

Quotes from Social Justice Documents on Care for the Earth

The most profound motive for our work is this knowing that we share in creation. Learning the meaning of creation in our daily lives will help us to live holier lives. It will fill the world with the spirit of Christ, the spirit of justice, charity, and peace.

On Human Work (Donders translation), #25

Nor can the moral character of development exclude respect for the beings which constitute the natural world... [First] one cannot use with impunity the different categories of beings, whether living or inanimate, animals, plants, the natural elements simply as one wishes, according to one's own economic needs. On the contrary, one must take into account the nature of each being and of its mutual connection in an ordered system, which is precisely the "cosmos".

[Second] natural resources are limited; some are not, as it is said, renewable. Using them as if they were inexhaustible, with absolute dominion, seriously endangers their availability not only for the present generation but above all for generations to come.

[Third] the direct or indirect result of industrialization is, ever more frequently, the pollution of the environment, with serious consequences for the health of the population. ...

The dominion granted to man by the Creator is not an absolute power, nor can one speak of a freedom to "use and misuse", or to dispose of things as one pleases. The limitation imposed from the beginning by the Creator himself ... shows clearly enough that, when it comes to the natural world, we are subject not only to biological laws but also to moral ones, which cannot be violated with impunity.

On Social Concern, #34

Although in general it is difficult to draw a line between what is needed for right use and what is demanded by prophetic witness, we must certainly keep firmly to this principle: our faith demands of us a certain sparingness in use, and the Church is obliged to live and administer its own goods in such a way that the Gospel is proclaimed to the poor. If instead the Church appears to be among the rich and the powerful of this world its credibility is diminished.

Justice in the World, #47