



## **Ecology abducted to environmentalism**

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Reflection by Stefano Fontana, based on the pope's speech to the diplomatic corps

ROME, Friday, January 15, 2010 (ZENIT.org).-Almost all the discourse of Benedict XVI to the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See is focused on the “safeguarding of the created”, expression with which the Church prefers to call the considered ecological problem.

On that same subject, the Pope had dedicated the message for World Peace Day on January 1, 2010.

In the discourse, he subtracts the ecology of environmentalism. How? As ideologies are always surpassed: broadening the perspective. Each ideology is, in fact, a reduction of perspective: ideology is the part that pretends to have the value of the whole. That is why it is fought by broadening the perspective and recovering the image of the whole.

The Pope makes this enlargement by establishing the relations of the environmental problem with other aspects of an ecology understood in a broad sense.

With the right to life, first of all, how can one separate, or even oppose, the protection of the environment and that of human life, including life before birth? -, the correct management of resources, the increase in military expenditure and armed conflict, often due to competition in the race of resources, migrations given that the serious violence that I have just evoked, together with the plagues of poverty and hunger, as well as natural disasters and the destruction of the environment, increase the number of those who leave their lands, and finally the problem of positive secularism.

**What will this problem have to do with ecology? The relationship is double.**

First of all, it is because the Church can make its contribution to the safeguarding of what is created if it enjoys the necessary religious freedom. Secondly because in the respect of the human person towards herself is where she manifests her sense of responsibility for creation.

We must think of the stones and the plants, the air and the water, the animals and the climate out of respect, before all that, to the person. But can we truly respect the person and have a straight concept of it without the reference to God? This is what relates, according to Benedict XVI, the environmental problem with the anthropological question and, in substance, with the same theological question.

Hence the key phrase of the discourse: “The denial of God disfigures the freedom of the human person, and also devastates creation. Therefore, the safeguarding of creation does not respond in the first place to an aesthetic requirement, but rather to a moral requirement, since nature manifests a plan of love and truth that precedes us and that comes from God”.

The recommendations on lifestyle changes are also inserted in this context. “May the light and strength of Jesus help us to respect human ecology, knowing that environmental ecology will also benefit from it since the book of nature is unique and indivisible”, the Pope has predicted.

He has also sponsored “a great educational effort, to promote an effective change of mentality and to establish new models of life”.

It is clear that “these new lifestyles” demand more than recycling plastic, provide detergents in ecological counters, eat biological and not consume too much water when brushing teeth.

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