



## Pope at audience: Counter a culture of waste with solidarity



(Vatican Radio) When stock markets drop ten points its ‘a tragedy’ but starving children, homeless people dying on our streets, people disposed of like trash – such as the unborn or the elderly – has become the norm.

This is the result of a culture of waste, of our being unable to ‘read the signs’ of God’s creation, His free gift to us, and of allowing money and not man rule society. A culture of solidarity should prevail over our culture of waste, because when we care for and cultivate creation – including the human person – when we share our resources, we all have enough.

This Wednesday Pope Francis dedicated his general audience with thousands of pilgrims and visitors to St Peter’s square to the UN World Environment Day. Emer McCarthy reports:

Below please find a Vatican Radio translation of the Holy Father’s catechesis:

### Catechesis

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

Today I want to focus on the issue of the environment, which I have already spoken of on several occasions during the World Environment Day, sponsored by the United Nations, which sends a strong reminder of the need to reduce the disposal of food.

When we talk about the environment, about creation, my thoughts turn to the first pages of the Bible which states that God placed man and woman on earth to cultivate and care for it (cf. 2:15). And the question arises: does cultivating and caring for the earth mean? Are we truly cultivating and caring for creation? Or are we just exploiting it? The verb “to cultivate” reminds me of the care that the farmer has for his land so that it bear fruit.

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attention, passion and dedication! Cultivating and caring for creation is God's indication given to e beginning of history; it is part of His project; it means nurturing the world with responsibility and tr habitable place for everyone. Benedict XVI recalled several times that this task entrusted to us by G grasp the rhythm and logic of creation. But we are often driven by pride of domination, of p exploitation; we do not "care" for it, we do not respect it, we do not consider it as a free gift that we m attitude of wonder, contemplation, listening to creation; thus we are no longer able to read what Ber the love story of God and man." Why does this happen? Why do we think and live in a horizontal n from God, we no longer read His signs.

But to "cultivate and care" encompasses not only the relationship between us and the environment, also regards human relationships. The Popes have spoken of human ecology, closely linked to er living in a time of crisis: we see this in the environment, but above all we see this in mankind. The hu is certain, the human person is in danger today, here is the urgency of human ecology! And it is a cause of the problem is not superficial but profound: it is not just a matter of economics, but of Church has stressed this several times, and many say, yes, that's right, it's true ... but the system co is dominated by the dynamics of an economy and finance that lack ethics. Man is not in charge toda rules. God our Father did not give the task of caring for the earth to money, but to us, to men an Instead, men and women are sacrificed to the idols of profit and consumption: it is the "culture of was is a tragedy, but poverty, the needs, the dramas of so many people end up becoming the norm. If or in Via Ottaviano, for example, a person dies, that is not news. If in so many parts of the world there ; to eat, that's not news, it seems normal. It cannot be this way! Yet these things become the norm: th of cold on the streets is not news. In contrast, a ten point drop on the stock markets of some cities, i not news, but if the stock markets drop ten points it is a tragedy! Thus people are disposed of, as if th

This "culture of waste" tends to become the common mentality that infects everyone. Human perceived as a primary value to be respected and protected, especially if poor or disabled, if not ye child – or no longer needed – such as the elderly. This culture of waste has made us insensitive eve food, which is even more despicable when all over the world, unfortunately, many individuals and fam and malnutrition. Once our grandparents were very careful not to throw away any leftover food. become used to an excess and daily waste of food, to which, at times, we are no longer able to give beyond mere economic parameters. We should all remember, however, that throwing food away is I the the poor, the hungry! I encourage everyone to reflect on the problem of thrown away and was means that, by seriously addressing this issue, are a vehicle of solidarity and sharing with the needy.

A few days ago, on the Feast of Corpus Christi, we read the story of the miracle of the loaves: Je loaves and two fishes. And the conclusion of the piece is important: " They all ate and were sat fragments were picked up, they filled twelve wicker baskets" (Lk 9:17). Jesus asks his disciples n waste! There is this fact of twelve baskets: Why twelve? What does this mean? Twelve is the numbe symbolically represent all people. And this tells us that when food is shared in a fair way, with solida every community can meet the needs of the poorest. Human ecology and environmental ecology wall

So I would like us all to make a serious commitment to respect and protect creation, to be attentive t culture of waste and disposable, to promote a culture of solidarity and of encounter. Thank you.

Summary in English

Dear Brothers and Sisters: Our Audience today coincides with World Environment Day, and so responsibility to cultivate and care for the earth in accordance with God's command (cf. Gen 2:1 respect the natural environment, but also to show respect for, and solidarity with, all the members of dimensions are closely related; today we are suffering from a crisis which is not only about the natural resources, but also about concern for human resources, for the needs of our brothers and sisters especially for the many children in our world lacking adequate education, health care and nutrition. Our "waste" have led some of us to tolerate the waste of precious resources, including food, while others suffer from hunger. I ask all of you to reflect on this grave ethical problem in a spirit of solidarity grounded in our earth and for all our brothers and sisters in the human family.

Greeting:

I offer an affectionate greeting to all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors present at today's Audience in England, Scotland, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Singapore and the United States. God bless you all!

**The brief statement can be found [here](#)**

**For other faith's statements on the environment, please click [here](#)**

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