



CURIA GENERALIZIA DELLA COMPAGNIA DI GESÙ

On Ecology

2011/16

TO THE WHOLE SOCIETY

Dear Brothers,
The Peace of Christ!

With this letter, I wish to bring to the attention of the whole Society an important concern of the 35th General Congregation (2008), namely, our commitment to the defense and protection of nature and the environment.

The Congregation reminds us that we live in a time of widespread environmental destruction that threatens the future of our planet (Cf. Decree 3, No. 33). In the face of this situation we cannot remain indifferent. Fortunately, one of the positive developments in our world is a growing environmental consciousness and concern among many individuals, communities, and organizations. In his writings, Pope Benedict XVI has strongly urged a more profound respect for creation and more decisive measures toward its protection.

Already during the preparations for GC 34 (1995), a number of postulates were received regarding ecology, an issue which the Congregation decided it could not treat in depth. As a result, in 1999 my predecessor, Fr. Kolvenbach, asked the Secretariat for Social Justice to develop a document on this topic, which appeared with the title, *We Live in a Broken World: Reflections on Ecology (Promotio Iustitiae, April 1999, no. 70)*.

GC 35 marked a step forward in the Society's stance towards ecology by integrating it in the decree on mission. Just as we Jesuits are called to promote and serve right relationships with God and with other human beings, in the same way and with the same urgency, we are called today to restore and heal humanity's broken relationships with creation.

In order to promote practical implementation of this concern, last year I convoked a task force made up of Jesuits and lay collaborators from all the Conferences. After several months of collaborative and inter-disciplinary work, the task force produced the document, "**Healing a Wounded World,**" which is being published at this time in the electronic edition of *Promotio Iustitiae* (no. 106, in www.sjweb.info).

This document contains suggestions for examining our personal lives, our community lifestyles, and our institutional practices. Likewise it can be a useful instrument to move us from written statements to concrete life and mission, so that in all these aspects of our lives, we contribute to the sustainability of the planet. There is much more we can do in this area using our present apostolic institutions, whether these be educational, pastoral, or social. We can adopt new ways of living, propose helpful practices, deepen understanding, promote research, and where appropriate engage in advocacy (Decree 3, no. 35).



At the same time, it is clear that we can only be credible in this work of reconciliation with creation if, on our part, we ourselves show signs of greater consistency and more responsible commitment, both personal and institutional, to this aspect of our mission. This demands of us *a change of heart* that manifests our gratitude to God for the gift of creation and our readiness to *embark on the path of conversion*.

Allow me to express my sincere gratitude to the task force mentioned above, for their important contribution towards helping us move from words to action.

Saint Ignatius invites us to contemplate creation and to see in it the Creator: *dwelling* in all creatures and *laboring for us* in each particular reality and in all of history (Sp. Ex., nos. 234-236). Through the intercession of St. Ignatius, I pray in the words of Fr. Pedro Arrupe, that we may confidently renew our offering of greater value and greater importance, "imitating and following Jesus who desires to lead all women and men and the whole of creation to the glory of the Father."

Sincerely in the Lord,

Adolfo Nicolás, S.I.
Superior General

Rome, 16 September 2011

(Original: Spanish)