

Foreword

The environmental crisis is currently one of the most topical and vital issues of our day. Alarming reports on the prevalent manifestations of this crisis, climate change in particular, have led to an awakening of public awareness in many countries. People, so far unaware of the upcoming threats, are now taking part in demonstrations aimed at mobilizing politicians to take quick and radical decisions and actions necessary to overcome an environmental crisis.

For several decades now, the Catholic Church has been actively involved in reflection on the environmental issue and it has recurrently encouraged its followers and all people of good will to become involved in the protection of creation and to adopt a more responsible approach towards the management of resources entrusted to us by the Creator. John Paul II and his successors, Benedict XVI and Pope Francis, took an unequivocal position in this respect. It was most expressly formulated in the encyclical *Laudato si'* published in 2015, in which Pope Francis presents a positive programme of the care for the Earth, our common home, in the form of an integral ecology. However, the ecological activity of the Church is not confined to the statements of popes. This issue has, for many years, already been the subject of reflection and actions of the Church at the level of episcopal conferences of individual states, bishops, ecological organizations with religious provenance, Catholic movements and

communities, and even parish groups and individual faithful.

The materials collected in this volume constitute the output of a conference organized by the Center for Ecology and Ecophilosophy at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw on the 30th anniversary of the announcement by the Polish Bishops' Conference of a pastoral letter on environmental threats. The conference entitled "The Church Towards the Ecological Crisis. On the 30th Anniversary of the Pastoral Letter of Polish Bishops on Environmental Protection" took place on May 16, 2019 in Warsaw. The papers published in this volume were presented during the conference. They were aimed at illustrating the ecological commitment of the Catholic Church in reflection on the ecological crisis and to present various activities undertaken with the view to overcoming it. Besides strictly academic materials, this publication includes a presentation of various initiatives of Catholic ecological organizations from Poland and abroad. Additionally, it propagates to English-speaking readers the content of the letter of the Polish Bishops' Conference of May 2, 1989 and October 4, 2019. This volume contains moreover an *Appeal of Christians and the People of Good Will in Poland for the Care of Creation*, which was unanimously adopted by all conference participants.

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