

**Message from Bishop John Tong  
for World Day of Peace  
1 January 2010 - Cathedral**

**My dear brothers and sisters:**

On every January 1 since 1968, the Holy Father has promulgated a message for World Day of Peace. His message is addressed not only to Catholics, but also to the leaders of nations throughout the world. This year our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, has chosen the theme: *If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation*.

He urges all people to take a long-range view of economic development, reflect on its meaning and goal, and rectify those mistaken strategies and methods which have led to our current crisis.

Our Holy Father says that the ecological crisis is connected to a crisis in morality. What he means is that, if people forget the role entrusted to them by God, then they will become dictatorial rulers and exploiters of the natural world. Not only will they be unable to protect the environment, they will destroy it.

According to the scriptures, God created male and female, and entrusted them to be masters of the world. (Genesis 1:27-28) Thus, we are stewards of creation, not its dominators and exploiters. Part of our vocation as human beings is the duty to pass on this world intact to the next generation. The Church must base its position on this biblical teaching to awaken humanity to today's situation, and to cultivate people's better instincts for our world.

All Christians have a duty to strive vigorously to protect the environment. If people understand the inseparable links among God, humanity and all creatures, then the task of cultivating peace will be halfway accomplished.

I encourage all of you to ponder the whole text of our Holy Father's message.

In Hong Kong, our late Cardinal Wu promulgated a message on ecology on the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi 1998. He referred to letters from Pope John Paul II and various bishops conferences to protect and improve the environment. Only in this way, "the poor will not be harmed, human life and dignity will be protected, the natural resources needed for future generations will be spared widespread damage, and the world will be full of hope."

In recent years, increasing numbers of residents in Hong Kong are recycling more and wasting fewer resources. They are turning off unneeded lights and setting their air conditioners to a less frigid temperature. However, still more effort should be made. Therefore, I urge all parishes and diocesan offices to use less energy in 2010. This will give witness to our concern for the environment.

I ask St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of those who are concerned for the ecology, to pray for us.

