

SECTION 52

SPIRITUALITY OF THE HEART IN 'LAUDATO SI': SOME CENTRAL THEMES

Hans Kwakman msc

In Pope Francis' encyclical: "Laudato Si" certain themes keep recurring. These show that the care for our common dwelling, the planet earth, is grounded in spirituality. David Cloutier, whom I also quote in the Reflection, mentions some central themes. I will briefly summarise his contribution.

Everything is interconnected. For the Pope this is the core of a healthy spirituality. Our spiritual life, our prayer and the celebration of the Eucharist should not be separated from our daily life, from caring for the world around us and for God's whole creation.

Everyone is connected. This forms the heart of our Christian faith: the human family is one, we are all brothers and sisters of each other and live in a common home. The Covid-19 pandemic makes this painfully clear once again.

The crisis in which the world is currently immersed cannot be resolved by purely technical measures. The solution to the crisis requires a conversion of the heart and a deepening of our relationship with God, with each other and with creation. Together with the Son, Jesus Christ, we are all sent to accomplish the Father's creative work. Under the inspiring guidance of the Holy Spirit, we are called to make this world a better place to live for everyone.

One of the things we thus need to do is to develop a *new way of living and interacting with one another*. The "*throwaway culture*" must make way for a culture of care and sustainability. This will also enrich us spiritually and deepen our relationship with God and with one another.

The earth is "our sister" and our "common home". These metaphors want to express that we are responsible for our planet, as for our family members and for our own home. Planet earth is not a problem to be solved, but a mystery to be admired in joy and gratitude.

Moreover, the Pope repeatedly stresses that there is a close relationship between *the crisis facing the world and the*

widening gap between rich and poor. The care of our common home needs above all to benefit the poor and the needy.

REFLECTION

“An actual encounter with the text of “Laudato Si” should also be about spiritual development. It should change us, inside and outside. We not only need to read it; we need to pray it and live it....

As we approach the encyclical, we might also pray for the grace of humility. A genuine humility always reflects Christ. Francis has been a prime example of it. When discussing social issues in our society, things can quickly become destructive...

Humility makes it possible for us to speak our differences, listen and perhaps grow toward one another.

Let us listen to God, to the pope, to one another, and to the world.

Let us pray about it – really pray – and not just react. And then let’s act together so that God’s will might be done on earth, and not just in heaven.”

(David Cloutier,
Reading, Praying, Living Pope Francis’s “Laudato Si.”
A Faith Formation Guide,
Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota.)