

Leading us back to the Creator

Ten Green Commandments #3 Rediscover a Theological Vision of the Natural World

The love of God is at the centre of everything. We are made in the image of God and by bearing the image of God we have been given a great responsibility. Earth, our common home, is a gift. We owe our very existence to the infinite love of the Creator.

Humans are called to “live in communion with the natural world ... and universal communion of the entire creation is the basis of our common fraternity “that excludes nothing and no one” (Kureethadam, 2019, 67). We must take a place within creation and not rule over it. We, as *Imago Dei*, must remember each created animal or plant also reflects the face of God.

Nellie McLaughlin speaks of universal communion:

all living beings are jewels in the great net of the universe so when we look reverently at one jewel we see all the others are reflected therein, and it in all the others. What a wonderful image of the body of Christ ... This image is very resonant for me as I read Laudato Si' which stresses again and again our dignity, interconnectedness and interdependence

as the entire community of creation. Everything is interconnected, and that invites us to develop a spirituality of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity' (2015, 29).

Throughout *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis (2015) reiterates the community of creation as “each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection ... Each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God’s infinite wisdom and goodness (section 69).

God is in everything as observed by the bishops of Japan. To “sense each creature singing the hymn of its existence is to live joyfully in God’s love and hope”. This contemplation of creation allows us to discover in each thing a teaching which God wishes to hand on to us. We are all connected, and we need to be in creation to hear the message (Pope Francis, 2015, section 221).

A theology of the created world exists in the Christian tradition and calls out to be embraced and lived. This is not a fleeting whim of green activists but a deep-seated spiritual and ecological imperative of our faith – one we need to share, teach and proclaim.



A theological reflection...

**In this time of climate change
To everything there is just one season;
The time is past when atmospheric CO₂ levels do not rise;
For there is no time when our activities do not
contribute to a rise in global temperatures.
It is a time to plant trees, not to cut down forests;
A time to walk lightly on the earth, not to drive;
A time to cherish species, not to kill them;
A time to build up life support systems,
and not needlessly to consume or waste them.
Theologian Anne Primavesi (in McLaughlin, 2015, 44)**

REFLECTION

How do you understand your connectedness with the natural world?

REFERENCES

1. Pope Francis. (2015). *Laudato Si'* [Encyclical letter]. Retrieved from www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html
2. Kureethadam, JI. (2019). *The Ten Green Commandments of Laudato Si'*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press.
3. McLaughlin, N. (2015). *Life's Delicate Balance – Our Common Home and Laudato Si'*. Dublin, Ireland: Veritas Publication