



## What's What

*A weekly communication that provides an opportunity for our faith community to grow together in faith.*

### Care for God's Creation

#### The second in a seven part series on Catholic Social Teaching

Modern Catholic social teaching is the body of social principles and moral teaching that is articulated in the papal, conciliar, and other official documents issued since the late nineteenth century and dealing with the economic, political, and social order. This teaching is rooted in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures as well as in traditional philosophical and theological teachings of the Church.

One of the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching is Care for God's Creation. We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of God's creation. Care for the earth is a duty of our faith and a sign of our concern for all people. We should strive to live simply to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. 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.

#### Scriptural Foundations

Our faith calls us to be good stewards of the earth and all its creatures.

- Genesis 1:31 (goodness of creation)
- Genesis 2:15 (stewardship of earth)
- Daniel 3:74-81 (all the earth blesses God)
- Hosea 4:1-3 (humans wound the earth)
- Romans 8:18-25 (all creation awaits redemption)

#### Quotes from Official Church Documents

- "The dominion granted to man by the Creator is not an absolute power, nor can one speak of a freedom to 'use and misuse', or to dispose of things as one pleases. The limitations imposed from the beginning by the creator himself...shows clearly enough that, when it comes to the natural world, we are subject not only to biological laws but also to moral ones, which cannot be violated with impunity."  
-Pope John Paul II, On Social Concern (*Sollicitudo*

*Rei Socialis*), no. 34

- At its core, the environmental crisis is a moral challenge. It calls us to examine how we use and share the goods of the earth, what we pass on to future generations, and how we live in harmony with God's creation."  
-National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Renewing the Earth: An Invitation to Reflection and Action on Environment in light of Catholic Social Teaching*, p.1

#### References from the Catechism

- 339 - Each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection. For each one of the works of the "six days" it is said: "And God saw that it was good." "By the very nature of creation, material being is endowed with its own stability, truth, and excellence, its own order and laws." Each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God's infinite wisdom and goodness. Man must therefore respect the particular goodness of every creature, to avoid any disordered use of things which would be in contempt of the Creator and would bring disastrous consequences for human beings and their environment.

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- 340 - God wills the *interdependence of creatures*. The sun and the moon, the cedar and the little flower, the eagle and the sparrow: the spectacle of their countless diversities and inequalities tells us that no creature is self-sufficient. Creatures exist only in dependence on each other, to complete each other, in the service of each other.
- 2415 - The seventh commandment enjoins respect for the integrity of creation. Animals, like plants and inanimate beings, are by nature destined for the common good of past, present, and future humanity. Use of the mineral, vegetable, and animal resources of the universe cannot be divorced from respect for moral imperatives. Man's dominion over inanimate and other living beings granted by the Creator is not absolute; it is limited by concern for the quality of life of his neighbor, including generations to come; it requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation.



## Saint in the Spotlight — Saint Padre Pio of Pietrelcina (1887-1968)

On Tuesday this week, September 23, we celebrate the memorial of St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina.

In one of the largest such ceremonies in history, Pope John Paul II canonized Padre Pio of Pietrelcina on June 16, 2002. It was the 45th canonization ceremony in Pope John Paul's pontificate. More than 300,000 people braved blistering heat as they filled St. Peter's Square and nearby streets. They heard the Holy Father praise the new saint for his prayer and charity. "This is the most concrete synthesis of Padre Pio's teaching," said the pope. He also stressed Padre Pio's witness to the power of suffering. If accepted with love, the Holy Father stressed, such suffering can lead to "a privileged path of sanctity."

Many people have turned to the Italian Capuchin Franciscan to intercede with God on their behalf; among them was the future Pope John Paul II. In 1962, when he was still an archbishop in Poland, he wrote to Padre Pio and asked him to pray for a Polish woman with throat cancer. Within two weeks, she had been cured of her life-threatening disease.

Born Francesco Forgione, Padre Pio grew up in a family of farmers in southern Italy. Twice (1898-1903 and 1910-17) his father worked in Jamaica, New York, to provide the family income.

At the age of 15, Francesco joined the Capuchins and took the name of Pio. He was ordained in 1910 and was drafted during World War I. After he was discovered to have tuberculosis, he was discharged. In 1917 he was assigned to the friary in San Giovanni Rotondo, 75 miles from the city of Bari on the Adriatic.

On September 20, 1918, as he was making his thanksgiving after Mass, Padre Pio had a vision of Jesus. When the vision ended, he had the stigmata in his hands, feet and side.

Life became more complicated after that. Medical doctors, Church authorities and curiosity seekers came to see Padre Pio. In 1924 and again in 1931, the authenticity of the stigmata was questioned; Padre Pio was not permitted to celebrate Mass publicly or to hear confessions. He did not complain of these decisions, which were soon reversed. However, he wrote no letters after 1924. His only other writing, a pamphlet on the agony of Jesus, was done before 1924.

Padre Pio rarely left the friary after he received the stigmata, but busloads of people soon began coming to see him. Each morning after a 5 a.m. Mass in a crowded church, he heard confessions until noon. He took a mid-morning break to bless the sick and all who came to see him. Every afternoon he also heard confessions. In time his confessional ministry would take 10 hours a day;

penitents had to take a number so that the situation could be handled. Many of them have said that Padre Pio knew details of their lives that they had never mentioned.

Padre Pio saw Jesus in all the sick and suffering. At his urging, a fine hospital was built on nearby Mount Gargano. The idea arose in 1940; a committee began to collect money. Ground was broken in 1946. Building the hospital was a technical wonder because of the difficulty of getting water there and of hauling up the building supplies. This "House for the Alleviation of Suffering" has 350 beds.

A number of people have reported cures they believe were received through the intercession of Padre Pio. Those who assisted at his Masses came away edified; several curiosity seekers were deeply moved. Like St. Francis, Padre Pio sometimes had his habit torn or cut by souvenir hunters.

One of Padre Pio's sufferings was that unscrupulous people several times circulated prophecies that they claimed originated from him. He never made prophecies about world events and never gave an opinion on matters that he felt belonged to Church authorities to decide. He died on September 23, 1968, and was beatified in 1999.

[www.americancatholic.org/Features/SaintOfDay](http://www.americancatholic.org/Features/SaintOfDay)

### Want to know more about the Care for God's Creation?

**USCCB Climate Change Justice & Health Initiatives**

<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/climate/wcc.shtml>

**USCCB's Environmental Justice Program**

<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/>

**Children's Health and the Environment**

<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/case/index.shtml>

**Useful Resources for Energy Conservation**

Cleaning Texas air one congregation at a time

<http://www.breathoflifetx.org/>

**Bishop's Statement Renewing the Earth: An Invitation to Reflection and Action on Environment in Light of Catholic Social Teaching**

<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/bishopsstatement.shtml>

**Article – It's easy being green: six things your parish can do**

<http://salt.claretianpubs.org/issues/envir/beaulieu.html>

"What's What" is a publication of the Youth Ministry Department of St Mary, Canandaigua, and St Bridget, Bloomfield.

Our Youth Ministry Mission Statement:

Building on the mission of our parishes to follow the way of Christ in our thoughts, words, and deeds, and to make Christ more fully present in all who live within our community, the Youth Ministry mission is to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world today; to affirm the gifts of our youth and provide opportunities for young people to share their gifts with the larger community; and to meet the religious, spiritual and social needs of all youth with the committed leadership, guidance and support of our parish family, providing an opportunity for our entire faith community to grow together in Christian faith.