

POST-SYNODAL  
APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION  
***ECCLESIA IN AMERICA***  
OF THE HOLY FATHER  
JOHN PAUL II  
TO THE BISHOPS,  
PRIESTS AND DEACONS,  
MEN AND WOMEN RELIGIOUS,  
AND ALL THE LAY FAITHFUL  
ON THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE LIVING JESUS CHRIST:  
THE WAY TO CONVERSION,  
COMMUNION AND SOLIDARITY  
IN AMERICA

***Ecological concern***

25. “And God saw that it was good” (*Gen* 1:25). These words from the first chapter of the Book of Genesis reveal the meaning of what God has done. To men and women, the crown of the entire process of creation, the Creator entrusts the care of the earth (cf. *Gen* 2:15). This brings concrete obligations in the area of ecology for every person. Fulfillment of these obligations supposes an openness to a spiritual and ethical perspective capable of overcoming selfish attitudes and “life-styles which lead to the depletion of natural resources”.(66)

In this area too, so relevant today, the action of believers is more important than ever. Alongside legislative and governmental bodies, all people of good will must work to ensure the effective protection of the environment, understood as a gift from God. How much ecological abuse and destruction there is in many parts of America! It is enough to think of the uncontrolled emission of harmful gases or the dramatic phenomenon of forest fires, sometimes deliberately set by people driven by selfish interest. Devastations such as these could lead to the desertification of many parts of America, with the inevitable consequences of hunger and misery. This is an especially urgent problem in the forests of Amazonia, an immense territory extending into different countries: from Brazil to Guyana, Surinam, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia.(67) This is one of the world's most precious natural regions because of its bio-diversity which makes it vital for the environmental balance of the entire planet.

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