

Martín Carbajo Núñez, OFM



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Franciscan Roots of the *Laudato Si'*

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MARTÍN CARBAJO NÚÑEZ



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English

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By Martín Carbajo Núñez

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Laudato Si', my Lord, for my parents Martín and Ascensión,
who taught me to enjoy family life & to care for the common house;
and for the brothers of my Franciscan Province of Santiago,
who have expanded the horizons of my first family home.

General index

ABBREVIATIONS	4
Biblical books	4
Magisterium sources	4
Writings of St. Francis	5
Franciscan Sources and Authors	5
Bibliographical and common	6
PROLOGUE	8
INTRODUCTION	12
1 A MERCILESS WORLD, DEVOID OF RELATIONAL GOODS	16
1.1. Ecology, environmental ethics, and sustainability	16
1.1.1. The anthropocentric ideology	18
<i>a) Strong anthropocentrism</i>	18
<i>b) Weak Anthropocentrism</i>	19
1.1.2. Non-anthropocentric environmental ethics	20
<i>a) Sentiocentrism: Theories focused on sensorial capabilities</i>	20
<i>b) Biocentrism</i>	21
<i>c) Ecocentric and holistic theories</i>	21
<i>d) Deep Ecology</i>	22
1.1.3. Christian perspective	22
1.1.4. The problem of sustainability	23
<i>a) Environmental degradation in the past</i>	24

<i>b) The growing concern about environmental sustainability</i>	25
<i>c) CST and the ethical problem of sustainability</i>	26
1.2. A self-sufficient freedom	28
1.2.1. The technocratic paradigm	29
1.2.2. The consumerist and throwaway culture	30
1.2.3. Absence of an integral and integrating vision of reality	31
1.2.4. Reductive conception of development	32
1.3. Gratuitousness excluded or ignored	33
1.3.1. Inability to contemplate beauty	34
1.3.2 “ <i>Rapidification</i> ” and hyperconnection	34
1.3.3. A dialectic of perpetual conflict	35
1.3.4. Institutionalized hatred and revenge	36
1.4. Instrumental relationships	37
1.4.1. Individualism rather than individuality	37
1.4.2. The “ <i>non-tuism</i> ”	38
1.4.3. Despotic dominion over nature	39
1.5. Total good instead of common good	40
1.5.1. The globalization of indifference	40
1.5.2. Every man for himself	40
1.5.3. Populism and the politics of intimacy	41
1.5.4. Economic system without political control	42
2 FRANCIS OF ASSISI, A MODEL OF INTEGRAL ECOLOGY	45
2.1. Francis of Assisi, a universal model	45
2.1.1. A model proposed by the Church	47
2.1.2. He inspires an ecology of fraternity	48
2.1.3. His vital attitude keeps being inspiring today	49

2.2. A loving and responsible freedom	50
2.2.1. All creatures come from a loving freedom	50
2.2.2. Giving voice to the creatures' praises	51
2.2.3. The Canticle of the Creatures	52
<i>a) Song of love and praise</i>	54
<i>b) A new cosmic and integral harmony</i>	55
<i>c) Synthesis of interior and exterior ecology</i>	55
2.2.4. The evangelical counsels as ecological conversion	56
<i>a) Poverty to be free and fraternal</i>	56
<i>b) Obedience and minority to dominate the ambition of power</i>	57
<i>c) Chastity to serenely love and being loved</i>	58
2.3. The logic of gift	59
2.3.1. Creation as an expression of gratuitousness	59
2.3.2. In Christ, Francis welcomes the gift of creation	60
<i>a) The beauty of the crucified Christ</i>	61
<i>b) In the creatures he welcomes the Incarnate Word</i>	61
2.3.3. He contemplates God's goodness in the crucified earth	62
2.3.4. He is neither a romantic nor a naive dreamer	62
2.3.5. Fruit of the gift and called to self-giving	64
2.4. Relatives and brothers in Christ	64
2.4.1. A direct and warm communication	65
2.4.2. His respect for the individuality of each creature	66
2.4.3. A vital, theological and affectionate attitude	67
2.4.4. Sister creatures	68
2.4.5. Fraternity based on mutual respect	69
2.4.6. He neither idealizes nor divinizes nature	69
2.5. Building together the family home	70
2.5.1. A fraternity "on the way out", towards the peripheries	71
2.5.2. The importance of forgiveness and reconciliation	72

2.5.3. He reinforces the bonds of interdependence and collaboration	73
2.5.4. A common house, inhabited by the Trinity	74
2.5.5. Francis, the new Adam, restores the harmony of Paradise	74

3 FRANCISCAN TRADITION: A BASIS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS **76**

3.1. Franciscan approach to Environmental Ethics	76
3.1.1. Freedom	77
3.1.2. Gratuitousness	77
3.1.3. Fraternity	78
3.1.4. Common good	79
3.2. Freedom as the origin and destiny of all that exists	79
3.2.1. The Creator, an absolutely free being	80
3.2.2. Free, but not capricious or inconsistent	81
3.2.3. Christ, the supreme work of the divine freedom	82
3.2.4. The human being, created for freedom	83
3.2.5. Free in body and soul, without dualisms	85
<i>a) Dualism in Western culture</i>	85
<i>b) Franciscans and integral anthropology</i>	86
3.2.6. Creation is the free gift of a loving freedom	87
3.3. The logic of gift and the Way of Beauty	88
3.3.1. Creation belongs to the order of love	88
3.3.2. Intimate relationship between the Trinity and creation	89
3.3.3. In Christ, everything is a gift and destined to love	90
3.3.4. Goodness and beauty as expressions of gratuitousness	91
3.3.5. To love and contemplate, instead of knowing to dominate	91
3.4. A big family in Christ	92
3.4.1. Individuality versus individualism	93
3.4.2. A relational concept of person	94

3.4.3. Withdrawal into oneself and alterity	95
3.4.4. A personal being who expresses himself in the relationship	96
3.4.5. Unity in diversity	97
3.4.6. Creation is language, encounter, relationship	98

3.5. The common good includes all creatures	99
3.5.1. A book that invites us to build the common good	100
3.5.2. A luminous multisensory temple	101
3.5.3. A home for the fraternal encounter and reciprocity	102
3.5.4. Dignity and worth of each creature	103

4 RECONCILIATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF THE COSMIC FAMILY 105

4.1. Everything is the fruit of a loving freedom	105
4.1.1. Creation is a blessing, a divine gift	107
4.1.2. Genesis 1: the cosmos as unity in diversity	107
4.1.3. Creation entrusted to human freedom	109
4.1.4. Conversion to an integral ecology	110

4.2. Assuming the logic of gift	111
4.2.1. Prayerful contemplation instead of despotic rule	111
4.2.2. “Praised be You through those who give pardon”	113
<i>a) Mercy is God's face</i>	114
<i>b) Mercy as the foundation of true justice</i>	115
<i>c) Conflict resolution</i>	115
4.2.3. The ethics of care and tenderness	116
4.2.4. Education in ecological responsibility	117

4.3. A cordial and universal family	117
4.3.1. Overcoming a fragmented vision	118
<i>a) A holistic approach</i>	119
<i>b) “The book of nature is one and indivisible”</i>	119
<i>c) A network of relationships at all levels</i>	119

4.3.2. A direct and friendly communication	121
<i>a) Pope Francis' communication</i>	121
<i>b) Seeking the harmony of hearts</i>	122
4.3.3. Dialogue as a vital attitude	122
<i>a) The roots of dialogue</i>	124
<i>b) Ecumenical and interreligious dialogue</i>	125
<i>c) In the Spirit of Assisi</i>	126
<i>d) Ecumenical and interreligious dialogue on the environment</i>	127
4.4. Building together the common good	128
4.4.1. Current commitments and initiatives by the Franciscans	129
4.4.2. The politics of mercy	130
4.4.3. The need for global ethics and global governance	130
4.4.4. Our reasons to hope	131
4.4.5. Preparing the new heavens and the new earth	132
CONCLUSION	133
BIBLIOGRAPHY	135
Bible	135
Magisterium	135
St. Francis: his writings and early documents on him	138
Franciscanism: Reference works	139
Books	140
Articles in books	148
Articles	149
AUTHOR INDEX	152
SUBJECT INDEX	156

Abbreviations

Biblical books

1Cor	1 Corinthians
2Cor	2 Corinthians
Hag	Haggai
Rev	Revelation or Apocalypse
Col	Colossians
Eph	Ephesians
Ez	Ezekiel
Gn	Genesis
Acts	Acts of the Apostles
Is	Isaiah
Jb	Job
Jer	Jeremiah
Jn	John
Lk	Luke
Lv	Leviticus
Mk	Mark
Mt	Matthew
Hos	Hosea
Prov	Proverbs
Rm	Romans
Ps	Psalms
Wis	Wisdom

Magisterium sources

AL	FRANCIS, Exhortation <i>Amoris Letitia</i>
AParens	PAUL VI, Letter <i>Alma parens</i>
CA	JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical <i>Centesimus annus</i>

CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CSDC	PCJP, Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church
CIC	Code of Canon Law
CV	BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical <i>Caritas in veritate</i>
DC	BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical <i>Deus caritas est</i>
CST	Social Doctrine of the Church
DV	SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Constitution <i>Dei Verbum</i>
DZ	DENZINGER, Enchiridion symbolorum
EA	JOHN PAUL II, Exhortation <i>Ecclesia in America</i>
EG	FRANCIS, Exhortation <i>Evangelii Gaudium</i>
EN	PAUL VI, Exhortation <i>Evangelii nuntiandi</i>
EV	JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical <i>Evangelium Vitae</i>
FR	JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical <i>Fides et ratio</i>
GS	SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Constitution <i>Gaudium et spes</i>
LE	JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical <i>Laborem exercens</i>
LF	FRANCIS, Encyclical <i>Lumen fidei</i>
LG	SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Constitution <i>Lumen gentium</i>
LS	FRANCIS, Encyclical <i>Laudato Si'</i>
OA	PAUL VI, Letter <i>Octogesima adveniens</i>
MD	JOHN PAUL II, Letter <i>Mulieris dignitatem</i>
NA	SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Declaration <i>Nostra aetate</i>
PCID	Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue
PCJP	Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace
PP	PAUL VI, Encyclical <i>Populorum progressio</i>
PT	JOHN XXIII, Encyclical <i>Pacem in terris</i>
RM	JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical <i>Redemptoris misio</i>
SRS	JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical <i>Sollicitudo rei socialis</i>
SCa	BENEDICT XVI, Exhortation <i>Sacramentum caritatis</i>
VS	JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical <i>Veritatis splendor</i>
WCD	World Communication Day
WDP	World Day of Peace

Writings of St. Francis

2LtF	The Second Letter to the Faithful
Adm	The Admonitions
CtC	The Canticle of the Creatures
CtAnt	A Letter a Brother Anthony of Padua
LtL	A Letter to Brother Leo
LtMin	A Letter to a Minister
CtO	A Letter to the Entire Order
PrsG	The Praises of God
OfP	The Office of the Passion
ER	The Earlier Rule (<i>Regula non bullata</i>)
LR	The Later Rule (<i>Regula bullata</i>)
SalV	A Salutation on Virtues
Test	The Testament

Franciscan Sources and Authors

1C	CELANO, The Life of St. Francis
2C	CELANO, The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul
3C	CELANO, The Treatise on the Miracles
4C	CELANO, Third Life
L3C	The Legend of the Three Companions
1Sent.	BONAVENTURE, Commentaria in I librum Sententiarum
2Sent.	BONAVENTURE, Commentaria in II librum Sententiarum
4Sent.	BONAVENTURE, Commentaria in IV librum Sententiarum
AP	The Anonymous of Perugia
Brevil.	BONAVENTURE, Breviloquium
2MP	The Mirror of Perfection. Larger Version
Don	BONAVENTURE, Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti
Hex.	BONAVENTURE, Collationes in Hexaëmeron
HO	JACQUES DE VITRY, Historia Occidentalis
In Eccl.	BONAVENTURE, Commentarius in librum Ecclesiastes

Itin.	BONAVENTURE, <i>Itinerarium mentis in Deum</i>
FAED	AMSTRONG R.J – HERMANN J.A.W. – SHORT W.J., ed., <i>Francis of Assisi: Early Documents</i> , 3 vol., NCP, New York 1999.
Lect.	DUNS SCOTUS, <i>Lectura</i>
Lig.Vitae	BONAVENTURE, <i>Lignum vitae</i>
LMj	BONAVENTURE, <i>The Major Legend</i>
LMn	BONAVENTURE, <i>The Minor Legend</i>
AC	<i>The Assisi Compilation</i>
OFM	<i>Ordo Fratrum Minorum</i>
OPh	DUNS SCOTUS, <i>Opera philosophica</i>
Primo Princ.	DUNS SCOTUS, <i>De primo principio</i>
QMetaph	DUNS SCOTUS, <i>Quaestiones super libros metaphysicorum Aristotelis</i>
Quaracchi	BONAVENTURE, <i>Opera omnia, Collegii S. Bonaventurae</i>
Quodl.	DUNS SCOTUS, <i>Quodlibet</i>
Rep.	DUNS SCOTUS, <i>Reportatio Parisiensis</i>
GSFS	<i>General Secretariate for Formation and Studies</i>
STrinitatis	BONAVENTURE, <i>De mysterio SS. Trinitatis</i>
Solil.	BONAVENTURE, <i>Soliloquium</i>
Vat.	DUNS SCOTUS, <i>Opera omnia, ed. Comm. Scotisticae</i>
Vivès	DUNS SCOTUS, <i>Opera omnia, ed. L. Vivès</i>

Bibliographical and common

a.	Articulus
AAS	<i>Acta Apostolicae Sedis</i>
ASS	<i>Acta Sanctae Sedis</i>
Bac	<i>Biblioteca de autores cristianos</i>
c.	chapter
Cfr.	Confer, see, compare
a/m.	Aforementioned
CST	<i>Catholic Social Teaching</i>
d.	<i>Distinctio, distinctiones</i>
ed.	Editor, publisher, coordinator, coordinators, editorial

Edb	Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
Ibid.	Ibidem
Id.	Idem, the same
impr.	Reprint
InsJP2	Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II (Teachings of John Paul II)
InsB16	Insegnamenti di Benedetto XVI (Teachings of Benedict XVI)
InsFco	Insegnamenti di Francesco (Teachings of Pope Francis)
Lev	Libreria Editrice Vaticana
n.	Number, numbers
OR	L'Osservatore Romano
p.	Pars, page, pages
PG	Migne, Patrologia graeca
PL	Migne, Patrologia latina
prol.	Prologus
q.	Quaestio, quaestiones
Reb	Revista eclesiástica Brasileira
S.Th	THOMAS AQUINAS, Summa Theologiae
un.	Unicus, unica
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UP	University Press
Univ.	University
Vol.	Volume, volumes

Prologue

On May 24, 2015, the solemnity of Pentecost, Pope Francis signed the encyclical *Laudato Si'* on care for the common home. Once published, the Ministers General of the Franciscan Families wrote a letter to the Holy Father thanking him for it and acknowledging that the encyclical brings to light the current relevance of the Franciscan charism regarding the respect for any form of life. Whoever loves God takes care of all his creatures.

The spirit of Francis of Assisi hovers constantly over this encyclical, as a breath that impregnates it with impressive simplicity. The immense and the distant are filled with closeness; poverty is lived among the riches of creation. God puts nature in our hands, not to dominate it, but to care for it. Cosmic fraternity is a gift and, at the same time, a task that we have received from the Most High. We are called to live joyfully as brothers and sisters of all creatures, and to proclaim together the greatness and goodness of our common Father.

Some centuries ago, Francis of Assisi composed the Canticum of the Creatures; Pope Francis has recalled it and put it again in the limelight. The Pope invites all to the joyful duty of coming closer to creation and building peace, overcoming the ethical challenges of our globalized world. This is also the purpose of the pages we are introducing with this foreword.

It is not the first time that Professor Martín Carbajo Núñez writes about current ethical issues, especially those related to the social, political, economic, and communications fields. However, a more specific study on ecological issues, from a Franciscan perspective, was clearly missing. The encyclical *Laudato Si'* has offered him a great opportunity and he has done well in taking hold of it.

We agree with the author in affirming that Francis of Assisi is an inspiring model for a true ecology. His example is an encouraging

invitation to take care of the common home and to overcome other interested and contradictory ways of understanding ecology. A continuous effort is needed in order to properly formulate the truth about nature. To this end, it is necessary to avoid certain experimentalism, which deepens the furrow of relativism, and hinders the growth of a true intellectual and moral reflection. We must overcome a partial ecology, fragmented and self-centered, to embrace an integral and complete one, which has human's well-being as its first and most important objective and, at the same time, allows people to be the true protagonists of their own development.

The reader will find here this line of integral ecology, which is, at the same time, intellectual, moral and transcendent. Intellectual: with the unquestionable honesty of reason and thought. Moral: assuming the responsibilities that derive from reasonable principles, natural rights and conscience-appealing rules. Transcendent: expanding the horizons of knowledge and assuming its intrinsic principles in the light of a mature and reasoned faith. The goal is integration, instead of division and fragmentation. In fact, ecology cannot be reduced to a multidisciplinary academic study. It must also be a vital attitude of respect and care for the common home, where all creatures, together with human beings, celebrate their undeniable unity while enjoying the presence of the Trinitarian God.

The Franciscan vision of the author is clear and evident. It would have been a big surprise for us if this vision were not present, because we know well professor Carbajo's formation, his broadminded ideas, and his dedication to illustrate the relevance of the Franciscan Tradition in addressing today's major social challenges. He knows well that any serious reflection on the care for the common home must take into account St. Francis of Assisi and the Franciscan School.

Let's now have a look at the last years of St. Francis. Death and endless life are already close. He knows very well that God the Father does not abandon his children and that his Goodness shines in all his creatures, especially in human beings. These are years to sing and to make the last will. It is then that Francis composes the *Canticle of Brother Sun*, which is a beautiful and admirable choral work. The praise of the creatures puts the music and the life of St. Francis the booklet. A wonderful symphonic poem emerges, in which

the beauty of creation is harmoniously interwoven with the noble sentiments of the Minstrel of God. This canticle is a parable of his life, narrated under the influence of divine grace, and sung by all the creatures in the universe.

Since ecology is an attempt to reconcile humans with nature, the environmentalists would do well in assuming the attitudes of their heavenly patron St. Francis, who so deeply perceived the sacredness of creation.

John Paul II said that today the “ecological question”¹ is an urgent responsibility and an unavoidable exercise of charity. In fact, the concern for ecological issues belongs to the core of Christian faith and to the mission of the Church, and so it must never be considered as alien to Christianity. The Church is called to foster the universal reconciliation “through Him and for Him.” (Col 1:16) She teaches that man is the brother and caretaker of all creatures, not his absolute and capricious master, and so he must protect the natural and social environment, without abusing of nature or putting it in danger.

Nobody can be surprised at knowing that Francis of Assisi is the universal patron of ecologists. Certainly, Professor Martín Carbajo has found no difficulty in illustrating the merits of the *Poverello* for such a deserved title. It is enough to remember the exemplarity of his life, his continuous praise, his contemplation of beauty, and his efforts at building the universal fraternity.

The encyclical *Laudato Si'* acknowledges the legitimacy of those interventions on nature that are aimed at obtaining necessary resources, provided that they are responsibly carried out, looking for the common good, and respecting the beauty, purpose, utility, and function of all living creatures. It is not an easy task. In fact, the encyclical, while being an enthusiastic hymn of praise to the Creator, is also an urgent call to take care of the common home.

The ecological problem is very complex and cannot be limited to the protection of natural areas nor to the promotion of a better relationship with the environment. Political and economic interests, ideologies, and the longing for opulence are obstacles that prevent people from giving priority to the common good, to the defense of human rights, and to the preservation of nature.

1 JOHN PAUL II, «Post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Pastores gregis*,» (Oct. 16, 2003) n.70, in *AAS* 96 (2004) 825-924.

The environmental issue has become an urgent call to our responsibility. In order to properly face it, we must reinforce universal solidarity and promote the integral development in all its human, cultural, educational, and social dimensions. Certainly, it cannot be reduced to an increase of the GDP. The well-being of men and women depends not only on material goods, but, above all, on the attainment of an integral, complete, and mature personality, (SRS 26) in full harmony with nature.

The interest in ecology is not limited to the adventure of some militants and activists, who strive to bring about their own projects. A real school is needed, with the most appropriate pedagogy, so that everyone can understand and properly deal with the ecological issues, overcoming some of today's best known contradictions. For example, today we protect and care for animals, while, quite unconsciously, we let humans be eliminated. We make many efforts at maintaining and increasing a good quality of life and, at the same time, we are forgetting or limiting the necessary conditions for people's full development, such as freedom, the rights to be born, to live and die with dignity. Besides, we look for a healthier and more breathable environment, but, at the same time, there is an increase of violence, extortion, social unrest, destruction of the family, and violation of fundamental rights. There is also a decline in personal and social values, in ethical principles, and in references to transcendence.

It is not strange that the author of this book emphasizes the ambiguity of the current way of understanding ecology, environmental ethics, and sustainability. Professor Carbajo points out the present need for a deep and well-balance reflection, open to everybody's participation, in order to unveil new horizons of hope. To this end, he proposes St. Francis and the Franciscan Tradition as significant sources of inspiration.

Francis of Assisi contemplates the invisible God who, in his creatures, becomes close, visible and recognizable. The Cantic of Brother Sun is an enthusiastic expression of admiration and gratitude to the Creator. It asserts that all creatures form a large fraternity, sustained and vivified by the Trinitarian God. In fact, all of them are a tangible manifestation of the Supreme Lord and should be recognized and loved as brothers and sisters, since they are sons and daughters of the only Father.

The whole universe invites us to praise and contemplate God and to establish loving relationships among us. In Christ, all creation has become a wonderful fraternity and a temple of the Eternal Word, who has made his dwelling among us. (Jn 1:14) This is how Brother Francis understands it and sings it in his Cantic of Brother Sun, which is a very enthusiastic hymn to creation. This Cantic will suffice to understand the importance of St. Francis in the history of ecology. Reading it, we understand the reason why St. Francis has been recognized as a model of the care and love for creation. All creatures lead him to God and, with them, he praises and dialogues with the Lord Most High.

The words of this foreword have been written as a paraphrase, in theological language, of the Cantic of the Creatures, with the aim of highlighting St. Francis' cosmic brotherhood. His cantic is like a convocation of all creation to the praises of God for all his gifts: for life, fraternity, forgiveness, even for Sister Death. The creation is sacred because God is in it.

Francis loved nature because he loved God. Sir Brother Sun is beautiful and radiant because it "bears a likeness of You, Most High One;" the moon, the water, the wind, the serene and cloudy weather are sisters and brothers, because God is the one who has made them clear, precious, and beautiful. Francis praises God in all creatures. It is perfectly understandable the reason why St. John Paul II proclaimed him the patron Saint of ecologists.

Franciscan contemplation does not exempt us from our responsibilities in this world; rather it compels us to be more committed to them. We need to live and act this love and responsibility in all spheres: in the public and private realms, in poverty and in abundance, with the animals and with sister water... If everything speaks of God, we must praise his name in all. The awareness of the challenges and evils that plague our world should lead us to a more responsible commitment: where there is hatred, we have to bring love; where there is bitterness, we must make visible the sweet radiance of the Supreme Goodness.

Arguments, paths, and Franciscan ways to get closer to God. Instead of remaining stuck to philosophical arguments or apologetic discourses, we need to be seduced by the splendor of truth (*bonitatis*

splendor), by the fascination of God's love, which has been poured out in the entire creation and particularly in the human being.

Our admired author finish this book with a splendid chapter on the reconciliation and reconstruction of the cosmic family. It could not be otherwise, since Francis of Assisi lived and longed for it.

Carlos Amigo Vallejo
Cardinal Archbishop Emeritus of Seville

Introduction

The reader will find in this book a Franciscan vision of ecology which, in many respects, seems to have inspired the encyclical *Laudato Si'*.² From its very title, the encyclical presents Francis of Assisi as a model of integral ecology and as an example of the type of fraternal relationships that are necessary to overcome the current social and environmental crisis. The Jubilee of Mercy has further emphasized this cordial approach to global ethical challenges.

Following the line indicated by Pope Francis, the book presents an integral vision of ecology and, from this point of view, analyzes today's global ethical challenges, putting them in relation with the experience of Francis of Assisi and with the philosophical-theological reflection of the Franciscan Tradition. Rather than looking back nostalgically to the past, the book invites the reader to find inspiration in St. Francis and in his followers to properly live our present and open it to a future of hope. The relevance of the Franciscan tradition in this field is widely recognized. Lynn White has been one of the authors who most harshly accused the Judeo-Christian religion of having caused the ecological crisis, but he has been also the one who more enthusiastically proposed Francis of Assisi as a model for ecologists.

The book consists of four chapters and in each of them will be organized around four themes: freedom, gratuitousness, fraternity, and the common good. The author considers that these are the four great principles of the Franciscan ethical reflection.

In the light of the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, the first chapter identifies and analyzes the most worrying ethical challenges in our globalized

2 In the body of the text, the quotations of the encyclical *Laudato Si'* will be indicated with just the numbers in brackets.

world. The chapter begins with a brief presentation of the main currents of environmental ethics that, from very different positions, try to deal with the problem of sustainability. After emphasizing the specificity of the Christian perspective, the following sections analyze the causes of the current socio-environmental crisis, underlining the need to overcome the technocratic paradigm, which analyzes and dissects, but is unable to arrive at a comprehensive and inclusive vision. Because of this fragmentary and efficientist conception, the relations in the common home deteriorate, no one looks others in the eye, and things are reduced to disposable objects.

In the second chapter, Francis of Assisi is presented as a model of integral ecology and inspirer of a consistent way of addressing the current socio-environmental crisis. It is noted that, at the time of St. Francis, the vision of the cosmos was very different to ours and there was not the type of environmental degradation that daunts us today. Although recognizing these differences of epoch and mentality, it is still clear that Francis' vital attitude has nothing to do with the strong anthropocentrism that, in later times, has considered nature as pure neutral matter and so has justified our modelling it at will, following no other criteria than our egotistical interests.

Francis also surpasses the position of those who present human beings as administrators of creation, but do not consider them fully integrated in it. Man would have the moral obligation of taking care of something that he does not feel as his own. He has assumed this task and does it mainly because God holds him responsible for that, but he keeps considering it as a heteronomous obligation that does not come out from his inner self. He sees himself as a steward, in charge of taking care of other people's property, or as a tenant, who merely complies with his agreements and responsibilities.

Francis goes much further. He does not feel himself as an absolute lord or as a butler, but as a brother. He loves all creatures because he recognizes himself as part of them, united to them with close ties of familiarity. The common home is his house; those who inhabit it are his brothers and sisters. There is no need to encourage him to behave properly: he does it spontaneously and joyfully, with all his heart. This ecology of kinship is much more profound and effective than the one based on mere management.

The third chapter studies how the Franciscan Tradition has formulated, in philosophical and theological terms, the intuitions of its founder. The limitations of the present work compel us to focus our study on Scotus and Bonaventure, its two most significant representatives. This school, usually named “voluntarism,” affirms that creation is the result of a loving and free will. All beings are good because they have been loved, called by name, freely chosen among many possible ones. They have also been inserted in a network of relationships in which each one is important and meaningful to the whole.

Instead of the excessive abstraction of Western philosophy, the Franciscans give primacy to the singular, to the concrete and individualized, thus recovering the capacity of contemplating with wonder the mystery of each being and perceiving it as unique and unrepeatable. All creatures, even the most insignificant, reflect the Trinitarian God and therefore have a value in themselves that must be discovered and respected. We all are brothers and sisters, children of the same Father and born in the same home. Instead of selfish interest, the Franciscans invite all to “being-with” (*inter-esse*), fraternally.

Taking into account the analysis done in the first three chapters, the fourth one presents some guidelines to address the current socio-environmental crisis and to establish the most appropriate religious, anthropological, and ethical foundation to address it. It does not intend to offer technical solutions, because the Franciscans respect the legitimate autonomy of the specialists in each area. As the Pope says, “the Church does not presume to settle scientific questions or to replace politics. But she is concerned to encourage an honest and open debate,” [188] in order to safeguard the person and the common good. Following this line, the fourth chapter tries to outline the ethical criteria that must guide the reconstruction of family relationships in the common home.

Our reflection is based on the conviction that the ecological crisis is a family crisis: human beings are breaking the ties that bind them to creatures, thus causing chaos and confusion. We need to restore those broken relationships to enjoy again our being brothers and sisters in the common home.

The human family “is the first and most important school”³ of fraternal relationships. There we learn “social virtues, such as respect for persons, gratuitousness, trust, responsibility, solidarity, cooperation”⁴, tolerance, forgiveness, and reconciliation⁵. It is also “the first and fundamental structure for «human ecology».” (CA 39) We need to put into practice the kind of fraternal and gracious relationships that we usually experience at home during childhood and that help us to discover the real face of our heavenly Father⁶ and the mystery of the Trinitarian “We.”⁷ The future of our big cosmic fraternity depends on it.

Before going any further, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of some terms that we are going to use. The Earth is our common home and everything is related in it. This affirmation, which the Pope repeats ten times in the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, implies that “the ecological” must not be reduced to “the green;” i.e., it should not be considered as something alien to social dynamics and human interaction.

We will also distinguish between the concepts of “creation” and “nature,” which are not equivalent. Francis of Assisi never uses the term “nature” in his writings. He prefers to use “creation,” because he sees everything from God. In fact, “nature is usually seen as a system which can be studied, understood, and controlled,” [76] whereas the Christian tradition uses “creation” to refer to the project of a personal and Trinitarian God, who acts out of love and everything has destined to the communion with Him. Creation is a gift, a reality “illuminated by the love which calls us together into universal communion.” [76]

3 POPE FRANCIS, «Address to the members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See,» (Jan. 11, 2016) in *OR* 156/7 (Jan. 11/12, 2016) 4-5, here 4.

4 BENEDICT XVI, «Homily, 7th world meeting of families,» (Jun 3, 2012) in *Insegnamenti di Benedetto XVI*, VIII/1 (2012), LEV, Vatican City 1981, 693-697, here 695.

5 JOHN PAUL II, «Apostolic exhortation *Familiaris consortio*,» (Nov. 22, 1981) n. 21, in *AAS* 74 (1982) 81-191, here 105-106.

6 POPE FRANCIS, «Address...» (Jan. 11, 2016) p. 4.

7 JOHN PAUL II, «Letter to families *Gratissimam sane*,» (Feb. 2, 1994) n. 8, in *AAS*, 86 (1994) 868-925, here 877.

Besides being of nature, the human being is also of culture. It is not easy to distinguish between these two terms, because “the definition of nature is always, at least, a construction of culture.”⁸

The reformed theologian Paul Tillich affirms that creation is not only a *factum*, but a *fieri*, emphasizing its dynamic and evolutionary character, a process that man has to take care of as a responsible administrator. Hegel also considers that creation is not an *actus* that took place at a precise instant, but a dialectical and eternal process of the divine essence, because God needs the world in order to be himself.⁹ These and other scholars agree in saying that creation is not something static and immutable, but project, openness, a kingdom of freedom. In a Christian perspective, the human being is called to develop the potentialities of all that exists, but always in conformity with the divine plan. In the *Liber naturae*, man discovers the divine presence and, in turn, as *capax Dei*, catalyzes the cosmic yearning to be lovingly united with his Creator. (Rom 8:22-23)

Francis of Assisi excludes a temporal sequence or timeline in the creative act that could give rise to hierarchies. The creation is not something that God did once and for all, in a fixed and determined historical moment, having taken a rest from then onwards and not worrying any more about it. God creates and sustains in the eternal today, because time is only a human category. Everything that comes into existence is a present gift of his magnanimity: it exists because it is loved. No creature is superficial and we have to take care of all of them, recognizing that they also are taking care of us.

The divine command of cultivating and caring for the garden (Gn 2:15) is not something limited to the beginning of time, but a task that each one receives here and now. Instead of dominion, God invites us to contemplation, while he keeps walking in the garden with those who do not hide or run away from him.

8 Cfr. J. CERQUEIRA GONÇALVES, «Cosmología,» in J.A. Merino – F. Martínez Fresneda, ed, *Manual de filosofía franciscana*, Bac, Madrid 2004, 208-248, here 218.

9 Cfr. G.W.F. HEGEL, *Lezioni sulla filosofia della religione*, Laterza, Rome 1983, 64.

This book introduces us to the Franciscan vision of ecology which, in many respects, seems to have inspired the encyclical *Laudato Si'*. Assuring an integral and inclusive vision of ecology, the book analyzes today's global ethical challenges, putting them in relation with the experience of Francis of Assisi and with the philosophical-theological reflection of the Franciscan Tradition. It emphasizes the need to overcome the current technocratic paradigm and the throwaway culture, which fosters the Well-Having over Well-Being and breaks the ties that bind us to creatures.

Francis of Assisi is a universal model for all those who seek to live in harmony with nature. Even Lynn White, who harshly accused the Judeo-Christian religion of having caused the ecological crisis, has been one who proposed Francis of Assisi as a referent for ecologists. The Franciscan school has formulated, in philosophical and theological terms, St. Francis's intuitions, laying the foundations of a fraternal and cordial ecology that surpasses both the strong anthropocentrism and the administration ecological model. We can no longer regard ourselves as dominators or stewards but as brothers, joyfully responsible for the common home.



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