

Caritas in Veritate

On Integral Human  
Development  
in Charity and Truth

A GUIDE for  
DISCUSSION and ACTION

**A publication of the Social Affairs Commission  
of the  
Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario**

Aussi disponible en français.

Produced by:  
Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice  
70 St. Mary Street  
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1J3  
416-927-7887

Published September 2010 by:  
Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario  
10 St. Mary Street, Suite 800  
Toronto, Ontario M4Y 1P9  
416-923-1423

# Caritas in Veritate

On Integral Human Development  
in  
Charity and Truth

A GUIDE for DISCUSSION and ACTION

## CONTENTS

Introduction

Notes for Group Leaders

### Sessions:

1. Why *Caritas in Veritate*?
2. We're all in this together, to the ends of the earth
3. Hey, we've globalized the market. Now can we civilize it?
4. The bottom line: too flat for a round planet, too thin for the human heart
5. Development: intelligent love of neighbour
6. The more tools we have, the more soul we need!
7. Making peace with nature: a fresh start for all of us

Conclusion

## Introduction

On June 29, 2009, Pope Benedict XVI released his third major encyclical.

Its Latin title (from the opening words of the letter) is *Caritas in Veritate* (Love in Truth). The English translation is *On Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth*.

This is Pope Benedict's first social encyclical, addressed to everyone in the Church and to "all people of good will" in the world. As such, it fits into the vigorous tradition begun by Pope Leo XIII. In 1891, Pope Leo issued a stern letter challenging "the misery and exploitation pressing down so unjustly on the labouring classes" as industrialization was in full swing throughout Europe.

In a very different moment of the world economy (1967), Pope Paul VI offered a letter on international economic development and the ways it should serve the "integral human development" of the peoples of the world. *Populorum Progressio* (The Progress of Peoples) recognized that questions of social justice now have to be understood in global terms – and also, of course, in the light of the Gospel.

The present pope considers *Populorum Progressio* a great work of moral teaching and an important prophetic witness. He refers to it as "the *Rerum Novarum* of the present age," and adopts Paul VI's concept of "integral human development" as his own criterion for evaluating the economic and technological forces of our own day.

But this new encyclical is no mere update. Pope Benedict is a respected theologian and philosopher, as well as a man of burning Christian faith. He digs deep to establish a framework of spiritual vision and philosophical thought. Then he challenges not only the economic and technological hubris of today, but also some contemporary intellectual assumptions that seem to him to shrink our understanding of human reason, human love and the human soul.

Within that framework, he looks at economic, ecological, inter-cultural, pro-life and social justice issues – and challenges us all to re-vision them in the light of the creative and redeeming love of God as we meet that love in the life and gospel of Jesus Christ. He also challenges us to hope: because the energy of God's love, working through human minds and hearts open to God's grace, can transform the turbulent forces of globalization into a journey towards human unity in "the city of God" – a civilization of love.

Don't be confused by the Latin word "*caritas*" in the title, or by the very limited meaning that the word "charity" now has in everyday English. In this letter, the words "charity" and "love" are used interchangeably. What both words point to is the infinite, all-inclusive, creative, redeeming, sanctifying love that is God's own energy. Through grace, it is our love too; God plants God's own unquenchable love in human hearts so that we can act in the world with a love that is greater than all the evil we will ever encounter.

In short, this is an important, exciting and "missionary" letter. But it is also a tough read! Most of us need some introductory support just to get our teeth into it.

That's why Ontario's Catholic bishops asked the Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice to prepare a study and action guide for *Caritas in Veritate*. They hope it will help many people to discover this blockbuster of an encyclical and make it their own – in parishes, in schools, in unions, professional and business associations, NGOs – or just in the kitchen or living room of friends who want to get together to understand this thing.

This is a “starter kit.” It is not comprehensive, nor is it a critical or analytical study. It simply tries to give people, in user-friendly language, a biblical and practical appreciation of the encyclical’s central themes and questions. And because this encyclical is a letter about the real world and how to change it, we hope that your discussion will also be about action – action that you yourself, or your group or movement, can take in your everyday life.

Many people are worried about some of the directions of today’s world, and also excited about the great human possibilities that are threaded through the capacities of our highly-charged civilization. Many already share some of Pope Benedict’s questions, alarms and hopes. Many have already begun restorative actions – some on a large international scale, some on a face-to-face basis with small numbers but great significance.

Theology is about life. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is about real change, genuine new beginnings. Scripture, in both Testaments, tells stories of particular moments through which the God of love reaches out to ordinary humans to set in motion a “joint venture” with them: a shared work that can start currents of divine/human love running through the real world. God still reaches out in that way: untiring, full of hope for us.

Every one of us can sign on to such a “joint venture.” All we have to do is to hear God’s gentle call to action, usually close at hand in our concrete life. That’s why every session in this discussion series has resources that can suggest significant action, or can connect you with a courageous action already in motion, somewhere in the world.



The best way to approach the Pope’s rich and complex letter is with others, in a small group setting. With internet access, you could “visit” some of the original, practical examples of “world-mending” that you find in the resources. You might feel a call to support or to join some of these actions.

May your study sessions draw you together in trust and in friendship. May God’s Spirit, Who inspires not only popes but also the unlikeliest of saints, be with you as you seek to be more responsible as a Christian in our tumultuous global village.

### Getting to know *Caritas in Veritate*

Everyone will have a preferred way to read Pope Benedict’s letter. Some will read it from beginning to end; others might prefer to sample it in smaller bites. As you read, you will encounter important themes and issues beyond those we cover in this “starter kit.”

Throughout the Guide, you will see numbers in brackets, such as (5), which will take you to a numbered paragraph in *Caritas in Veritate*. Reading these sections as you use this Guide will expand your understanding of Pope Benedict’s insights.

The encyclical is available in paper-back from the **Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops**. A single copy is \$6.95 (+ tax and shipping costs), with discounts for orders of 10 or more. You can order by phone: 1-800-769-1147; by mail: CCCB Publications, 2500 Don Reid Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1H 2J2; by email: [publi@ccc.ca](mailto:publi@ccc.ca); or online [www.cccbpublications.ca](http://www.cccbpublications.ca).

It is also available on the Vatican website at [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20090629\\_caritas-in-veritate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate_en.html)

## Notes for group leaders

This Guide is designed for small (5-8) group discussion. We encourage its use in parishes, universities, high schools, unions, businesses and in other professional settings.

The leader's role is crucial to the success of these sessions. It is expected that he or she have some familiarity and experience with Catholic Social Teaching and with the issues discussed in *Caritas in Veritate* and this Guide.

### **The following are recommended steps for preparing each session:**

1. The reflections in the Guide are meant to be read by all participants *before each* session. Ask your group members to read the reflection, taking the time to look up the references to *Caritas in Veritate*. The numbers in brackets throughout the Guide identify paragraphs in the encyclical where Pope Benedict develops his insights on a particular topic.
2. The leader should become familiar with the Resources offered for each Session. They are located at the end of the reflection and at the conclusion of the side-bar story.
3. Allow about an hour and a half for your session.
4. The leader welcomes everyone and opens with a short prayer.
5. Begin the first session by asking each person to take a couple of minutes to introduce *who* they are. This helps to build trust in the group. The emphasis should be on personal stories, rather than on *what* they do. It helps to ask people to include an event that has marked their life.
6. Listening is key to group discussion. Limiting each participant's sharing to two or three minutes keeps the momentum going. We recommend sharing in rounds, each taking a turn, but passing if wished.
7. Before each round, you might take a minute or two of silence to allow participants to gather their thoughts. This will encourage reflective sharing rather than debate.
8. Questions for each round are included in the Guide at the end of each Session.
9. The role of the leader is to ensure the discussion begins and ends on time, to read the questions and ensure maximum participation.
10. Close by agreeing on the date and time for the next session and end with a short prayer.

## Why Caritas in Veritate?

When you think of it, it's rather amazing that at 83 years old, with almost every newspaper in the world telling him that his church is in crisis and he'd better fix it fast, Pope Benedict XVI released a major encyclical letter, not on the problems of the church but on the great possibilities and urgent challenges facing the world. The whole world. Each one of us included.

Why would he do such a thing?

Popes have been writing this kind of passionate and thoughtful letter to the world for more than a century now, starting with Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* in 1891. Pope Benedict strongly affirms these "social encyclicals" as an essential element of Catholic teaching. In writing this new one, he is particularly celebrating the letter that Pope Paul VI released in 1967, *Populorum Progressio*. That hope-filled letter set out a vision of global human development – not just economic development, but *integral human development* – as a challenge facing everyone's conscience and as the necessary path to world peace.

So this kind of letter to the world is part of Pope Benedict's job, part of the contemporary papal ministry. But maybe there is an even more important reason.

Maybe it's true, as he insists, that the world is now at a crucially significant point.

The so-called Cold War is over. The world is no longer frozen into two giant opposing blocs afraid to engage in all-out war with each other. Today the force we call "globalization" has us interacting economically and technologically with people from every continent, almost every time we eat a meal, walk through a store, take a prescribed medicine or use the internet. Everyone is now my "neighbour" in a more practical way than ever before.

Globalization is a huge fact of contemporary life. It's full of dangers and distortions, oppression and inequality. It sharpens the danger of planet-wide pollution. It weakens older forms of protecting ourselves – such as the nation-state, for example.

But globalization is also full of new possibilities for helping each other and learning from each other, world-wide.

Pope Benedict, like John Paul II before him, thinks that the end of the Two Blocs phase demands **"a complete re-examination of development."** (23) He also thinks we need new forms of governance that can tackle problems which ignore national borders, driven by the force of economic globalization. We need **"to set ourselves new rules and to discover new forms of commitment, to build on positive experiences and to reject negative ones. The current crisis thus becomes an opportunity for discernment, in which to shape a new vision for the future."** (21)

Development there certainly has been. The pope notes that in some parts of the world, economic growth **"has lifted billions of people out of misery"** (21), but it has often been brutally unfair, grossly unequal and carried out in a reckless way that puts at risk the very biosphere, the natural environment on which we all depend for life itself. We do need development – Pope Benedict even says there is a human vocation to development – but we need to do it in a just way.



In one section of his long letter, Pope Benedict describes the present moment this way:

**“It must be acknowledged that ... economic growth has been and continues to be weighed down by malfunctions and dramatic problems, highlighted even further by the current crisis. This presents us with choices that cannot be postponed concerning nothing less than the destiny of man ...**

**“The technical forces in play, the global interrelations, the damaging effects on the real economy of badly managed and largely speculative financial dealing, large-scale migration of peoples ... the unregulated exploitation of the earth’s resources: all of this leads us today to reflect on the measures that would be necessary to provide a solution to problems that are ... of decisive impact upon the present and future good of humanity.**

**“The different aspects of the crisis ... are increasingly interconnected ... . They require new efforts of holistic understanding and a new humanistic synthesis. The complexity and gravity of the present economic situation rightly cause us concern, but we must ... take up with confidence and hope the new responsibilities to which we are called by the prospect of a world in need of profound cultural renewal, a world that needs to rediscover fundamental values on which to build a better future.” (21)**

So the letter was written partly to respond to this current crisis of uncertainty in the world’s economy. But what really fuels Pope Benedict’s passion is something deeper. He had to write this letter *because God cares so much about the state of the world.*

God cares – more than the most ardent social justice activist – about the integral, authentic development of every human being and of the human community. God cares about international development the way good parents care about the health and education and maturing of their children – because that is what we humans are: we are God’s own beloved family. All of us.

## Moses Coady

In the 1920s, the people of Nova Scotia faced very hard times after several decades of downturn in fishing, mining and agriculture. Little hope remained among the miners, loggers and fishermen – until the arrival of two charismatic priests, cousins Moses Coady and Jimmy Tompkins.

Moses Coady insisted that liberation from poverty could be achieved through adult education. He asked: “What should people do to get life into this community and what should they think about to enable them to get it?”

Dr. Coady and his associates used a practical strategy of study and action that began with the immediate economic needs of the people. He showed them how they could establish a credit union, starting very small, expanding as people’s confidence developed. He encouraged working together, seeing the possibilities of cooperation built on mutual trust. They must be people of honour and repay loans as quickly as possible. The participants saw that such collaboration could bring great returns.

“There is nothing the people cannot get if they work together,” said Coady.

Housing and other cooperatives followed. The formation of study clubs in which cooperative group action was created through a persistent process of questioning, debate and learning had emerged and the Antigonish Movement was born. It spread or was imitated in many areas. By the 1940s it became known around the world and adult educators and social activists came to study the Antigonish model. In 1959, the Coady International Institute was established.

Moses Coady died that same year. The movement he fostered to address his main concern, the growing gap between rich and poor, lives on in Nova Scotia and throughout the world.

See [antigonishreads.ca](http://antigonishreads.ca) for more about Moses Coady. For the Coady Institute: [www.coady.stfx.ca](http://www.coady.stfx.ca).

God is love. God created human persons as creatures who can, in more ways than we understand, reflect God's own love and wisdom by taking care of each other and of all life on earth. When we wrecked that picture by the refusal that Christians call "original sin," God became human in Jesus Christ to open a way for us to share in healing the life we have wounded. God gifts us with reason, and blesses reason with faith, so that we will have light to see how we can transform sin-wounded situations.

Even more crucially: *God gives us love* as the courage and energy to set out on the path that intelligence and faith light up for us. Love and the truth of things belong together. Love isn't just a pleasant sentiment. It's the only basis for good policy and helpful law. Love *thinks*, love *knows* and urgently understands. In love, with God's grace, we humans can heal the world we have broken, step by patient, thoughtful step.

Obviously, the word "charity" in this papal letter (used interchangeably with "love" – both being a translation of the Latin word *caritas*) is all about the great transforming mystery of divine love planted in human hearts for the life and redemption of the world. It is certainly not limited to the usual legal meaning of "charity" as a donation of money to worthy projects or to those in need.

That's why it is the Church's business, and the business of each one of us, to meet responsibly the right-here-right-now problems of a globalized world. It's a mandate of God's love. It's a matter of obedience to God's call, a matter of holiness: whole-world holiness, our-time holiness. It's what we're made for.

This is how *Caritas in Veritate* opens:

**"Charity in truth, to which Jesus Christ bore witness by his earthly life and especially by his death and resurrection, is the principal driving force behind the authentic development of every person and of all humanity. Love – *caritas* – is an extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous and generous engagement in the field of justice and peace."** (1)

We are **"made for gift."** (34) Love is our vocation. It belongs not only in our homes and friendships, but in much wider **"networks of love."** (5) Love belongs in the public and intellectual life of the whole world. And it's up to us to plant it and nourish it there.

The first and oldest commandment is: *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.* (Luke 10: 27, based on Deuteronomy 6: 5)

Pope Benedict's letter is about loving God **"with all your mind"** so that you can see how to love your neighbour in the whole-world way that our time demands. The world needs us, who are created for love, to find the ways in which each one of us can help **"to shape the earthly city in unity and peace, rendering it to some degree an anticipation and a prefiguration of the undivided city of God."** (7)



## Resources

- a) Dr. Moses Coady. *Masters of Their Own Destiny*. (1939) at [antigonishreads.ca](http://antigonishreads.ca).

See also biographies:

Jim Lotz. *The humble giant: Moses Coady, Canada's rural revolutionary*. Ottawa: Novalis (2005); and

Jim Lotz and Michael Welton. *Father Jimmy: the life and times of Father Jimmy Tompkins*. Wreck Cove, NS: Breton Books (1997).

- b) Ched Myers. *The Biblical Vision of Sabbath Economics*. Washington, DC: Tell the Word Press (2001). Also at [www.chedmyers.org/catalog/sabbath-economics](http://www.chedmyers.org/catalog/sabbath-economics).

This short book consists of seven studies of the scriptural views of God's dream of enough for everyone. Its approach is to "read the Bible economically in order to read the economy biblically."

- c) E.F. Schumacher. *Small is beautiful: economics as if people mattered: 25 years later ... with commentaries*. Point Roberts, Wash.: Hartley & Marks Publishers (1999).

See also Robin Broad and John Cavanagh. *Development redefined: how the market met its match*. Boulder, Colo.: Paradigm Publishers (2009).

- d) *All you need is love?* (2009) Open Space: a publication of the Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice [www.jesuitforum.ca/sites/default/files/OpenSpace4.pdf](http://www.jesuitforum.ca/sites/default/files/OpenSpace4.pdf)

This short publication gives an overview of *Caritas in Veritate*.

## Discussion questions

- 1) What struck you most when you read "Why Caritas in Veritate"?
- 2) "It's a matter of obedience to God's call, a matter of holiness: whole-world holiness, our-time holiness."  
Moses Coady is one example of such "whole-world holiness." Can you think of other examples, whether historical figures or people from your own experience?
- 3) In your own life, how does your work, your family, your studies, your other commitments, give you a chance to "meet responsibly the right-here-right-now problems of a globalized world"?
- 4) What other questions or actions have occurred to you as you reflected on the content of this Session?

## We're all in this together, to the ends of the earth

Over and over again in the long letter *Caritas in Veritate*, this thought appears in one form or another: as society becomes more globalized, it makes us neighbours but does not make us brothers and sisters.

We have increasingly immediate impacts on each other internationally, but not necessarily a deepening concern for each other. The next step needs the grace of God: but what an awesome step! God's call to us, now that our technology and our economy connect us so tightly world-wide, is to accept and love the entire human race as our family, under God. Then we need to think in that way, and plan in that way, designing institutions, laws and customs to prevent exploitation and act as "**networks of love.**" (5)

That's not just a feeling or an idea. It's a huge, complex task that needs the effort of all of us. Globalization invites us Christians – and other servants of God – into whole-world holiness. Today, the ways in which we develop economic relations, international law, protection for migrants, responsible technology and care of the environment are the big-picture ways – the "institutional" ways – in which we grow in our vocation to love. (7)

God has been inching us towards big-picture, no-boundaries love for a long, long time. And we've been resisting and finding it hard, ever since the beginning, as we see in the book of Genesis and the story of Cain and Abel.

This call to care for the common good is one theme that runs all the way through the Hebrew scriptures and then, without missing a beat, straight into the Gospels. Sometimes in those Gospels you can feel a shock-wave hit the disciples as Jesus points out one more of the countless practical consequences of being called to love everyone.

One of those moments comes in the famous story of the feeding of the five thousand people who come crashing uninvited into a lovely quiet retreat the apostles were enjoying with Jesus in a "deserted place." (Luke 9: 12) Jesus and the apostles were tired and needed a break. But when the crowd arrived, with all their needs, Jesus welcomed them and went into teaching mode. It got late, but no one was leaving.

So the Twelve, trying to be practical, said to Jesus something like: "Please stop. We're hungry. They're hungry. Tell them to go away and get something to eat, and we can relax."

But Jesus said, in effect: "If they're hungry, that's our problem. What can you offer them to eat?" The disciples were stunned. *Our* problem? Half a year's wages wouldn't get them each a sandwich! What do you want us to do, find a Food Basics here in Algonquin Park?

The solution started small. Jesus asked his friends to find out what supplies they had in hand and to share those out. They did. And the miracle grew from there. Everyone had enough.

The disciples shouldn't have been so surprised. In the scriptures that they had known all their lives, there are a hundred ways of insisting that every good economic resource – land, food, work, money, knowledge – is meant to be handled in a way that benefits everyone in the community.

Your family owns a farm, and the crops have ripened? The first thing you do is organize a big feast for the whole community, including especially those who don't own land of their own – like the Levites and “the aliens who live among you” – and also the orphans and widows “so that they may eat their fill within your towns.” (Read Deuteronomy 26:1-12 to get the picture.)

You have money that your family doesn't immediately need? Then lend it to someone in the community who is in need – and don't charge interest. “You shall not lend (a needy person) money at interest, nor give him your food for profit. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.” (Leviticus 25: 37)

In hundreds of ways, devout Israelites learned that the economy God will bless is a *covenant* economy, just as God is a covenant-making God. Abundance is indeed a blessing – it's a dimension of *shalom* – but it is given as a blessing for the whole community, not only for owners. And that doesn't happen automatically, as in “a rising tide lifts all boats.” New wealth, in fact, often creates new poverty, bigger gaps, new exclusions. Abundance becomes a blessing for all as a result of God's commandments, which are eminently real-life, and which insist on sharing.

To read Exodus and Deuteronomy with attention to how the economy of the Promised Land worked when its people lived covenant is to marvel at how many of the religious laws of ancient Israel were instructions about economic sharing.

To read *Caritas in Veritate* is to marvel at how intricately the “social magisterium” of the Catholic Church cares about the contemporary global economy, wanting it to grow with global social justice as its true goal.

## Tommy Douglas: the greatest Canadian

In 2004, Canadians voted Tommy Douglas the Greatest Canadian of all time following a nationwide contest.

At the age of 10, he was in hospital due to complications from a bone infection. His parents had no money to pay for a specialist and were told the boy's leg would have to be amputated. A visiting surgeon offered to operate for free if his students could attend. This experience served as the inspiration for Douglas' dream of universally accessible medical care.

“I felt that no boy should have to depend either for his leg or his life upon the ability of his parents to raise enough money to bring a first-class surgeon to his bedside ... I came to believe ... that people should be able to get whatever health services they require irrespective of their individual capacity to pay.”

A Baptist minister, Tommy Douglas became the Premier of Saskatchewan in 1944 as the leader of the provincial Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) party.

In April 1959, Douglas announced his government's intention to introduce a universal and comprehensive medical care insurance program for the province. It was strongly opposed by the College of Physicians and Surgeons and by 1961 there was a fierce doctors' strike. Tommy Douglas, however, showed Canadians that it was possible to develop and finance a universal medical care system.

When the legislation came into effect in 1962, the premiums were \$12 a year per person or \$24 for families. The people of Saskatchewan would collectively pay for those who were sick and all could be reassured that a terrible illness in the family would not lead to bankruptcy.

For more information, go to [www.tommydouglas.ca](http://www.tommydouglas.ca).

With wise local and international governance and a “culture of communion,” the global economy can in so many ways support **“integral human development of the whole person and of every person.”** And that’s what God cares about.



In the Western world, since the days of Adam Smith, capitalism’s devotees have tended to insist that economic growth is the fruit of self-interest, not of solidarity. Meanwhile, the economy featured in divine revelation – and in Catholic social teaching – is all about solidarity. (Fortunately, citizens and governments in the West have not always agreed with Smith’s way of thinking, and have built many marvels of concern for everyone – like the progressive tax system, free schooling, publicly supported health care – the list could go on and on!).

Solidarity, says *Caritas in Veritate*, **“is first and foremost a sense of responsibility on the part of everyone with regard to everyone.”** (38)

Everyone???

Biblical Israel understood “everyone” to mean, first and foremost, other Israelites; other heirs of the covenant with the God of Israel. People outside that covenant should be treated justly and not exploited. But since they were potential enemies, you could keep your distance. You could, for example, charge interest on loans to a foreigner. They weren’t “us.”

*Caritas in Veritate* insists that in the age of globalization, everyone means *everyone*. The whole world is “us.” We have to think hard, and plan afresh and carefully, if we are to live up to this emerging opportunity for “family living” in the whole human family.

How will we manage water resources with everyone in mind? (43) How will we make energy available, not just for those with the biggest buying power, but for poor countries and peoples? (49) How will we govern mass media so that they won’t bulldoze minority cultures into irrelevance, and trample on delicate strands of traditional wisdom? (73) How will we establish international supervision of financial transactions for the common good and not merely for one-sided, short-term profit? (45) How will we learn to live in a way that respectfully recognizes the limits and rhythms of the natural environment? (48-51)

The letter bristles with difficult questions like these. It also brims with confidence that human beings have the gifts to be able to deal with global questions: respectfully, justly, and with compassion. God made us with that potential.

If we clear serious breathing space for truth in the public forum; if we keep political life centered on its task of protecting the common good; if we seize every opportunity to promote a **“civilization of love”** – then we’re well on the way.



## Resources

- a) Bishops Conference of England and Wales. *Choosing the Common Good*. 2010. Available at [www.catholicchurch.org.uk/Catholic-Church/Publications/choosing\\_the\\_common\\_good](http://www.catholicchurch.org.uk/Catholic-Church/Publications/choosing_the_common_good)  
*Choosing the Common Good* presents some of the principles and values needed to build a just and civil society. In it, the Bishops of England and Wales present key themes of Catholic social teaching, pointing out that, "The common good refers to what belongs to everyone by virtue of their common humanity."
- b) *Water: let justice flow*. [www.devp.org](http://www.devp.org)  
 The Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace 2010-2011 education campaign with a focus on social movements that advocate for water as a basic human right.
- c) Maude Barlow. **Toward an Understanding of the Commons** in *Our Water Commons*. p. 6-9. [www.canadians.org/water/publications/water\\_commons/index.html](http://www.canadians.org/water/publications/water_commons/index.html).  
 Maude Barlow explains how an ancient notion of "the Commons" can help us to work towards a way of life where the dignity of every person is honoured. "The atmosphere and oceans, languages and culture, the stores of human knowledge and wisdom, the informal support systems of community, the peace and quiet we crave, the generic building blocks of life – these are all aspects of the commons."
- d) **Jubilee South** at [www.jubileesouth.org](http://www.jubileesouth.org)  
 Jubilee South is an amazing example of how a network of ordinary citizens can work together to bring about a more just social order. It began its work with the Jubilee Year's efforts towards the cancellation of Third World debt, which it considers immoral and illegitimate. Today, its goal is "building a new world economic order that is people-centered, equitable, gender-fair, sustainable and democratic."

## Discussion questions

- 1) What struck you most when you read: "We're all in this together, to the ends of the earth"?
- 2) When you pay your taxes, do you think you're serving the common good and practising "whole-world holiness"? Why, or why not?
- 3) **"In an increasingly globalized society, the common good and the effort to obtain it cannot fail to assume the dimensions of the whole human family ... in such a way as to shape the earthly city in unity and peace ..."** (7)  
 What are some ways in which you, your family, your parish, your school, your workplace, can "shape the *earthly city* in unity and peace"?
- 4) What other questions or actions have occurred to you as you reflected on the content of this Session?

## Hey, we've globalized the market. Now can we civilize it?

For many lifetimes, a see-saw struggle has been going on in the world's public life.

On one side is the energy of "private" enterprise, with its vision, initiative and plain old boundless greed, intent on opportunities to create wealth. On the other side is the push-back from "civil society" (including churches) saying, in a thousand ways, "Wealth is to be shared! Make room for the common good!" Every generation sees some victories and some defeats for the share-the-wealth side. The main scene of this struggle has been the nation-state. Now this same struggle is truly global, and we're all part of it.

One of the most impressive aspects of Pope Benedict's letter is its sense of urgency about the new possibilities – positive and negative – built into right now, into this moment of history. *Caritas in Veritate* sizzles with awareness of new dangers, but also new opportunities, at every level of our human life together.

Investment and trade can now leap across oceans at the click of a mouse, with astonishing technology ready to make it happen. That wide-open situation has caused vast economic growth. It **"has lifted billions of people out of misery"** (21) in some countries. But, left to itself, it is breathtakingly unfair. The *gap* between the rich world and the poor world has increased. And inside many countries (including Canada), the social and economic distance is growing between the "winners" and the "losers" in today's game of rapid economic change.

People everywhere are anxiously aware that their livelihood can be whisked out from under them by decision-makers they've never met. The great global hustle makes it hard for ordinary people (and their governments) to plan ahead for a stable, fruitful, family-friendly life.

For generations, national governments have been assigned decisive responsibility for "common good" roles such as protecting workers, regulating conditions of production and making crucially important services (like education) available to citizens on the basis of need rather than of purchasing power. These days national governments have to compete with each other in attracting and keeping foreign investment – well, any investment – and therefore jobs.

Corporate decision-makers search the world looking for conditions that will lower their production costs and maximize their freedom of action. That puts downward pressure on wages and benefits, and on social security programs in countries that have them. And it tends to reward governments which offer cheap labour, few worker protections, toothless unions (or no unions at all), and don't offer social programs covered partly out of business taxes.

Well, says Pope Benedict, this is the moment to insist internationally that the market belongs to everyone in their full human dignity and equality and it must not become **"the place where the strong subdue the weak."** (36)



He insists, for example, that, **“the repeated calls issued within the Church’s social doctrine ... for the promotion of workers’ associations that can defend their rights must ... be honoured today even more than in the past, as a prompt and far-sighted response to the urgent need for new forms of cooperation at the international level, as well as the local level.”** (25)

This is our chance to develop **“new forms of international governance”** able to provide some of the standards, some of the protections, some of the oversight that national governments have developed over time. Or might not yet have developed: Pope Benedict adds that a major focus of international aid should be on **“consolidating constitutional, juridical and administrative systems in countries that do not yet fully enjoy these goods.”** (41) Poorer nation-states may need aid to develop the tools to keep commerce in balance with the human needs of their own societies.



But nation-states can’t do it all. The Pope is aware of what a fine balancing act good international governance demands. The principle of solidarity (we’re *one* human community), he says, must always stay linked with the principle of subsidiarity (people need room to claim responsibility for their own actions and their own communities in harmony with their cultures).

**“Globalization certainly requires authority, (but) ... this authority must be organized in a subsidiary and stratified way, if it is not to infringe upon freedom and if it is to yield effective results in practice.”** (57, 58)

*Business itself has to do some of the social-justice heavy lifting. “Out-sourcing” production to a poorer country shouldn’t be outlawed altogether, because the investment can be good for the poorer country.*

## Fair Trade: connecting consumers with farmers

After working overseas and seeing, first-hand how our trading system exploits the growers and producers of many food items we buy in our supermarkets in Canada, Eric Sauvé and two friends established La Siembra Co-operative in 1999 to provide some alternatives.

They began with hot chocolate, sugar and cocoa, operating out of a community kitchen at First United Church in Ottawa. They chose Cocoa Camino for their product label and were the first in North America to be registered importers of fair trade certified cocoa and sugar.

La Siembra (“planting time” in Spanish) formed its structure on the same democratic, participatory and transparent ways of their producer partners. They believe the worker co-op model is an essential element of a sustainable economy.

The employees are member-owners of the co-op and participate democratically in the operation of the company. It is an example of equitable business practices that can help to build better communities for producers and consumers alike.

The worker-owners of La Siembra Co-operative are committed to a model of fair trade rooted in the growing social solidarity economy.

For more information:  
[www.cocoacamino.com](http://www.cocoacamino.com)

But “out-sourcing” puts Boards of Directors a whole world away from workers. It can weaken any company’s sense of responsibility towards workers, suppliers, the natural environment and the broader society, says the Pope. (40)

Investors can become like high-level bombers – very effective, but so high up they don’t see the human damage they are causing.

Pope Benedict insists that the struggle for social responsibility has allies within business – **“many far-sighted managers today are becoming increasingly aware of the profound links between their enterprise and the territory or territories within which it operates”** – but such people need support from all the rest of us, as citizens, as consumers, as investors, as legislators, and as day-by-day promoters of a global social conscience. (40)

We should make friends and allies with local, national and international business leaders who have shown that they are sensitive to social and ethical concerns.

Movements that start with the passion of a few activists can now reach millions of people through the internet and the media. Think of the way Development and Peace supports activists working for justice in dozens of countries. More examples of “global solidarity activism” are being born every year. Is this a new way of developing those **“networks of love”** the Pope praises early in his letter? (5).

*Ordinary citizens now need to grow a true global conscience.* The opportunities for responsible action are endless. We can deepen consumer education so that more people will stop buying products of companies that are harming people or the environment and will instead buy from companies that are taking care of the societies they’re in. We can support “fair trade.” We can support unions that are finding ways to strengthen their counterparts in poorer, harsher local circumstances. (64)

We can promote ways of “globalizing” some patterns of taxation so that fiscal resources can meet urgent needs that are beyond poorer nation-states. And, as missionaries have always done, some of us can go *where the need calls*, to spend time face-to-face with brothers and sisters struggling for what their communities desperately need.

The problems are awful. *But there has never been a time in history when so many ordinary people can take an active part in building local and global solutions!*

Over and over again, *Caritas in Veritate* encourages us: God made you for this kind of love and responsibility! No, we can’t do it by ourselves, but God is there to give energy and wisdom.

**“The unity of the human race, a fraternal communion transcending every barrier, is called into being by the word of God-who-is-Love.”** (34)

And God-who-is-Love does this barrier-melting work through grace given to you and me and our children!



## Resources

- a) John Dillon. **“An idea whose time has come: adopt a Financial Transactions Tax.”** May 2010. <http://www.kairoscanada.org/fileadmin/fe/files/PDF/Publications/PBP24-FTT.pdf>  
See also *Caritas in Veritate*, paragraphs 65 to 67.  
This innovative idea sees a very small charge on all financial market transactions, such as trading currencies or buying bonds, to be used to fund programs to fight climate change and world poverty and make financial institutions pay their fair share of the costs of the global economic crisis – a simple way to civilize a voracious market, say its supporters.
- b) **Transfair Canada** at [www.transfair.ca](http://www.transfair.ca). **Ten Thousand Villages** at [www.tenthousandvillages.ca](http://www.tenthousandvillages.ca).  
The idea of “fair trade” started in the 1980s when a few people worried about how the new Free Trade Agreements would affect small-scale coffee farmers in Latin America. They started tiny, garage-sized projects so consumers in the North could buy their coffee at prices that were fair to the growers, even if it meant paying a little more than the price at the big retail grocery stores. Today you can find Fair Trade products in almost every corner of Canada and in many countries world-wide.
- c) The **Millennium Development Goals** at [www.undp.org/mdg](http://www.undp.org/mdg).  
Believe it or not, in September 2000 all 192 member states of the United Nations agreed to the eight Millennium Development Goals and a number of targets to reach each one by 2015. The goals include such things as reducing extreme poverty and hunger, providing primary education for all, improving maternal health, environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development.  
See also **CIDSE** at [www.cidse.org](http://www.cidse.org).  
CIDSE is an international alliance of Catholic development agencies, including Development and Peace. Its work covers resources for development; climate justice; food, agriculture and sustainable trade; and business and human rights.
- d) Wayne Ellwood. *The no-nonsense guide to globalization, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Toronto: New Internationalist Publications and Between the Lines (2006).  
The revised edition of this well-received book examines the key issues arising from globalization – the competition for energy resources; the debt and economic crises, the links between the “war on terror”, the arms trade and privatization. The final chapter examines civil society alternatives to corporate globalization, including the World Social Forum and the Make Poverty History campaign.
- e) **No Sweat Uniforms**. A number of Ontario Catholic School Boards have joined together to ensure that uniforms and equipment are ethically produced. See <http://en.maquilasolidarity.org/resources/nosweat/schoolpolicies>

## Discussion questions

1) What struck you most when you read: “Hey, we’ve globalized the market. Now can we civilize it”?

2) “In a global economy, groups in the North and South must work together for employment with dignity, fair wages and working conditions, and healthy workplaces and communities.” (Maquila Solidarity Network: <http://en.maquilasolidarity.org>.)

MSN supports the Ethical Trading Action Group, a coalition of faith, labour and non-governmental organizations advocating for ... labour practices based on ... international standards. Its members include the Canadian Autoworkers Union; Canadian Labour Congress; CUPE; Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation; and the Steelworkers Humanity Fund.

Why is it important that workers and their unions in the global North work with their counterparts in the South for just labour practices?

3) In our globalized world, do you think it would make much difference if you decided to use and promote fair trade coffee, tea, sugar, cereal, etc. in your home or parish?

4) What other questions or actions have occurred to you as you reflected on the content of this Session?

## The bottom line: too flat for a round planet, too thin for the human heart

Ever since Pope Leo XIII, with his thunderous 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* that roared against “**the misery and exploitation pressing down so unjustly on the labouring classes,**” the official social teaching of the Catholic church has not sounded particularly “business friendly.” Ownership friendly, yes, in some ways. Work friendly, for sure. But a long way from the kind of capitalist ideology still held in some circles, that sees the single-focus drive towards maximum profit as a kind of sacred energy that should never be blocked because every other good thing trickles down from it.

*Caritas in Veritate* is truly enthusiastic about business enterprise – but only if we make sure that it leaves lots of room for everyone’s heart and soul. Pope Benedict wants us all to notice that good business can include, indeed can be built on, the generosity, mutuality and spontaneity that can turn work into one of the great joys of human life in community.

Many people in the Western world still believe in a centuries-old doctrine about the primacy of the profit motive. Business is only business, this doctrine insists, when it puts the bottom line first and last. The responsibility of the business leader is to maximize the return on his - and the shareholders’ - investment.

Pope Benedict organizes the whole third chapter of *Caritas in Veritate* to argue that this is no iron-clad law, nor is it a “natural” law. Space needs to be created “within the market” as a normal part of the working, planning and investing world for economic activity carried out by people who are not acting according to the logic of pure profit. In the formal language in the encyclical:

**“Economic life must be understood as a multi-layered phenomenon: in every one of these layers, to varying degrees and in ways specifically suited to each, the aspect of fraternal reciprocity must be present. In the global era, economic activity cannot prescind from gratuitousness, which fosters and disseminates solidarity and responsibility for justice and the common good among the different economic players.” (38)**

“Gratuitousness” is a word that has dropped out of Canadian English but in the encyclical it means something like “in the spirit of a gift.” The word includes the idea of generosity and the joy of giving. It also implies freedom of action, a spirit of spontaneity.

Pope Benedict observes that society doesn’t work very well unless this spirit of gift is encouraged, delighted in, taken seriously. In its own theological way, *Caritas in Veritate* makes a contribution to the growing debate in Canada (and other countries) about how to make legal and regulatory room for “social enterprise” – organizations set up to provide a needed public good, but which make themselves sustainable by doing some things for (carefully regulated) profit.

The idea of a business whose main purpose is to help less privileged people carve out a better foothold in the marketplace, or to help a whole community remain viable in hard times, is not a new idea.

The co-op movement, credit unions, the Canadian Wheat Board are all well-known examples in the Canadian economic scene. Indeed if we knew more of the histories of “normal” family business start-ups, we might

notice that a burning practical desire to help the local community has always been a huge source of entrepreneurial energy. “Me-to-We” (the “business” offshoot of the Ontario-based charity Free the Children) is a current, local example.



So an economy of neighbourly love is not a new idea but it is definitely an idea whose time has come – again. Currently the most famous example on the world scene is the huge network of micro-credit centres, services and businesses that have sprung from the Grameen Bank in grindingly poor Bangladesh.

Grameen Bank and Muhammad Yunus (its founder) won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006, so impressive are the results of his reinvention of banking to make active entrepreneurial room for the poorest women and men in Bangladesh’s villages and rural areas.

Muhammad Yunus calls his idea “social business.” Social business needs many of the same skills, and some of the same methods, as “profit-maximizing business,” but it is a different institution. It needs its own kind of professional training, its own organs of communication, and it needs legal space to breathe.

*Caritas in Veritate* wants the modern world to make ample room for business enterprises that have social justice, a healthy environment and joy in work as their *primary* goal.

**“Alongside profit-oriented private enterprise and the various types of public enterprise, there must be room for commercial entities based on mutualist principles and pursuing**

## “You will be altogether joyful”

You shall count seven weeks. Begin to count the seven weeks from the time the sickle is first put to the standing grain. Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the LORD your God blesses you.

And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who is within your towns, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow who are among you, at the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make his name dwell there. You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt; and you shall be careful to observe these statutes.

You shall keep the Feast of Booths seven days, when you have gathered in the produce from your threshing floor and your winepress. You shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow who are within your towns.

For seven days you shall keep the feast to the LORD your God at the place that the LORD will choose, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful.

The Book of Deuteronomy  
16: 9-15

**social ends to take root and express themselves. It is from their reciprocal encounter in the marketplace that one may expect hybrid forms of commercial behaviour to emerge, and hence an attentiveness to ways of *civilizing the economy.*" (38)**



Is this Utopian fuzziness? Is it a confusing, trendy novelty that will blow over? Aha, is it the perfect "cover" for a legion of future con artists who will claim legal and tax-related supports because of social benefit, while actually milking people for all they're worth?

Sure, all of those evils, and more, can afflict "social business" and any other organized human enterprise. We're a sinful people, remember? But, from God's point of view, the idea of "an economy of solidarity" is as old as the need to work, and as fundamental as the commandment "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

The first books of the Bible illustrate this conviction dramatically. In the story of the beginning of Creation, work is no problem at all: it's as natural as breathing. Humans are placed by God in earth's fertile garden precisely "to till it and keep it." (Gen. 2: 15) And ownership isn't an issue: things are God's.

Then the story darkens. The newly-created humans decide they would rather explore their own ideas and ignore God's wisdom. By the time the first kids have grown up, the neighbourhood of Eden is no paradise. Work becomes problematic: "Cursed is the ground because of you. In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you" (Gen. 3: 17-18). Jealousy and murder leap into the picture. As the story continues, it is in the spirit of Cain the brother-killer, and his brawling descendants, that economic development first takes shape. Read the fourth chapter of Genesis with the economy in mind and you'll see what we mean.

But light comes into the growing darkness. The Book of Exodus begins the story of how God leads a chosen people out of an economy that is rich and brilliant, but enslaving – that's how Egypt was remembered by the Israelites who had once been its slaves. God leads this people through a long apprenticeship of courage and obedience to sacred law. Then they can begin anew and build an economy that reflects God's saving will.

In that economy, "profit" is shared with the community, loans are an act of neighbourly support, land is treated respectfully, work alternates with days and weeks of rest and celebration (for everyone!) and the common good thrives.

It is the reversal of the "thorns and thistles" prophecy. It is what a working economy should be: a resilient foundation for a community's joy.

You work your land, you share its fruits with needy neighbours, you thank your God, and then you celebrate, "because the Lord your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful." (Deut. 16:15)



## Resources

- a) Josh Wingrove. "Marc and Craig Kielburger's do-gooding social enterprise." *The Globe and Mail*. March 19, 2010. See also 'Me to We' at [www.metowe.com](http://www.metowe.com) and 'Save the Children' at [www.freethechildren.com](http://www.freethechildren.com).
- Free The Children was founded by 12-year-old Craig Kielburger in 1995 when he gathered 11 school friends to begin fighting child labour overseas. Today, Free The Children is the world's largest network of children helping children with more than one million young people involved in 45 countries. 'Me to We' is a "social enterprise," a profit-generating business which supports Free The Children's programs.
- b) Muhammad Yunus. *Banker to the poor: micro-lending and the battle against world poverty* (1999) and *Building Social Business: the new kind of capitalism that serves humanity's most pressing needs*. New York: PublicAffairs (2010).
- See also the Grameen Bank at [www.grameenfoundation.org](http://www.grameenfoundation.org) and the Yunus Centre at <http://muhammadyunus.org>.
- c) The **Ontario Cooperative Association** at [www.ontario.coop](http://www.ontario.coop).
- Did you know that there are some 1,300 co-operatives and credit unions in Ontario? And that almost 1.4 million Ontarians are members of a co-op? If you want to find out more about a housing, food, child care or any of the 20 categories of co-ops in the province that are near you, just visit the website and enter your postal code.

## Discussion questions

- 1) What struck you most when you read: "The bottom line: too flat for a round planet; too thin for the human heart"?
  - 2) Is it indeed "Utopian fuzziness" when *Caritas in Veritate* "**wants the modern world to make room for business enterprises that have social justice, a healthy environment and joy in work as their primary goal.**" Why, or why not?
  - 3) In 2005, Alisa Smith and J.B. MacKinnon began an "experiment in local eating". Their **100-Mile Diet** "inspired thousands of individuals ... to change the way they eat. Locally raised and produced food [is] ... better tasting, better for the environment, better for local economies and better for your health.." (Visit their website, full of practical ideas, at <http://100milediet.org>).
- Have you tried a 100-mile-meal? Is the concept of eating locally-produced foods worth pursuing? Does it hold any biblical meaning for you?
- 4) What other questions or actions have occurred to you as you reflected on the content of this Session?

## Development: intelligent love of neighbour

Wouldn't it be interesting to ask several different people what they think "development" means. What would your MP say if you asked: "What does the Government of Canada mean by international development"?

You might get a different answer if you asked someone from a country with a very long history – Ethiopia, perhaps, or Iraq, or China: what is "development" and do you think Canadians understand what it is?

A life-long missionary who has lived on another continent might have a deeply personal take on "development." How do you think a Canadian mining executive might define development? Or an Inuit woman in Nunavut? Or an activist with the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty? How do you think Mother Teresa would have defined development?

Pope Benedict is emphatic about how the social teaching of the Catholic Church defines development. For him, development is a *human vocation*, which involves becoming more deeply human all the days of your life.

Pope Benedict quotes Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio*: "In the design of God, every man is called upon to develop and fulfill himself, for every life is a vocation." Pope Benedict adds:

**"This is what gives legitimacy to the Church's involvement in the whole question of development. If development were concerned only with technical aspects of human life, and not with the meaning of man's pilgrimage through history in company with his fellow human beings, nor with identifying the goal of that journey, then the Church would not be entitled to speak about development." (16)**

### Integral human development: building peace from the ground up

People in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), have suffered repeated conflicts between armed groups, including government and armed militias. At issue is the control of valuable mineral resources – diamonds, gold and coltan (used in cell phones). As in many countries, all aspects of mining can lead to conflict.

Both military and armed militias recruit their soldiers from the under-employed young men of South Kivu. These soldiers depend on the same villages for food, water and money, pillaging what they need.

The Bishops' Conference of the DRC<sup>1</sup> has established a community project, which supports women in particular with a small revolving loan fund to buy seeds, animals and farming tools. They also have a literacy group. In just 10 months, more than 3,000 women and girls have learned to read; as many as 600 women have borrowed money. With the profits earned from growing food, each woman repays her loan and money is lent to another.

The young men also need productive livelihoods to keep them from joining paramilitaries. Sustainable agriculture is an option – if they can access small loans to get started. They can now go before the women's revolving loan committee to make a request. In the process, women are seen in a new light and community reconciliation begins. The project is now self-sufficient and each small loans effort earns enough that women can use some of the profits to continue literacy training.

<sup>1</sup> Supported by the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace. Visit [www.devp.org](http://www.devp.org) to learn more about the international development work of the Catholic Church in Canada and how you can participate.

But because development is about *humanity*, the Church can't stop talking about it. The Pope even says,

**"The whole Church, in all her being and acting – when she proclaims, when she celebrates, when she performs works of charity – is engaged in promoting integral human development."** (11)

Hey, what happened to wells and bridges and transportation? What happened to schools and clinics and hospitals and universities, good laws, fair and competent police and judicial systems, freely elected governments, agricultural productivity, the capacity to do scientific research towards the solution of real problems? Aren't those the things Canada is helping to pay for when we offer development assistance?

Of course all those things belong in the picture. Extreme poverty is an enemy of the **"authentic human development"** this Pope esteems so highly. Hunger is an enemy. **"Feeding the hungry is an ethical imperative for the universal Church"** and **"a requirement for safeguarding the peace and stability of the planet."** (27) And that doesn't just mean food aid.

The Pope calls for a long-term perspective for dealing with food security – improving rural infrastructures, irrigation systems, transport, markets. He underlines the importance of discovering *appropriate technology* that respects traditional as well as new farming techniques, testing to be sure they are **"respectful of the environment and attentive to the needs of the most deprived peoples."** (26)

But the most crucial element of this perspective is *respect for the people themselves*, involving them in **"choices and decisions that affect the use of agricultural land."**



Authentic development is about human persons and their communities. You can't call it good development if you increase food production by driving people off the land and into urban unemployment and uselessness, while huge machines produce export crops on land that used to be their livelihood.

Speaking of unemployment, the Pope sees that as another enemy of authentic development. Chronic unemployment, or even long-term uncertainty about whether or not you can get good steady work **"tends to create new forms of psychological instability, giving rise to difficulty in forging coherent life-plans, including marriage. This leads to situations of human decline. ..."**

**"Being out of work or dependent on public or private assistance for a prolonged period undermines the freedom and creativity of the person and his family and social relationships, causing great psychological and spiritual suffering."**

**"I would like to remind everyone, especially governments engaged in boosting the world's economic and social assets, that the primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is man, the human person in his or her integrity. The human person is the source, the focus and the aim of all economic and social life."** (25)

Yes, people need shelter and food and water. These are human rights so obvious that we need **"to cultivate a public conscience that considers food and access to water as universal rights of all human beings, without distinction or discrimination"** because food and water have such **"an important place within the pursuit of other rights, beginning with the fundamental right to life."** (27)

Here is where the essentials really begin. Respect for life *is* development. If you can't welcome every human life, your "development plan" will start to shrink and twist that radical respect for the other which is so essential to integral development.

**“Openness to life is at the centre of true development. ... The acceptance of life strengthens moral fibre and makes people capable of mutual help.” (28)**

Obviously this vision of respect for life is a religious conviction. Religious awareness is tough; it can sometimes hang on to humanly crucial truths that are being forgotten and rushed past in our technological, economic, or ideological enthusiasms. That’s why the Pope sees religious freedom as essential to good development. (29)

Culture is as essential to integral development as food, water, good public institutions, or anything else you can name. One of the most passionate undercurrents of *Caritas in Veritate* is respect for the culture of each people, a care not to trample on cultures by one-sided globalization. It takes wisdom and patience to know how to listen cross-culturally. If we don’t approach culture with wisdom and respect, we can crush whole worlds of meaning and beauty.

One-sided globalization shrinks the subtle heritage of truth, just as environmental irresponsibility kills off species.

**“The risk for our time is that the *de facto* interdependence of people and nations is not matched by ethical interaction of consciences and minds that would give rise to truly human development ... .**

**“The sharing of goods and resources, from which authentic development proceeds, is not guaranteed by merely technical progress and relationships of utility, but by the potential of love that overcomes evil with good, opening up the path towards reciprocity of consciences and liberties.” (9)**

So that’s how this wonderful letter sees a blessed future for “development.” Yes, it needs money and technology and (especially) sharing, but mostly it needs respectful, just and intelligent love of other people.

**“Love is rich in intelligence and intelligence is full of love.” (30)**

That’s why development is a vocation. It is a multidimensional call from God to each human being and to everyone together. Integral development is about **“the whole of the person in every single dimension.”** (11) It’s also about the quality and breadth of human community. Our Creator leads us along a challenging journey whose goal is **“a civilization animated by love”** (13) that welcomes every human being.

The journey unfolds in real history, with all its sweat and tears and mistakes, all its brilliance and daring and patience. But it’s bigger than history. In more ways than we can understand, today’s rapid globalization can interact with God’s eternal plan to bring all of us together as one family, united in love and truth, each one radiant with the human perfection God planted in us as a wondrous possibility, before we were conceived.



## Resources

- a) Pope Paul VI. Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio* (On the Development of Peoples). 1967.  
[www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_enc\\_26031967\\_populorum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum_en.html)
- b) Seth Klein and Armine Yalnizyan. *Creating a Just Society: Reducing poverty, inequality will spur economic recovery*. (2010)  
See also Armine Yalnizyan. *The Rich and the Rest of Us: The Changing Face of Canada's Growing Gap* (2007). Toronto: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. [www.policyalternatives.ca](http://www.policyalternatives.ca)
- c) The story of the **Rich Man and Lazarus** in the Gospel of Luke: Chapter 16, verses 19 to 34.
- d) **Nyéleni Declaration on Food Sovereignty**: outlines the pillars of sustainable development. [www.nyeleni.org/?lang=en&lang\\_fixe=ok](http://www.nyeleni.org/?lang=en&lang_fixe=ok)

## Discussion questions

- 1) What struck you most when you read: “Development – intelligent love of neighbour”?
- 2) With an ever-increasing rich/poor gap, people lose the feeling of being “neighbours,” human beings on a common journey of life. Have you, or has someone you know, had the experience of feeling uncomfortable, or excluded, when you were with people of a different income bracket from your own?
- 3) What is your personal experience, or that of your family or neighbours, with unemployment or underemployment? What labour or social policies would you support to increase opportunities for Canadians who are trying to find work?
- 4) What other questions or actions have occurred to you as you reflected on the content of this Session?

## The more tools we have, the more soul we need

**T**True development does not consist primarily in “doing.” The key to development is a mind capable of thinking in technological terms and, at the same moment, grasping the fully human meaning of human activities ... .

“Even when we work through satellites or through remote electronic impulses, our actions always remain human, an expression of our responsible freedom ... . Human freedom is authentic only when it responds to the fascination of technology with decisions that are the fruit of moral responsibility. Hence the pressing need for formation in an ethically responsible use of technology.” (70)

If you’re old enough to remember practising how to get into the nearest nuclear fallout shelter, then you don’t need anyone to explain to you that technology – brilliant, scientifically conceived and designed technology – can kill us all as easily as it can figure out how to protect the lungs and brain of a seriously premature infant.

The nuclear news today is about the slow, careful work of countless international diplomats as the world inches towards mutually agreed abolition of nuclear weapons. People heave a sigh of relief that the superpowers of the Cold War years did not, in fact, commit “Mutually Assured Destruction,” even while we worry about what terrorists might do with black-market nuclear materials.



Technology. It’s wonderful. And it’s also intensely dangerous. *Caritas in Veritate* calls it:

“a profoundly human reality, linked to the autonomy and freedom of man. In technology we express and confirm the hegemony of the spirit over matter ... . It reveals man and his aspirations towards development, it expresses the inner tension that impels him gradually to overcome material limitations.

“Technology, in this sense, is a response to God’s command to till and to keep the land (cf. Gen. 2:15) that God has entrusted to humanity. It must serve to reinforce the covenant between human beings and the environment, a covenant that should mirror God’s creative love.” (69)

Well, if technology expresses and confirms the rule of the spirit over matter, what happens when the spirit doing the ruling is sick?

What happens when owners of a powerful technology – in mining, for example – are so intent on reaping wealth from it, that they don’t stop to understand and care about the Aboriginal inhabitants of the land they want to mine, even when the area will be ruined as a “homeland”?

Or what about “intellectual property rights” that can keep new technologies away from poorer people, even when life itself is at stake? A famous example of what the Pope calls “**excessive zeal for protecting knowledge through an unduly rigid assertion of the right to intellectual property, especially in the field of health care**” (22) has been the difficulty of getting AIDS medications into poorer countries.

Technology is wonderful. But technology without ethics, wisdom and compassion; technology without a respect for the limits inherent in things; technology plus greed, technology plus a desire to dominate, technology without love for everyone – is terrifying.

We humans are creatures who have received our own being as a gift, since we did not make ourselves or the earth from which humanity lives. Pope Benedict adds that if we lose our sense of being finite creatures of an infinite Creator, we will be in great danger of being swallowed up by our own technology.

Without a sense of the transcendence of God, our technology could shrink-wrap us inside a set of human-made meanings. Then we would be held back from **“encountering being and truth,”** unable **“to discover a meaning that is not of our own making.”** (70)



But by no means does *Caritas in Veritate* teach that people don't need technology. We do need it. We need new technologies, and also, at least for now, “old” technologies that inventors are trying hard to surpass. But above all we need a well-developed conscience, and a profoundly respectful approach to life.

The technology that has “globalized” us perhaps more than any other is electronic communication. Television and the internet are an ongoing revolution, potentially putting everyone in touch with everyone.

But the Pope asks: are the electronic media civilizing us? Do they promote true freedom, a profound vision of the person and of the common good and universal values? Or are they usually in the grip of planners whose goal is to dominate markets and turn people into consumers of their products?

## Biotechnology vs. the Sacred Corn of Mexico

*“When you sow corn, throw four seeds at a time: one for the wild animals, another for people with a taste for what's not theirs, another for festival days and another for the family.”*

*“Corn is not a business, but a food for survival, our sustenance and our happiness. When we plant it, we bless it to ask for a good harvest for all. ...”*

*“But we have recently found out that native corn varieties have been contaminated with genetically modified seeds. This means that what our Indigenous peoples took thousands of years to develop can be destroyed in no time at all by companies that trade in life.”*

Aldo Gonzalez Rojas, Oaxaca, Mexico

The people in Oaxaca were shocked to find their local varieties of corn had been contaminated. When the communities came together to discuss the situation, they agreed that GMO (genetically modified organism) contamination had not happened by accident. They knew these seeds were dangerous and that to defend their corn was to defend their culture and their lives.

The communities understood that genetic engineering was a method of taking control over agricultural livelihoods.

GMO seeds are owned by companies. This is completely opposed to nurturing and saving seeds over millennia by and for local communities.

Corn in Mexico is much more than a crop and a central element in eating habits. Corn lies at the heart of the peoples' history, their daily lives, economy, religious beliefs and worldview.

[www.grain.org/seedling](http://www.grain.org/seedling) (July 2004; Jan. 2009). For more information on new frontiers of genetic engineering, visit [www.etcgroup.org](http://www.etcgroup.org) and Hands off Mother Earth [www.handsoffmotherearth.org](http://www.handsoffmotherearth.org).

Are they draining the human juice out of traditional cultures without offering wisdom and balance in return? The media are **“fundamentally important in engineering changes in attitude towards reality and the human person,”** says *Caritas in Veritate*. How can we work to make sure that this dazzling technological network is **“used to promote universal participation in the common search for what is just”?** (73)

Being smart about technology can solve some very real problems. But in some cultural settings, a technological mindset can make people feel as if there are no natural and moral limits, no need for reverence in the face of a Creation that we did not invent.

Pope Benedict worries about this attitude most of all when it comes to the manipulation of human life by biotechnology. *In vitro* fertilization, research using human embryos, cloning and designing animal-human hybrids: all these techniques feed into a sense that we have mastered life’s mystery and that it’s all just sophisticated mechanics.

Then why not push ahead with eugenics, why not make euthanasia easy, why worry about abortion? Because, says *Caritas in Veritate*, the human being is also spiritual, and is a creature of God, not of science. Human dignity is a question that goes much deeper than any question of convenience or central planning.

**“Faced with these dramatic questions, reason and faith can come to each other’s assistance. Only together will they save man. Entranced by an exclusive reliance on technology, reason without faith is doomed to flounder in an illusion of its own omnipotence. Faith without reason risks being cut off from everyday life.”** (74)

It’s true. The more we live within a network of technological wizardry, the more we need wisdom and spiritual depth. Without that, we could end up with **“a conscience that can no longer distinguish what is human”** (75). For real wisdom, we need God. We need the Gospel of Jesus, because, as the Pope says, Jesus **“in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love, fully reveals humanity to itself ... . When God is eclipsed, our ability to recognize the natural order, purpose, and the ‘good’ begins to wane.”** (18)

But when persons attuned to God’s wisdom become skilled in the use of today’s powerful technologies, they can “love their neighbours as themselves” with an effectiveness our grandparents couldn’t imagine. How’s that for a new mission field?



## Resources

- a) Jennifer Moore. *“Taking stock of Canada’s mining industry”*: Ecuadorian landmark lawsuit challenges Canadian mining impunity.” *Briarpatch* magazine (May 2010) [briarpatchmagazine.com/taking-stock-of-canada%E2%80%99s-mining-industry](http://briarpatchmagazine.com/taking-stock-of-canada%E2%80%99s-mining-industry).

See also *Two Million Tons a Day: A mine waste primer* from MiningWatch Canada [www.miningwatch.ca/sites/miningwatch.ca/files/Mine\\_Waste\\_Primer.pdf](http://www.miningwatch.ca/sites/miningwatch.ca/files/Mine_Waste_Primer.pdf)

In Latin America, Canadian mining companies have been the focal point of widespread protests over human rights abuses, water contamination, destruction of rainforests and the deaths of community activists. In Canada, solid wastes from mining operations are in the tens to hundreds of millions of tons of waste for a single mine.

- b) **Canadian Mining Called to Account.** CCODP Education Campaign:  
[www.devp.org/devpme/eng/advocacy/miningforjustice-eng.html](http://www.devp.org/devpme/eng/advocacy/miningforjustice-eng.html)
- c) Douglas Roche. *“God and the Culture of Peace: A Theology of the Street.”* Regis College, University of Toronto, Chancellor’s Lecture. 2009. [roche.apirg.org/public\\_html/index.html](http://roche.apirg.org/public_html/index.html)
- d) Robert Kenner, Director. *Food, Inc.* Participant Media. Publisher: Magnolia Home Entertainment. 2009.  
 Robert Kenner draws on reporting by Eric Schlosser (*Fast Food Nation*) and Michael Pollan (*The Omnivore’s Dilemma*) to explore how meat and vegetables produced by agribusiness are unhealthy and environmentally-harmful. Available on DVD in libraries and video stores.
- e) Brewster Kneen. *“Control of Seeds”* on the Forum on Privatization and the Public Domain  
[www.forumonpublicdomain.ca](http://www.forumonpublicdomain.ca).

See also Vandana Shiva. *The Future of Food and Seed.* 2009. From OpEd News.  
[www.opednews.com/articles/Vandana-Shiva-Organicolog-by-Rady-Ananda-090401-47.html](http://www.opednews.com/articles/Vandana-Shiva-Organicolog-by-Rady-Ananda-090401-47.html)  
 (also available online in video format).

### Discussion Questions

- 1) What struck you most when you read: *“The more tools we have, the more soul we need”*?
- 2) *“Seed is created to renew, to multiply, to be shared, and to spread. Seed is life itself.”*  
 (Vandana Shiva)  
*“By the end of the 20th century, the development and distribution of seed was almost entirely in the hands of a very few giant corporations which consider seeds as private property to be developed, owned, bought and sold not for public good but simply for private profit.”* (Brewster Kneen)  
 What could be the impact on your access to nutritious food when corporations control seeds rather than farmers who save seeds from their own crops for re-use year after year?
- 3) What is your favourite technology, one that you yourself use? How has it developed/deepened you as a human being? In what ways might it also be *“bad for you”* or for your neighbourhood, community?
- 4) What other questions or actions have occurred to you as you reflected on the content of this Session?

## Making peace with nature: a fresh start for all of us

**T**hen God said to Cain: "What have you done?  
 Listen! Your brother's blood is crying out to  
 me from the ground!  
 Now be accursed and driven from the ground,  
 which has opened its mouth  
 to receive your brother's blood from your hand.  
 When you till the ground,  
 it shall no longer yield to you its strength.  
 You will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the  
 earth."  
 (Genesis 4: 10-13)

*When the poor and needy seek for water,  
 and there is none,  
 And their tongue is parched with thirst,  
 I the Lord will answer them,  
 I the God of Israel will not forsake them.  
 I will open rivers on the bare heights  
 And fountains in the midst of the valleys;  
 I will make the wilderness a pool of water,  
 And the dry land springs of water.  
 I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia,  
 the myrtle, and the olive;  
 I will put in the desert the cypress, the plane and  
 the pine together  
 so that all may see and know, all may consider  
 and understand  
 that the hand of the Lord has done this, the Holy  
 One of Israel has created it. (Isaiah 41: 17-20)*

We live in a time of fear for the future of the earth on which we live, the air we breathe and the water without which all of us would die.

The feeling of threat to Mother Earth runs so deeply that today's science-minded people can hear their own anxiety echoed in warnings that come to us from our pre-scientific ancestors in faith.

Many powerful passages in the ancient Scriptures link loss of soil fertility and of biodiversity to human arrogance, abuse of faith and injustice, especially to the poor.

Equally, the biblical tradition links abundance of nature's yield to a restoration of justice, mercy, and human responsiveness to God.

Thirty or forty years ago, biblical passages that made such connections sounded poetic but "primitive" to most readers in the Western world. We wouldn't dream of taking them literally. But nowadays, those same cries and whispers echo the sense of urgency communicated by teachers like David Suzuki, Wendell Berry, Al Gore, Maria Mies, Vandana Shiva and many others.

There is a sense that we must wake up from centuries of carelessness and indifference to the earth – or else we might all follow the polar ice cap into slow extinction.



Not everyone agrees, of course, on what we should do as we wake up! Arguments about how bad or not-so-bad the ecological situation is and (especially) about what we must do about it, are a staple of our public life.

Many feel the need for change *now* in our treatment of the natural environment. Countless organizations, large and small, are springing up to protect the oceans, or to save a particular watershed or forest. Other groups work to change the way mining is carried out, and to argue for strict limits on where drilling for oil will be permitted.

There is a revival of respect for smaller-scale, careful, mixed farming, rather than vast "factory farms" that turn out freight-trains-full of one product only, often by methods that are cruel to animals and exhausting to the soil. Other movements promote new and old ways of getting all of us to be less dependent on oil and other greenhouse-gas-producing sources of energy.

On the other hand, many people and governments feel stuck in the way things are. Courageous changes are often proposed. But when it comes to a vote, or to a decision around the boardroom table, resistance to change often seems unconquerable.

Remember what happened a few years ago when Liberal leader Stéphane Dion proposed changing the tax system to discourage carbon-based fuels and to hasten the development of a “green economy”? He and his party went down to defeat. The next Liberal campaign quietly buried Dion’s so-called carbon tax.

We get scared. We get overwhelmed by how complicated the challenge is.

There are indeed some really big problems. Sometimes a major industry is crucial to keeping a whole town working, and a whole country paying its debts. Yet everyone knows that the industry is strangling something precious and natural that we will always need – a river system, for example.

In Canada, the most dramatic dilemma right now is embodied in the oil sands (or “tar sands”) in Alberta – terrible for the environment and for the Indigenous people who have always lived there; wonderful for Canada’s export performance, for well-paid jobs, for fuel and for Alberta’s political influence.

Canada’s “dirty oil” is controversial in several countries. Here at home, the topic is almost too hot to touch politically. People of conscience – like Bishop Luc Bouchard in whose diocese much of the oil sands action is happening – struggle to find a responsible way forward. You can sample Pope Benedict’s carefully balanced struggle over energy issues in paragraph 49 of *Caritas in Veritate*.

We get scared – but we are also having our consciences raised, and some of us are thinking hard. And that’s exactly why Pope Benedict considers that we in this generation face an awesome moral and spiritual *opportunity*.

In his 2010 World Peace Day (January 1) speech, the Pope wrote: **“The ecological crisis offers an historic opportunity to develop a common plan of action aimed at orienting the model of global development towards greater respect for creation, and for an integral human development. ... It should be evident that the ecological crisis cannot be**

**viewed in isolation from other related questions, since it is closely linked to the notion of development itself, and to our understanding of man in his relationship to others and to the rest of creation. ... The ecological health of the planet calls for ... a profound, long-term review of our model of development.”**



It gets even more challenging. We do need a breakthrough in socio-economic thinking. We do need economic plans based on healthier, more inclusive goals. But Pope Benedict says that something deeper and broader is at stake: we need a *cultural renewal*:

**“The world needs a profound cultural renewal ... (it) needs to rediscover fundamental values on which to build a better future. ... The crisis thus becomes an opportunity for discernment, in which to shape a new vision for the future.” (21)**

What an exciting project! To join in a world-wide, peaceful struggle to re-think and re-imagine *all* of “business as usual,” to bring it closer to the vision that is in the Creator’s own heart! Yes, it will take everything we’ve got – creative, unusual business skills, and thoughtful, careful science; better politics, and new international laws and agencies.



But the gifts of ordinary people for everyday-life changes are equally in demand. Your great-grandmother’s recipes might suddenly have much to teach us. Someone’s wonderful idea about how to re-introduce composting, even in big cities, might seem practical rather than eccentric. And as we go deeper, people will see the urgency of long-buried questions about life-rhythms and priorities – like more commitment to family life and to local community life, to unborn life and to vulnerable people, and to the peaceful things we can do together that consume very little and cost almost nothing. *Everything* matters, and *everyone* counts.

As *Caritas in Veritate* puts it: **“On this earth there is room for everyone: here the entire human family must find the resources to live with dignity, through the help of nature itself—God’s gift to his children – and through hard work and creativity. ... This means being committed to making joint decisions aimed at strengthening that covenant between human beings and the environment which should mirror the creative love of God, from whom we come and towards whom we are journeying.”** (50)

At the heart of all this, what we most need is faith. Without faith, we stay stuck in fear. But faith, nourished by “love in truth,” drives out fear. Faith shows us that *we were made for such responsibilities*. We are the daughters and sons of the Creator of all things, entrusted from the beginning with the care of earth’s wondrous garden.

Yes, we have gone a long way towards making a junkyard out of Eden. But we also know that our God is a Redeemer: that God has already come, in our flesh, to invite us to join with him in “making all things new.” (Rev. 21: 5) God’s Spirit, who can “renew the face of the earth,” (Psalm 104: 30) will help us. It will be our **“integral human development”** – and our joy – to find our particular, vocational ways to meet the enormous challenge of this time.

**“Only if we are aware of our calling, as individuals and as a community, to be part of God’s family, will we be able to generate a new vision and muster new energy in the service of a truly integral humanism. The greatest service to development, then, is a Christian humanism that enkindles charity and takes its lead from truth, accepting both as a lasting gift from God. Openness to God makes us open towards our brothers and sisters and towards an understanding of life as a joyful task to be accomplished in a spirit of solidarity.”**(78)



## The Tar Sands: the world’s largest energy project

*“Our message to both levels of government, to Albertans, to Canadians and to the world who may depend on oil sands for their energy solutions, is that we cannot be sacrificed any longer.”*

Chief Rosanne Marcel, Mikisew Cree First Nation

More than 360,000 First Nations people live on the Athabasca River downstream from the tar sands. Fort Chipewyan is home to the Mikisew Cree. Water quality there has been found to be hazardous and studies show an unusual number of diseases and cancer with many deaths.

Fort Chipewyan Doctor John O’Connor, said: “There have been several different kinds of cancer, as well as what we call auto-immune diseases like rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, various skin rashes. The cancerous diseases have been the biggest concern.”

Extraction of oil from the tar sands requires from 3.5 to 5 barrels of water for one barrel of oil. Only 10% can be returned to the river system. Most ends up in lake-size tailings ponds filled with water and toxic material which form a thick toxic sludge. Mining one square meter of bitumen creates six square meters of tailings. These toxic “lakes” now occupy 140 sq km of forest and are visible from space.

Following a report it commissioned in 2007, Suncor admitted that one of its oldest tailing ponds had been leaking millions of litres of waste-water daily into the groundwater which flows into the Athabasca River.

Canada, once a global leader in tackling ozone pollution and acid rain, has no effective climate change policy. It has abandoned its Kyoto Protocol targets and now ranks 59<sup>th</sup> out of 60 countries on responsible climate action.

Source: CBC Edmonton. November 2008

## Resources

- a) *The Earth Charter* at [www.earthcharterinaction.org](http://www.earthcharterinaction.org).

The Earth Charter is a declaration of fundamental ethical principles for building a just, sustainable and peaceful global society in the 21st century. The drafting of the text was done during a six-year worldwide consultation process (1994-2000) administered by the independent Earth Charter Commission, convened by Maurice Strong of Canada and Russia's Mikhail Gorbachev. The official launch of the Charter took place on June 29, 2000 at the Peace Palace in The Hague with Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands in attendance.

- b) Vandana Shiva. *"Bioethics: a Third World Issue"* [www.nativeweb.org/pages/legal/shiva.html](http://www.nativeweb.org/pages/legal/shiva.html).

See also *Earth democracy: justice, sustainability, and peace*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press. 2005.

Born in India in 1952, Vandana Shiva is a world-renowned environmental leader and thinker. Director of the Research Foundation on Science, Technology, and Ecology, she is the author of many books, including *Water Wars: Pollution, Profits, and Privatization* (2001) and *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge* (1997). In 1993, Vandana Shiva won the Alternative Nobel Peace Prize (the Right Livelihood Award). Before becoming an activist, she was one of India's leading physicists. She holds a master's degree in the philosophy of science (University of Guelph) and a doctorate in particle physics (University of Western Ontario).

- c) Bishop Luc Bouchard, Diocese of St. Paul, Alberta. *"A Pastoral Letter on the Integrity of Creation and the Athabasca Oil Sands."* (2009) [www.dioceseofstpaul.ca](http://www.dioceseofstpaul.ca) (Pastoral Letters)

See also Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Our Relationship with the Environment: The Need for Conversion* (2008) [www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/enviro\\_eng.pdf](http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/enviro_eng.pdf).

Also CBC. *In Depth: Fort Chipewyan* (2008) [www.cbc.ca/edmonton/features/fort-chipewyan/in-depth.html](http://www.cbc.ca/edmonton/features/fort-chipewyan/in-depth.html).

- d) Pope Benedict XVI. *"If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation."* World Day of Peace, January 1, 2010.

[www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/messages/peace/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20091208\\_xliii-world-day-peace\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20091208_xliii-world-day-peace_en.html)

- e) KAIROS Re-energize Campaign. Excellent resources on climate change for youth and adults. [www.kairoscanada.org/en/get-involved/campaign](http://www.kairoscanada.org/en/get-involved/campaign)

### Discussion questions

1) What struck you most when you read: “Making peace with nature: a fresh start for all of us”?

2) “Do unto those downstream as you would have those upstream do unto you.”  
Wendell Berry, “**Watershed and Commonwealth**” in *The Citizenship Papers* (2004)

How would you apply Wendell Berry’s version of the golden rule to the development of the Athabasca tar sands?

3) “Earth, our home, is alive with a unique community of life. ... [Its] resilience ... and the well-being of humanity depend upon preserving a healthy biosphere with all its ecological systems, a rich variety of plants and animals, fertile soils, pure waters, and clean air. The global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples. The protection of Earth’s vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust.” (The Earth Charter)

What needs to change in our individualistic consumer society to realize the vision of the Earth Charter that caring for the environment is a “sacred trust” and a “common concern of all peoples”? (Take, for example, motor vehicles.)

4) What other questions or actions have occurred to you as you reflected on the content of this Session?

## Conclusion

We hope you and your group have found this Guide to be helpful in unpacking this complex but rich encyclical. We very much hope your discussions built trust and friendship among you as a group and have been engaging, fruitful, inspiring and motivating.

As mentioned in the Introduction, this Guide is a “starter kit.” It was designed to bring the central themes of *Caritas in Veritate* to life. However, the content of the encyclical becomes real only when it is shared through people’s lived experiences with others. That’s where the energy is and that’s where further energy, creativity and ideas for action are generated.

With these thoughts in mind, we present these concluding questions:

- 1) **What struck you most in your participation in this seven-session study of *Caritas in Veritate*?**
- 2) **In your own life how does your work, your family, your studies, your other commitments give you a chance to apply the spirit of *Caritas in Veritate* right-here-right-now?**
- 3) **How do you plan to follow up on the experience of these sessions?**



**We welcome your feedback on this Guide for Discussion and Action on *Caritas in Veritate*. Kindly send any comments or suggestions you would like to share with us to:**

**General Secretary  
Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario  
10 St. Mary Street, Suite 800  
Toronto, Ontario M4Y 1P9**

**Or email: [acbo@acbo.on.ca](mailto:acbo@acbo.on.ca)**

*Thank you!*