Si*** the pope's encyclical on the environment Abstracted by Herk Stokely

Dalai Lama on The Environment

Our ancestors viewed the earth as rich and bountiful, which it is. Many people in the past also saw nature as inexhaustibly sustainable, which we know is the case only if we care for it. It is not difficult to forgive destruction in the past that resulted from ignorance. Today, however, we have access to more information, and it is essential that we re-examine ethically what we have inherited, what we are responsible for, and what we will pass on to coming generations.

As people alive today, we must consider future generations: a clean environment is a human right like any other. It is therefore part of our responsibility towards others to

ensure that the world we pass on is as healthy, if not healthier, than we found it.

Peace and the survival of life on earth as we know it are threatened by human activities that lack a commitment to humanitarian values. Destruction of nature and natural resources results from ignorance, greed and lack of respect for the earth's living things.

This lack of respect extends even to the earth's human descendants, the future generations who will inherit a vastly degraded planet if world peace does not become a reality, and if destruction of the natural environment continues at the present rate.

Our beautiful world is facing many crises.... It is not a time to pretend everything's good.

Many of the earth's habitats, animals, plants, insects and even micro-organisms that we know to be rare may not be known at all by future generations. We have the capability and the responsibility to act; we must do so before it is too late.

Just as we should cultivate gentle and peaceful relations with our fellow human beings, we should also extend that same kind of attitude towards the natural environment. Morally speaking, we should be concerned for our whole environment.

This, however, is not just a question of morality or ethics, but a question of our own survival. For this generation and for future generations, the environment is very important. If we exploit the environment in extreme ways, we will suffer, as will our future generations. When the environment

changes, the climatic condition also changes. When the climate changes dramatically, the economy and many other things change. Our physical health will be greatly affected. Again, conservation is not merely a question of morality, but a question of our own survival.

Therefore, in order to achieve more effective environmental protection and conservation, internal balance within the human being himself or herself is essential. The negligence of the environment, which has resulted in great harm to the human community, resulted from our ignorance of the very special importance of the environment. We must now help people to understand the need for environmental protection. We must teach people to understand the need for environmental protection. We must teach people that conservation directly aids our survival.

We are all here on this planet, as it were, as tourists. None of us can live here forever. The longest we might live is a hundred years. ***So while we are here we should try to have a good heart and to make something positive and useful of our lives. Whether we live just a few years or a whole century, it would be truly regrettable and sad if we were to spend that time aggravating the problems that afflict other people, animals, and the environment. The most important thing is to be a good human being.***

Extracted from the transcript of a talk he gave which covered several subjects.