



(CCCB – Ottawa) – As part of the United Nations' *International Year of Planet Earth*, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) has published a pastoral letter which calls for a collective consciousness to face critical environmental problems affecting the earth.

Produced by the Episcopal Commission for Social Affairs, the pastoral letter is titled ["Our Relationship with the Environment: The Need for Conversion."](#)

The Commission asserts that despite important commitments at summits held in Rio, Kyoto, Johannesburg and Bali, Canada represents "an extreme case" of non-compliance.

"After signing the Kyoto Protocol [in 1997], in which we agreed to decrease our greenhouse gases to six per cent less than those of 1990, we have instead increased them by approximately 25 per cent," the letter explains.

The Bishops state that Canadians are not sufficiently conscious of the impoverished inheritance

they are leaving for the generations to come. As a result, the Commission for Social Affairs calls for immediate adjustments to improve the current situation, particularly for the well-being of future generations and the Global South.

In order to restore humanity's bonds with nature and lessen the effects of ecological breakdown, the pastoral letter proposes several ways Canadians can change, including:

- Regaining a sense of limit and adjusting our way of life to the planet's available resources
- Freeing ourselves of an "obsession to possess and consume" and instead choosing "joyful austerity" or voluntary simplicity
- Making personal efforts in favour of the environment

The Bishops insist that responsibility for restoring a healthy relationship with nature falls on each individual, who must re-examine his or her perceptions about possessions and personal comfort. This will demand greater solidarity and new forms of sharing among all Canadians, they said.

In October 2003, the CCCB Social Affairs Commission published an earlier letter on the environment entitled ["The Christian Ecological Imperative."](#) This text, as well as the recent pastoral letter which has just been published, is available on the CCCB website

<http://www.cccb.ca/>

. Printed copies may be ordered from

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