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SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF PONTIFFS ON ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

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An "encyclical" in Latin refers to a "circulating letter," commonly referred to as "Catholic Social Teaching." Papal encyclicals began with Benedict XIV's "Ubi Primum" (1740), and since the pontificate of Pius IX (1846-78) has become the standard means for exercising the pope's ordinary teaching authority. Encyclical is a formal pastoral letter written by, or under the authority of, the pope concerning moral doctrinal, or disciplinary issues addressed to the universal church. Some of them are social encyclicals, which are, specially concerned on the social teachings of pontiffs, with matters of social justice, human rights, and peace. *Catholic Social Teaching* is grounded in the values and principles of Judeo-Christian religious experience, which are reflected in the Christian scriptures and the Church's lived tradition. It has evolved as each generation has attempted to live in society with reflective fidelity to those values and that religious vision. An active commitment to social justice is now recognized as essential to authentic Catholic faith. Before the advent of encyclicals, some of them known as "bulls." Pope's social teachings sometimes, not often deal with ecology and environment; they can be grouped under four models: Dominion Model; Stewardship Model, Creation-centered Approach model; and Deep Ecology Model.

Dominion model

Humans feel that they can rightfully exploit natural environment. The emphasis here is that humans are not at all at home in nature. It stresses differences between humans and the rest of nature, while we are not above the nature but with the nature. The danger is the arrogant disdain for material world; subjugating and empowering nature and environment, which leads to exploitation.

Dominion Model social teachings known as 'papal bulls' were, very prevalent in 15th and 16th centuries. Romanus Pontifex is a papal bull written January 8, 1455 by Pope Nicholas V to King Alfonso V of Portugal. Papal bulls were originally issued by the pope for many kinds of communication of a public nature, but after the fifteenth century, only for the most formal or solemn of occasions. Here is one example, based on Dominion Model teaching: Romanus Pontifex asserts, "...since we had formerly by other letters of ours granted among other things free and ample faculty to the aforesaid King Alfonso—to invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ wheresoever placed, and the kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities, dominions, possessions, and all movable and immovable goods whatsoever held and possessed by them and to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to apply and appropriate to himself and his successors the kingdoms, dukedoms, counties, principalities, dominions, possessions, and goods, and to convert them to his and their use and profit." These passages specifically granted to nations and explorers cause to seek out lands unknown to

Christians. In 1493 Pope Alexander VI issued *Inter Caetera* stating one Christian nation did not have the right to establish dominion over lands previously dominated by another Christian nation, thus establishing the Law of Nations. Together, the *Dum Diversas* (1452 by Pope Nicholas V), the *Romanus Pontifex* and the *Inter Caetera* came to serve as a justification for the Discovery Doctrine and the Age of Imperialism.

Portugal's dominion over all lands were discovered or conquered during the Age of Discovery. Henry the Navigator, who was the governor of the Order of Christ, negotiated with the Pope and offered him to propagate the Christian faith in the new countries. So the bull was enacted, which politically protected the rights of the Portuguese. Along with encouraging the seizure of the lands of "Saracens, pagans ... and other enemies of Christ", it repeated the earlier bull's permission for the enslavement of such peoples. The bull's primary purpose was to forbid other Christian nations from infringing the King of Portugal's rights of trade and colonization in these regions. The bull praises earlier Portuguese victories against the Muslims of North Africa and the success of expeditions of discovery and conquest to the Azores and to Africa south of Cape Bojador. It also repeats earlier injunctions not to supply items useful in war such as weaponry, iron or timber to either Muslims or pagans. The Papal bull *Romanus Pontifex* of 1455 has served as the basis of legal arguments for taking Native American lands by "discovery", and continues to do so today. The logic of the rights of conquest and discovery were followed in all western nations including those that never recognized papal authority. They were also early influences on the development of the slave trade of the 15th and 16th centuries, even though the papal bull *Sublimus Dei* of 1537, by Pope Paul III, which was on the enslavement and evangelization of South American Indians, forbade the enslavement of non-Christians. Scholars note that the executive brief for *Sublimus Dei* was withdrawn by the Pope after protests by the Spanish monarchy. Paul III publicly sanctioned slavery in Rome in 1545, the enslavement of Henry VIII in 1547 and the purchase of Muslim slaves in 1548. The consequences precipitated by Dominion Model teachings, history would never forget the dark age of colonization, slavery, and the mass murders of Aztecs, Mayans and Incas of South America.

The members of the Society of Jesus were the principle victims of the Dominion Model based social teachings of popes. The pontificate of Clement XIII (1758-69) was dominated by the Jesuit issue. He was under heavy pressure from Portugal, and then France, Spain, Naples and Sicily, to dissolve the Jesuit order and he summoned a special consistory to discuss the matter but died the day before it met. The Jesuits had been expelled from Brazil (1754), Portugal (1759), France (1764), Spain and its colonies (1767) and Parma (1768). Those who have seen the movie, "*The Mission*," by Warner Brothers, 1986, which deals with Jesuits who attempt to evangelize a village of South American natives and the aftermath of terror and murder inflicted on the natives by politics and church, would definitely understand and feel the dangers of anthropocentric Dominion Model. Very often, Dominion Model teachings therefore, acted not as a form of conflict-resolution but, rather, conflict-intensification. I am struck by how little anger there is in the Dominion Model atrocities of religions, the era of massacres, slavery, expulsions, forced conversions, inquisitions, excommunications, suspensions, burning at the stake, ghettos and pogroms.

In the early 15th century the Portuguese were competing for a sea route to India to participate in the spice trade and they also brought with them the Dominion Model evangelization. As a first step Prince Henry the Navigator launched expeditions to explore the West Coast of Africa. The expeditions needed long years and were expensive. The Portuguese expected, that a later profit need to be shared, because other European countries could use the new sea route, too. After Vasco da Gama found the sea route to India in 1498, the Portuguese practiced just trading for four centuries. Portuguese clerics were only responsible for the needs of the Portuguese, and clerics of other nations were not allowed to operate in Portuguese India. In Goa envoys of the Pope were arrested and sent back. So the Catholic Church threatened to open the East for all European Catholics. Around 1540 King John III started the Christian mission by sending the Society of Jesus to Goa. The missionaries were supported by the colonial administration, who offered incentives for baptized Christians, rice for the poor, good jobs for the middle class and military support for the local rulers. It is unquestionable that there had been emigration due to harsh methods of conversion. Historians Simao Botelho, Vedor da Fazenda of Portuguese India, wrote to the king in 1552 saying that some missionaries wanted to convert the Hindus by force, to the extent of even harming them and compelling them to migrate. The most ordinary means to attract the Hindus to conversion were charity, kindness and social service; intensive and constant preaching, confessions, admonitions, judicial penalties, catechetical instruction and indulgences; appeal to emotions, fantasy and senses through the relics of saints, lives of saints, hymns and promises of eternal salvation. The missionaries were successful and spread in Asia.

The encyclicals written before Vatican Council II, as I noted earlier, most of them fall under Dominion Model: very anthropocentric approach, very rigid and arrogant, placing man at the very center and he is the hero of creation. "Qua Primas," encyclical written by Pope Pius XI and promulgated on 11, December, 1925 is one example of it. Similar teaching is contained in Pope Leo XIII's encyclical "Rerum Novarum" (May 15, 1891), Pope Pius XI's "Quadragesimo Anno" (1931), Pope John XXIII's "Mater et Magistra" (1961). Reasonably, the dominion motive is depicted in the first human being naming all the animals that God has made and led before him "to see what he would call them" (Gen. 2:19). All other creatures will be what the human beings say they are—certainly an extraordinary statement of the power over creation given by God to humanity. But the context of this conferral is the human hunger for companionship. The natural world is not merely intended for subjugation by human beings but for companionship. Dominion over the Earth and all that it contains with the command "to fill the whole Earth and subdue it"—certainly this conveys power. Such a claim to power by human beings over all nonhuman creation contains the possibility, all too often realized, of domination and exploitation of the Earth. This Christian belief is erroneous and misguides policies towards the environment. Unless, Christians along with all people change our attitudes towards the Earth, global warming and its effects will only worsen. We need to confront climate change because our collective wellbeing depends on the environment and because we are called as Christians to care for the Earth, serving God's vision of shalom throughout all of creation. Another recent example of Dominion Model Encyclical is "Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth) of Pope John XXIII, promulgated on 11 April, 1963 before the council. I quote from the document, *"But the progress of science and the inventions of technology show above all the infinite greatness of God, Who created the universe and man himself. He created all things out of nothing, pouring into them*

the abundance of His wisdom and goodness, so that the holy psalmist praises God in these words: O Lord our master, the majesty of thy name fills all the Earth. Elsewhere he says: What diversity, Lord, in thy creatures! What wisdom has designed them all! God also created man in His own image and likeness, endowed him with intelligence and freedom, and made him lord of creation, as the same psalmist declares in the words: Thou hast placed him only a little below the angels, crowning him with glory and honor and bidding him rule over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all under his dominion."

Fortunately, after the Vatican Council II, more relaxing approach towards creation was added, still anthropocentric but this time, popes suggested more feeling of justice, holiness and responsibility towards creation, on the part of man. One example is *Gaudium et Spes* (1965, Vatican II): *"For man and woman created to God's image, received a mandate to subject to themselves, the Earth and all that it contains, and to govern the world with justice and holiness, a mandate to relate ourselves and the totality of things to him who was to be acknowledged as the Lord and Creator of all. Thus by the subjection of all things to man and woman, the name of God would be wonderful in all the earth (no, 12, 33, 34)."* *Laborem Exercens*, of Pope John Paul II, on Human Work, issued on September 14, 1981, is explicitly based upon the record of man's creation in God's own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26-28), and hence of great interest to modern biblical creationist Christians of all branches of Christendom. The contents of this encyclical are closely connected with and intended to elaborate upon traditional Roman Catholic teaching in the area of human labor and social relations. Through work man must earn his daily bread and contribute to the continual advance of science and technology and, above all, to elevating unceasingly the cultural and moral level of the society within which he lives in community with those who belong to the same family. Man is made to be in the visible universe an image and likeness of God himself and he is placed in it in order to subdue the Earth.

On Human Work, Pope sees man's work as an essential ingredient of man's likeness to God in that it differentiates man from the rest of creation: *"Work is one of the characteristics that distinguish man from the rest of creatures, whose activity for sustaining their lives cannot be called work"* (p.1). Man's creation mandate to subdue the Earth is itself part and parcel of man's created likeness to God: *"Man is the image of God partly through the mandate received from his creator to subdue, to dominate, the Earth. In carrying out, this mandate every human being reflects the very action of the creator of the universe"* (pp. 9-10). Because man is made in the image and likeness of God, man, like God Himself, is a person, *"that is to say, a subjective being capable of acting in a planned and rational way, capable of deciding about himself and with a tendency to self-realization"* (p. 13). Precisely what is meant here by "self-realization" is not spelled out. As a person man is and must be the subject (not the object) of work (p.14). God's fundamental and original intention with regard to man, whom he created in his image and after his likeness, was not withdrawn or canceled out even when man, having broken the original covenant with God, heard the words: *"In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread."* These words refer to the sometimes heavy toil that from then onward has accompanied human work; but they do not alter the fact that work is the means whereby man achieves that "dominion" which is proper to him over the visible world.

The reliance of Pope John Paul II upon the Genesis record of man's creation in God's own image and likeness is remarkable and praiseworthy. Acknowledging and building upon the foundation of biblical creation, he confidently offers advice on labor and social relations not only to Christians but also to contemporary government and social leaders at large. Whatever reservations we might have about this or that specific inference derived by him in "On Human Labor" from the biblical creation record, we must unconditionally applaud his explicit faith in that record as the infallible, true, incontrovertible, forever valid, absolute revelation by God of His creation and purpose for man. It is a very brilliant document indeed from Pope John Paul II. The document still recognizes the importance of man and definitely it is anthropocentric: *his image, his dignity and his dominion*. The encyclical points out, that man has to work hard to earn these honors, in contrast to the earlier teachings that they were bestowed absolutely free, by God. Man's work and progress should enhance human relationships with the society, economy, nature, and environment. The human characteristics mentioned by pope are all valuable to humans. They are essential to the preservation and enrichment of our civilization and culture. Clearly it is from the human standpoint that they are being judged to be desirable and good. Humans are claiming human superiority from a strictly human point of view, that is, from a point of view in which the good of humans is taken as the standard of judgment.

Stewardship Model

Humans care for creation, which is intended to serve our needs. The emphasis is that there is a wide gap between humans and the remainder of creation; anthropocentrism, in which the human person is the center of creation. There is the danger of overemphasis on mastery, with focus on conquering and controlling nature; speciesism; no sense of solidarity with other species.

Stewardship is a way of life. Stewardship is a conversion of heart. Stewardship is a disciple's response. Stewardship is an expression of love. Stewardship is part of our vocation. Stewardship is an honor and an opportunity. Living as good stewards of God's gifts will satisfy the deepest, strongest longings of our hearts. It will fill us with joy, happiness, satisfaction. Stewards know the meaning of life and make real sacrifices to make the world a better place, making their own lives better in the process. Many are concerned that liberty, science, and technology are more a threat to the environment than a blessing to humanity and nature. Human understanding and control of natural processes empower people not only to improve the human condition but also to do great harm to each other, to the Earth, and to other creatures. As concerns about the environment have grown in recent decades, the moral necessity of ecological stewardship has become increasingly clear. *At the same time, however, certain misconceptions about nature and science, coupled with erroneous theological and anthropological positions, impede the advancement of a sound environmental ethic.* In the midst of controversy over such matters, it is critically important to remember that while passion may energize environmental activism, it is reason, including sound theology and sound science that must guide the decision-making process. Elsewhere in the creation story we see that "God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it" (Genesis 2:15). Here God presents the world as a garden and people as its gardeners, carefully tending it. Acting as a steward, or "gardener" of God's creation means, living in a way in which we recognize that every-

thing belongs to God. We are not to use the Earth as we please, but care for it as God intended.

Exploitation of natural resources in the past led to conflict and the enrichment of a few at the expense of many. The reason for the problems facing mankind today appears to be over-exploitation of all the resources around us far beyond our genuine immediate needs. Natural resources remain an important source of income. During the 1990s 65% of all foreign direct investment was in oil, gas and mining. In effect of our actions, mass destruction is taking place all over the world. Water is polluted. Air in many places is almost unbreathable. Rain forests are being hacked down mercilessly, thus changing the weather pattern all over the globe. Population growth is going out of control. No matter how we look at the state of affairs around the world, the Earth seems to be a doomed planet. Man, the steward has become the natural enemy of all living things, has been destroying it systematically and no wonder that thousands of species of animals and plants are disappearing from the face of the Earth. We are squandering all the natural resources without foresight. Consequently ecological imbalances like global warming, climate change, ozone depletion, famine, cyclones, and drought are on the rise. Every one of us is responsible for the disaster threatening the very existence of life on Earth. The question that we have to ponder is whether it is possible even now, although late, to salvage the planet and make it a habitable place for all living things. Science believes in the 4.5 billion year-old-Earth, therefore, many scientists doubt the role of man as steward, because where was man some 2 million years ago and where will be man in another 2 million years from now? Obviously, man as we know him, addicted to consumption, treats Earth as a temporary gold mine exploiting its resources, in the process he declares war on creation and leaves it wounded and bleeding. As a result Earth is in the advanced state of exhaustion, slowly dying. Social teachings of popes always addressed these problems in number of encyclicals. Most of the encyclicals point out an inner man “the image of God,” as a steward, enabled by spirit, consciousness, awareness, enlightenment, which is a consoling and promising dimension of man as a steward in the future.

Octogesima Adveniens, (A Call to Action), an apostolic letter from Pope Paul VI, was promulgated in 1971. Pope Paul VI begins this letter by urging greater efforts for justice and noting the duties of local churches to respond to specific situations. The pope then discusses a wide variety of new social problems which stem from urbanization. *“Man is suddenly becoming aware that by an ill-considered exploitation of nature he risks destroying it and becoming in his return the victim of this degradation. Not only is the material environment becoming a permanent menace; pollution and refuse, new illnesses 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 (no. 21).”* Pope appeals to the stewards of the Earth and he calls them for action. These issues include women, youth, and the ‘new poor.’ He stresses the need to ensure equality and the right of all to participate in society. Clearly the claim to power must be balanced by the call to responsibility, the traditional appeal to stewardship. The relationship between humanity and the rest of creation has often been cast in the Jewish and Christian traditions as that of a caretaker, one charged by God with the maintenance of the Earth. This belief about the environment can’t be further from the truth. Christians should, and need to confront global warming because God calls us to. We hear this theme occurring from

the very beginning of time, when God created the Earth and "saw that it was good." It is clear that we are stewards of the Earth, as God entrusted Adam, Eve, and their descendents to care for the Earth and to have "dominion" over it (Genesis 1:26, 28). People often interpret the word dominion as being similar to domination. Those that interpret it this way see the Earth as having a lower status than people, and existing only for our own use. Another occurrence of "dominion" clarifies its meaning in terms of a king's responsibility to serve his people (Psalm 72). A king's role is not to dominate over others, but is to care for and protect those in his care: "a kind steward."

Redemptor Hominis: (Redeemer of Man) - This is the first encyclical of Pope John Paul II, promulgated on March 4th, 1979. As with so many of his encyclicals, there was something here for everyone: a piercing criticism of contemporary culture, an emphasis on human rights, *on recognition of ecological responsibility (stewardship)*, on imperatives of ecumenism, evangelization, and much else. Here pope writes about redemption, whatever the ambiguities of our present mode of existence, envisages the renewal of the whole of creation. In and through Christ, faith experiences; creation as brought to its fulfillment in a way that promises to include everything and everyone. Though the present form of the world "groans" with ambiguities and futility, Christ is its center, in living contact with that "inward mystery" that each of us is. He is there at the "heart" of our existence. Basically the document deals with redemption and the dignity of the human race. The document appeals to the moral sensibility of the steward of the Earth, while making some suggestions on progress and development. I quote from the document: *"The development of technology and the development of contemporary civilization, which is marked by the ascendancy of technology, demand a proportional development of morals and ethics. For the present, this last development seems unfortunately to be always left behind. Accordingly, in spite of the marvel of this progress, in which it is difficult not to see also authentic signs of man's greatness, signs that in their creative seeds were revealed to us in the pages of the Book of Genesis, as early as where it describes man's creation, this progress cannot fail to give rise to disquiet on many counts. The first reason for disquiet concerns the essential and fundamental question: Does this progress, which has man for its author and promoter, make human life on Earth "more human" in every aspect of that life? Does it make it more "worthy of man"? There can be no doubt that in various aspects it does. But the question keeps coming back with regard to what is most essential--whether in the context of this progress man, as man, is becoming truly better, that is to say more mature spiritually, more aware of the dignity of his humanity, more responsible, more open to others, especially the neediest and the weakest, and readier to give and to aid all."*

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (Concern about Social Things), is an encyclical written by Pope John Paul II on 30 December 1987. Pope John Paul II's seventh encyclical letter, marking the twentieth anniversary of "Populorum Progressio," Pope Paul VI's encyclical on the development of peoples. John Paul II presents a series of reflections on the requirements of authentic human development, the international duty of solidarity, *the role of stewardship*, and the social responsibility of the church. In considering the relevance of the earlier document's themes for the present era, the pope aims both to pay homage to his predecessor and to set forth the tradition of Catholic social teaching (nos. 1–4). The pope begins by characterizing *Populorum Progressio* as an application of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, and in particular the social tenets of the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, to the

problem of the development of peoples (nos. 5–7). I quote from the document, “Among today’s positive signs, we must also mention a greater realization of the limits of available resources, and of the need to respect the integrity and the cycles of nature and to take them into account when planning for development, rather than sacrificing them to certain demagogic ideas about the latter. Today this is called ecological concern (no. 26, 34).

Creation-Centered Approach Model

Humans are not so much caretakers as fully part of creation the emphasis is on intrinsic value and sacredness of nature, so all species deserve protection; recognizes interdependence within the web of life. The danger is in the call for sustainable development leaves many unresolved issues! It is unclear how to balance human needs with solidarity with other species.

We need very urgently Creation-centered Approach model of social teaching, because it has lots of potentiality to appeal humanity, as extinction rate accelerates to wipe out all species on Earth. Time is running out! Extinction is a part of the natural order on Earth. Species have always disappeared because of natural changes in the environment or biological changes (like diseases). So, why save them? Dr. Stuart Pimm of the University of Texas said that scientific evidence strongly suggests that the current rate of extinction is much higher than the natural rate—about 1,000 times greater than before humans were on the Earth. Most endangered species protection concentrates on “fixing” problems that people created, not stopping natural extinctions. When the Endangered Species Act was passed in 1973, the U.S. Congress said that endangered species are of “*esthetic, ecological, educational, historical, recreational and scientific value.*” So let’s look at those reasons: *Esthetic*—this means that endangered species are beautiful to look at. Just like a clean stream or ocean, beautiful mountains, wildflowers and other parts of nature are to us. We would like to save beautiful things for our lifetime and for the kids who come after us; *Ecological*—biodiversity is a word we came across very often these days. It means keeping a variety of life forms in our ecosystem. Think of all the different kinds of dog breeds there are and how many varieties of flowers we have on the Earth. If there were only 10 types of dogs left, people would pay attention! Lack of variety is also dangerous. New diseases show up when there is less variety and one disease can wipe out an entire species. It is also important to have variety in ecosystems: forests, deserts, wetlands, swamps, prairies, oceans etc. They help keep varieties of species alive. We don’t think about bacteria as very important, but bacteria in the soil helps crops grow. Birds control pests and improve harvests. Plants and trees filter our water and our air;

For Selfish Reasons—be selfish about endangered species! Problems with species are often the first sign that there are problems with people. The bog turtle’s problems indicate water quality problems. The bald eagle’s problems with thin egg shells was an early sign of DDT (a chemical insecticide) getting into our water and food chain. So protect them to protect yourself!; *Educational*—all of the species are being studied by students at all grade levels. We continue to learn from animals and the problems we create for them and the solutions that we find for dealing with them; *Historical*—we have a historical record of extinctions in recent times and the fossil record of past extinctions. Many species play a part in our living history; *Recreational*—millions of people enjoy camping, hiking, bird watching, rowing, kayaking, backpacking, fishing,

hunting, biking and other outdoor. What kind of nature do you want to enjoy? Probably the best one available!; *Scientific*—most of our medicines come from plants and animals. Probably most of our FUTURE medicines and cures will be found there too. What if the species of animal or plant to disappear next is the one that would lead to a cure for cancer or AIDS? Can we afford to take that chance?; *Moral*—don't we owe to future generations to give them the same opportunities in all the areas listed above? If we have made problems with our Earth, isn't it our job to fix them if we can? The little dwarf wedge mussel inhabits creek and river areas with a slow to moderate current and a sand, gravel, or muddy bottom. These areas must be nearly silt free, which means that polluted waterways will not support them. Their appearance, as with many endangered species, indicates a healthy environment. The construction of dams alters these conditions. Upstream from each dam, heavy silt deposits combined with low oxygen levels, makes the area unsuitable for mussels. Downstream of the dams, water level and temperature changes from water let out by power generators also hurt. In some areas below the dams, the river banks have changed because the water flow is lower and never floods naturally anymore so a sandy, gravel, or muddy bottom no longer exists. Who caused these changes? WE DID? Who should fix them? WE SHOULD!

Justitia in Mundo (1971, Synod of Bishops) – Bishops could see much ahead of their time the environmental catastrophes which would befall on us in the third millennium. First time in the history of Catholic Church, they take a Creation-centered Approach model. They talk about Earth's systems: lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere and biosphere. All these systems are built in a complex form of relationship and damage to one could cause irreparable disaster to all. Justitia in Mundo definitely inspired by the power of the Holy Spirit and one time in history I feel very proud about our bishops. We need more synods of this type, from our pastors, if we want to accelerate the campaign on Global Warming and Climate Change. I quote from the document, *“Such is the demand for resources and energy by the richer nations, and such are the effects of dumping by them in the atmosphere and the sea that irreparable damage would be done to the essential elements of life on earth, such as air and water, if their high rates of consumption and pollution, which are constantly on the increase, were extended to the whole of mankind (no.11) ...the richer nations should recognize the danger of destroying the very physical foundations of life on earth. Those who are already rich are bound to accept a less material way of life, with less waste, in order to avoid the destruction of the heritage which they are obliged to share (no.70).*

Centesimus Annus – (one hundredth year of Rerum Novarum) – Encyclical written by Pope John Paul II, it was promulgated on 1st of May 1991. Centesimus Annus opened up new horizons in the area of Catholic social teaching, and it's insights into the political, economic, and cultural dilemmas confronting the modern world. The document deals with the subjects like entrepreneurship, subsidiary and solidarity, the role of family in the free economy, globalization, and the environment. Equally worrying is the ecological question which accompanies the problem of consumerism and which is closely connected to it. Pope John Paul II brilliantly takes the Creation-centered Approach Model to make an appeal to save life on Earth, by emphasizing on the intrinsic value of all life. I quote from the document, *“In his desire to have and to enjoy rather than to be and to grow, man consumes the resources of the Earth and his own life in an excessive and disordered way. At the root of the senseless destruction of*

the natural environment lies an anthropological error, which unfortunately is widespread in our day. Man, who discovers his capacity to transform and in a certain sense create the world through his own work, forgets that this is always based on God's prior and original gift of the things that are. Man thinks that he can make arbitrary use of the Earth, subjecting it without restraint to his will, as if it did not have its own requisites and a prior God given purpose, which man can indeed develop but must not betray. Instead of carrying out his role as a cooperator with God in the work of creation, man sets himself up in place of God and thus ends up provoking a rebellion on the part of nature, which is more tyrannical than governed by him (no. 37, 38).

Deep Ecology Model

It is the radical re-visioning of the relationships and boundaries between humans and the rest of creation. The emphasis is on the call for revival of asceticism, human renunciation, and mysticism; eco-theology views nature as a medium for the mystery of the sacred, which humans must not presume to know fully. The danger is overly romanticized view may make creation into an idol; danger of totally neglecting legitimate human needs.

Shallow ecology is anthropocentric, or human-centered. It views humans as above or outside of nature, as the source of all value, and ascribes only instrumental, or 'use', value to nature. Deep ecology does not separate humans—or anything else—from the natural environment. It does see the world not as a collection of isolated objects but as a network of phenomena that are fundamentally interconnected and interdependent. Deep ecology recognizes the intrinsic value of all living beings and views human beings as just one particular strand in the web of life. Mahatma Gandhi gave meaning to Self-realization in various contexts: 'Life is an aspiration, and its mission is to strive after perfection, which is self-realization'; commenting on the *Bhagavad Gita* 'Man is not at peace with himself till he has become like unto God. The endeavor to reach this state is the supreme, the only ambition worth having. And this is self-realization. This self-realization is the subject of the *Gita*, as it is of all scriptures ... to be a real devotee is to realize oneself. Self-realization is not something apart.' As Arne Naess, the chief proponent of "Deep Ecology" concept, notes for Gandhi "*to realize God*," "*to realize the Self*" and "*to realize the Truth*" are three expressions of the same development. Camped out in Death Valley, California, during 1984, George Sessions and Arne Naess draw up eight basic principles that describe Deep Ecology: *First*, the well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth have value in themselves and these values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes; *Second*, richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves; *Third*, humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy *vital* needs; *Fourth*, the flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population and the flourishing of nonhuman life demands such a decrease; *Fifth*, present human interference with the nonhuman world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening; *Sixth*, policies must therefore be changed and these policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures and the resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present; *Seventh*, the ideological change is mainly in appreciating *life quality* rather than adhering to an increasingly higher

standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great; *Eight*, those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to try to implement the necessary change.

Besides anthropocentric encyclicals, I always wondered, when would popes include frogs, snakes, ants, bees, trees and microbes in their social teaching of the Church? At last time has arrived! “Caritas in Veritate” (Charity in Truth) is a very sensational encyclical from Pope Benedict XVI, has satisfied some of my expectations. Most of the eastern great faiths such as Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism have been teaching Deep Ecology for thousands of years. We have enormous amount of potentiality in Deep Ecology Model, not only for the ecological and environmental benefits, ecumenical benefits as well, if we follow their path of wisdom. We may not follow blindly the part of pantheistic notion of Deep Ecology; on the other hand, we can always be justified for following our own version of panentheistic notion of Deep Ecology: *God in All and All in God*. Integral human development in charity and truth is the theme of this encyclical. Caritas in Veritate is the masterpiece on social teachings of the church. It touches upon all aspects of organized and unorganized labor. It provides moral and ethical guidelines for the welfare of the workers and promotion of their rights all over the world. More than two years in the making, “Caritas in Veritate,” or “Charity in Truth,” is Benedict’s third encyclical, since he became pope in 2005. Filled with terms like “globalization,” “market economy,” “outsourcing,” “labor unions” and “alternative energy,” it is not surprising that the Italian media reported that the Vatican was having difficulty translating the 144-page document into Latin. Benedict also called for a reform of the United Nations so there could be a unified “global political body” that allowed the less powerful of the Earth to have a voice, and he called on rich nations to help less fortunate ones. “In the search for solutions to the current economic crisis, development aid for poor countries must be considered a valid means of creating wealth for all,” he wrote. *Benedict, arguably the most environmentally conscious pope in history, wrote, “One of the greatest challenges facing the economy is to achieve the most efficient use—not abuse—of natural resources, based on a realization that the notion of ‘efficiency’ is not value-free.”* Everyone thought this pope could lead us all, back to the times of pre-Vatican, but he has shown us a new promised land where milk and honey flows.

Pope seems to follow the theme of John Donne, “no man is an island, entire of itself; everyman is a piece of the continent.” We are not alone, we are all somehow connected. The tone of Caritas in Veritate apparently looks like Dominion Model document, but at depth it browses a bit with Deep Ecology Model social teaching. *The four pillars of Catholic Social Doctrine are: human dignity, subsidiarity, solidarity and the common good.* Caritas in Veritate recommends, *to place, the well-being of global humanity at the top of their agenda.* But, what being ‘human’ means has changed. Central to the new understanding is ‘rationality’; the recognition of our inherently human social relationships, human relationship with nature and its consequences. Caritas in Veritate seeks to define the conditions for what it calls the ‘*development of the whole man and of all men*’ and holds that this must be based upon ‘*a deeper critical evaluation of the category of relation.*’ We continue to neglect our relationship with nature and God, *because homo economicus is anthropocentric and homo sociologicus is socio-centric, there is no place in either for transcendence.* Caritas in Veritate affirms that ‘*one of the deepest forms of poverty a person can*

experience is isolation, isolation from God and nature for which man has been designed to relate. It is what St. Augustine meant by 'our hearts are restless' until we realize the relationships that divine revelation offers us; with father, mother, brother and friends and the document recommends to add, also planet, animals, plants, environment and ecology. What Caritas in Veritate invites us to do is to sanctify every human encounter with 'fraternity' and to extend this to the whole of humanity and whole of creation, making it one global family through 'relational inclusion,' of nature and environment.

Another brilliant example of Deep Ecology Model document is also from Pope Benedict XVI, written for the celebration of the world day of peace on 1 January, 2010. Pope argues that the quest for peace by people of good will surely become easier if all acknowledge the indivisible relationship between God, human beings and the whole of creation. Benedict notes that threats to global peace just as often arise from misuse or neglect of the Earth's resources as they do from man's inhumanity to man. Can we remain indifferent before the problems associated with such realities as climate change, desertification, the deterioration and loss of productivity in vast agricultural areas, the pollution of rivers and aquifers, the loss of biodiversity, the increase of natural catastrophes and the deforestation of equatorial and tropical regions? He argues that responding appropriately to our ecological crisis will aid in addressing the spiritual and moral crisis which propels overconsumption and indifference and challenges global leaders to reconsider long-held beliefs about the role and nature of economic development: *The Jan. 1, celebration of the world day of peace address also advocates a "inter-generational solidarity": "Natural resources should be used in such a way that immediate benefits do not have a negative impact on living creatures, human and not, present and future; that the protection of private property does not conflict with the universal destination of goods; that human activity does not compromise the fruitfulness of the Earth, for the benefit of people now and in the future."* Overall, Benedict seems to appreciate the global environmental crisis as something of an opportunity to promote solidarity and address industrialized society's consumption compulsion, call it a global deadly sin of gluttony that trickles down unpleasantly into individual morality. "The ecological problem must be dealt with not only because of the chilling prospects of environmental degradation on the horizon; the real motivation must be the quest for authentic worldwide solidarity inspired by the values of charity, justice and the common good. *"It is becoming more and more evident that the issue of environmental degradation challenges us to examine our lifestyle and the prevailing models of consumption and production, which are often unsustainable from a social, environmental and even economic point of view. We are all responsible for the protection and care of the environment. This responsibility knows no boundaries. In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity it is important for everyone to be committed at his or her proper level, working to overcome the prevalence of particular interests."*

Church leadership has done a remarkable job when it comes to the social teaching of the popes. When it comes to the dignity of man, creation, peace and justice, undoubtedly some of the brilliant documents are papal encyclicals. Some of these encyclicals have shaped the political outcome in some countries and changed the course of world's history for good. In fact, two forces that have guided human social development through the ages have been one is economic growth and the other, religion. I mean, these are the two engines that have developed and forced us into

where we are today, or shaped us into where we are today. However, when it comes to ecology and environment, still, we find a bit of struggle and uncertainty in the social teachings perhaps, due to misinformation or lack of information. But religions are starting to play a bigger and more vocal role in talking about protecting God's creation and we whole heartedly welcome that engagement. If they say, "do this," they're going to be listened to in a way that no government and certainly no NGO, is going to be listened to. In my opinion, the last two models, Creation-centered Approach Model and the Deep Ecology Model have a bigger scope in the future. These two models have the ability to convince humanity, not only catholic community, but also can influence other religions, especially eastern religions. I think it's absolutely imperative for anyone in a position of religious responsibility in the western world, hammer on these models loudly and consistently as they possibly can.

Footnote: Bull - Today, the bull is the only written communication in which the Pope will refer to himself as *episcopus servus servorum Dei*, meaning "Bishop, Servant of the Servants of God." For instance, Benedict XVI, when he issues a decree in bull form, will begin the document with *Benedictus, Episcopus, Servus Servorum Dei*. While it used to always bear a metal seal, it now does so only on the most solemn occasions. It is today the most formal type of letters patent issued by the Vatican Chancery in the name of the Pope.