

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND THE COMMON GOOD



Learning Intention: To understand that by working towards environmental sustainability we are working towards the common good.

[Pope Francis' message for World Food Day 2021](#)

I would like to indicate four areas where action is urgently needed: in the fields, at sea, at the table and in reducing food losses and waste. Our lifestyles and daily consumption practices influence global and environmental dynamics, but if we are to make a real difference, we must encourage producers and consumers to make ethical and sustainable choices and raise awareness among the younger generations of the important role they play in making a world without hunger a reality. Each of us can play our part in this noble cause, starting with our daily lives and the simplest gestures. Knowing our Common Home, protecting it and being aware of its importance is the first step towards being stewards and promoters of the environment.

Explain what issues would arise if individuals made decisions based solely on their own needs.

Can you think of any scripture references about the importance of considering others in our actions?

ACTIVITY

Working towards the common good means that we need to be deliberate in our choices and conscious of how they can affect others. What may be good for one small group, may not be best for all.

For each of the decisions below, construct a flow chart that shows the flow on effect to the environment and, subsequently, individuals and communities in our world. The flow on effect may be positive or negative, and you may wish to conduct some research to help.

- Deciding to use single-use plastic bags
- Switching off appliances at the power point when not in use
- Flushing wiper down the toilet
- Walking, riding a bike or catching public transport rather than driving
- Using biodegradable plates instead of plastic plates at a party
- Re-filling a drink bottle instead of purchasing bottled water
- Using a clothes dryer to dry clothes each time instead of using a clothes line

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“Every human being and every social group has proper interests that are more or less justified. To desire the “common good” means to be capable of thinking beyond one’s own needs. We must be interested in the good of all, even of people nobody thinks about because they have no voice and no power. The goods of the earth are there for everyone. And if each person thinks only of themselves, then coexistence becomes a war of all against all.”

Pope Francis, DOCAT n 88

ACTIVITY – EXTENDED RESPONSE

Referring to climate change, discuss the barriers that exist in working towards the common good when governments make decisions based only on achieving their own economic and social goals. Support your response with real-life examples, statistics and church teaching.



With Caritas Australia’s support, the San Isidro Care Centre vocational school in the Solomon Islands was able to install eight large water tanks allowing them to expand their vegetable and poultry production increasing their food security. Photo: Neil Nuia/Caritas Australia