

UKRAINIAN GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH
Major Archbishop of Kyiv-Halych

Kyiv,
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**To the organizers and participants
of 13th Ecumenical Social Week**

It was with great joy and interest that I received the news that, on October 7-10, 2020, the 13th Ecumenical Social Week (ESW) entitled "Hear the Cry of the Earth: Integral Ecology in Action," will be held in Lviv.

I extend my sincere thanks to the Institute of Ecumenical Studies of the Ukrainian Catholic University for focusing this Social Week's attention on the urgent need to preserve the environment. Our society, finally, must realize that it is impossible to provide the necessary conditions for life and development of man and society without a radical change in our attitude to the environment.

Pope Francis in his ecological encyclical «Laudato Si'» recalls the words of St. John Paul II, who noted that man likely "seems to see no other meaning in his natural environment than what serves for immediate use and consumption." [Encyclical «Redemptor hominis» March, 5, 1979, 15: AA5 71 (1979), 287]. That is why it is necessary to rethink the perception of the natural environment for the sake of "ecological conversion." John Paul II also remarked that too little effort had been made to "safeguard the moral conditions for an authentic 'human ecology'" [Encyclical «Centesimus annus», May 1, 1991, 38: AAS 83 (1991), 841].

The Lord God created human beings as the masterpiece of his creation. Humans, through their creativity, are called to be an icon of the Creator, the governor of the created

world, to ensure its harmonious development. Instead, they have become - through lifestyle and the predatory nature of modern civilization - the cause, and at the same time, the victim of the current environmental crisis, which is gaining global proportions.

“The destruction of the human environment,” Pope Francis continues in the above-mentioned encyclical, “is extremely serious, not only because God has entrusted the world to us men and women, but because human life is itself a gift which must be defended from various forms of debasement. Every effort to protect and improve our world entails profound changes in ‘lifestyles, models of production and consumption, and the established structures of power which today govern societies’ (Centesimus annus, 58). Authentic human development has a moral character” (Laudato Si’, 5).

With great joy, I state that the responsibility for the environment is not the concern of one particular Church in Ukraine. It is very important that this noble cause of respect for the created world and respect for God the Creator become a joint effort of all Christians in Ukraine, so that the theme of ecological conversion can gain an ecumenical dimension. In this area we can and must do a lot together, in particular with our Orthodox brothers.

I hope that your esteemed gathering will bear generous fruits in the exchange of ideas, approaches and practices. May your proposals and resolutions, based on Christian values, become useful guides in ensuring the building of a just social order in Ukraine for all its inhabitants as children of God.

With prayer and blessing

+ SVIATOSLAV