



Laudato Si': Chapter 2 – The Gospel of Creation

“The Gospel of Creation” considers the world the way that God intended it. The chapter surveys the rich scriptural traditions to show that there is no biblical justification for “a tyrannical anthropocentrism unconcerned for other creatures.” [68]. Likewise, there is no room for misanthropic versions of environmentalism since reverence for nature is only authentic if we have compassion for fellow humans. A person who is truly concerned about the trafficking of endangered species is automatically concerned with the trafficking of humans.

Chapter 2 – “The Gospel of Creation” – makes a number of points:

- (1) The universe in all its diversity manifests God’s goodness
- (2) The goodness of created things – including the earth -- is meant for all humanity
- (3) We are to exercise stewardship over the earth so that created goods can realize this destiny
- (4) Stewardship is incompatible with viewing the earth as ours to use as we will, for the unlimited extraction of profit.
- (5) Stewardship requires, or is greatly facilitated by, cultivating an attitude of communion with all created things – including, of course, all humanity. (see also §52)
- (6) Remarkable passages at §98ff. about the incarnation uniting God with creation, and about Jesus’ living in harmony with the created world.

In Summary: “the present world system is certainly unsustainable from several points of view, for we have stopped thinking about the goals of human activity. “If we scan the regions of our planet, we immediately see that humanity has disappointed God’s expectations” (§61)

Chapter Two Reflections

WE ARE NOT GOD

“We are not God. The earth was here before us and it has been given to us.” (no. 67)

“When human beings place themselves at the center, they give absolute priority to immediate convenience and all else becomes relative. . . . It is also the mindset of those who say: Let us allow the invisible forces of the market to regulate the economy, and consider their impact on society and nature as collateral damage.” (no. 122-123)

“A fragile world, entrusted by God to human care, challenges us to devise intelligent ways of directing, developing and limiting our power.” (no. 78)

Questions

1. How has the incorrect vision of humans' role in the world that Pope Francis describes in the quotes above contributed to many of the problems Pope Francis named in chapter 1, such as pollution, climate change, access to safe, drinkable water, loss of biodiversity, and global inequality?
2. Read paragraphs 67-69 of *Laudato Si'*. How does Pope Francis' explanation of the correct interpretation of Genesis 1:28 (about humans having “dominion” over the earth) help clarify our role in caring for the earth?