



CATHOLIC RURAL LIFE

Agricultural Ethics for a Global Generation

Stewardship of the Land means Care of Creation

Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2415:

"To till and to keep" the earth does not end in dominion over all life, but in humble stewardship that returns the earth in fullness to God. Men and women ought to approach Creation in awe and fear, knowing that human artifice of the earth can bring bounty or ruin, depending on willful choices and our regard for the sacred."

Creation has an integrity and inherent value beyond its utilitarian necessities for human beings. Humans are called to be responsible stewards of the land – to cultivate and to care for the land, water, forests, air and oceans. We are called to work graciously in harmony with God as co-creators. Stewardship of the land is not only good for the earth, but economically beneficial and socially just for all.

For those who live in cities, they can help steward the landscape by an *ethics of eating*. We should choose those foods that are grown and processed in a responsible, sustainable and just way. Once we grow or produce the kinds of foods that are good for the earth, then we can eat and share what is good to grow. By our ethical food choices, we can shape the countryside in a sustainable way for all. Eating is a moral act!

The disturbing phenomenon of climate change also needs to be taken seriously, focusing on the central importance of the human person, and especially of populations most at risk. Please visit our website to read more: CatholicRuralLife.org.

Pope Benedict XVI:

"What is needed is a change in the lifestyles of individuals and communities, in habits of consumption and in perceptions of what is genuinely needed. Most of all, there is a moral duty to distinguish between good and evil in human action, so as to rediscover the bond of communion that unites the human person and creation."

Address to the Food and Agriculture Organization, November 2009.

The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it. (Genesis 2:15)