

HUMILITY AND CREATION

88. An important aspect of human well-being is the relationship we have with the rest of the created world.

89. To flourish as human beings, we need to breathe clear air, drink clean water and eat safe food. We are relatively fortunate in this country to enjoy such gifts although they are sometimes threatened by pollution or disease, but we should not shirk from asking ourselves how far our own well-being may be directly linked to the deprivation of others. In other parts of the world even the basic necessities of life are not easy to secure. Recent investigations have found that the forests of the earth, the stocks of fish in the seas, and the wonderful diversity of animal and plant life on the planet are all at risk. This is due to a considerable extent to over-exploitation and pollution. Furthermore, many scientists are now convinced that high levels of gas emissions from the fuel we burn are changing the climate of the planet. These changes could be devastating, causing disruption of weather systems, rises in sea level and flooding affecting millions of people.

90. In his 1990 *Letter for the World Day of Peace*, Pope John Paul II spoke of the relationship between world conflict, injustice and the 'lack of due respect for nature, by the plundering of natural resources and by a progressive decline in the quality of life.' The goods of creation were given for the benefit of all people, but they are being exploited by and for a minority. The harm that is being done to the planet will affect everyone, but the poor will suffer most as they will be unable to escape the worst effects.

QUESTIONS

Is man's selfishness the main cause of damage to the ecosphere and environment? Discuss

Why are governments so dilatory in taking action to protect the environment? Discuss

Are many workers being exploited in the developing world in order to satisfy the apparently insatiable needs of the developed world? Discuss

Are natural disaster sometimes caused by man's greed? Discuss