

OCTOGESIMA ADVENIENS

APOSTOLIC LETTER OF POPE PAUL VI

*To Cardinal Maurice Roy
President of the Council of the Laity and of the Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace
On the Occasion of the Eightieth Anniversary of the Encyclical "Rerum Novarum"*

The environment

21. While the horizon of man is thus being modified according to the images that are chosen for him, another transformation is making itself felt, one which is the dramatic and unexpected consequence of human activity. Man is suddenly becoming aware that by an ill-considered exploitation of nature he risks destroying it and becoming in his turn the victim of this degradation. Not only is the material environment becoming a permanent menace - pollution and refuse, new illness and absolute destructive capacity - but the human framework is no longer under man's control, thus creating an environment for tomorrow which may well be intolerable. This is a wide-ranging social problem which concerns the entire human family.

The Christian must turn to these new perceptions in order to take on responsibility, together with the rest of men, for a destiny which from now on is shared by all.

From http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_letters/documents/hf_p-vi_apl_19710514_octogesima-advienens_en.html 4/24/2004