

## **Section 51: 'Laudato Si' and a Spirituality of the Heart.**

On May 24, 2015, Pope Francis issued an encyclical letter entitled "*Laudato Si'*": ("*Praise be to you, my Lord*") in which he speaks on "*Care for our Common Home.*" In this letter, the Pope urges us to take responsibility for the place where we live, the world we inhabit together with so many other creatures: planet Earth.

Our common home is currently going through a deep crisis, the Pope declares. He speaks of "*the complexity of the ecological crisis and its multiple causes*" (LS 63). He refers to global warming and climate change; the throwaway culture and pollution; extreme drought and lack of access to safe drinkable water; loss of biodiversity and the decline in the quality of human life. We cannot remain indifferent to these catastrophes, he states, all the more so since these disasters mostly affect the poorest people.

For us, Chevalier Associates, there is also the question of what attitude we can adopt in the midst of these crises – we, who are trying to live a Spirituality of the Heart. This question brings us straight to the heart of Pope Francis' discourse, which he formulates as follows: "*Creation is of the order of love. God's love is the fundamental moving force in all created things*" (LS 77). He bases this vision on the testimony of the Holy Scriptures. For example, the book of 'Wisdom' declares: "*For you love all things that exist, and detest none of the things that you have made; for you would not have made anything if you had hated it*" (Wisdom 11:24; LS 77).

Therefore, the Pope invites us to see creation first and foremost "*as a gift, coming from the outstretched hand of the Father of all, and as a reality enlightened by love, which calls us together to universal communion*" (LS 76).

This vision of the Pope raises many questions, especially in these times when so many people are suffering

from the global COVID-19 pandemic. But even people who suffer from devastating earthquakes or typhoons; prolonged drought or flooding; extreme poverty, permanent handicaps or a painful loss, will wonder how the Pope can speak of a God who loves all that lives (Wisdom 11:26). We will elaborate on this in the following sections.

## REFLECTION

*“The various cultural and religious resources  
found in art, literature, sacred writings,  
liturgical action and mystical contemplation,  
contribute to the ecological commitment  
which is intrinsic to faith.*

*The Creation accounts in the Bible bring together  
relationships to God, the neighbour and to the earth,  
together with the principle of common ownership.*

*All this requires that human intelligence  
respect the particular nature of things.*

*Each living being has a value in God’s eyes,  
which counts more than pragmatic usefulness.*

*There is a larger world of wonder  
overflowing the limited scope of mere human utility.*

*In that perspective of one divine creation,  
everything is interconnected.”*

( Anthony J. Kelly Csr, "Laudato Si".  
An Integral Ecology and the Catholic Vision.  
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