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Tuesday, June 16, 2009

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# Pope Preaches Green at UN

Ker Than in New York City for National Geographic News April 18, 2008

Pope Benedict XVI heightened his recent environmental campaign in his address at UN headquarters in New York City today—a push that includes everything from stern theological warnings to solar panels on St. Peter's Basilica.

"International action to preserve the environment and to protect various forms of life on Earth must not only guarantee a rational use of technology and science, but must also rediscover the authentic image of creation," Pope Benedict told the UN General Assembly.



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Vatican City.

(See Vatican photos.)

In addition, green themes appeared in the church's March update of the "seven deadly sins." One of the new offenses is "environmental pollution."

The comments are the latest in a series of increasingly strong statements made by the pontiff in recent months.

The pope has argued that environmental protection is a moral obligation and has called global warming a "grave concern."

(See also: "Pope's Views on Science Invoke Spirited Debate" [April 18, 2008].)

Practicing What He Preaches?

Under Benedict, the Roman Catholic Church has taken steps to set examples of how to be green for its followers—about a fifth of the world's population—and the rest of the world.

In July 2007 the church accepted an offer by a Hungarian start-up company to plant trees in Hungary to offset the carbon footprint of Vatican City—the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases emitted by the tiny state. (See how the greenhouse effect works.)

The move is intended to make Vatican the world's first carbon-neutral country—though it has increasing competition for the honor.

Vatican engineers are also installing solar panels on the roof of St. Peter's Basilica in



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