

Section 60:
Spirituality of the Heart:
A Spirituality that sustains
our care for the environment.

In chapter 4 of 'Laudato Si' Pope Francis speaks about, *"some elements of an integral ecology, one which clearly respects its human and social dimensions"* (LS 137). 'Integral ecology' refers to the fact that *"everything is connected"* (LS 16; 70; 91; 117; 240). For example, care for the environment is linked to our way of life, that is, our way of consuming natural resources and products, our cultural customs as well as our habits of clothing and eating. In everything we do or not do, we have to take into consideration the common good of all people, including the milieu in which they live (Cf. LS 156).

The Pope adds that: *"A commitment this noble cannot be sustained... without a spirituality capable of inspiring us, without an interior impulse which encourages, motivates, nourishes and gives meaning to our individual and communal activity"* (LS 216). Consequently, he states: *"An integral ecology includes taking time to recover a serene harmony with creation, reflecting on our lifestyle and our ideals, and contemplating the Creator who lives among us and surrounds us, whose presence must not be created but found, uncovered"* (LS 225).

In chapter 6, entitled *"Ecological Education and Spirituality,"* the Pope points out that, *"An integral ecology is also made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness* (See also the Reflection of Section 58). He often refers to Saint Francis of Assisi as *"the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology, lived out joyfully and authentically. ... He was particularly concerned for God's creation and for the poor and outcast... He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace"* (LS 10). Saint Francis helps us *"to see that an integral ecology takes us to the heart of what it is to be human.... He conversed with all creation, even preaching to the flowers, inviting them "to praise the Lord, just as if they were endowed with reason" 19* (LS 11).

REFLECTION

Franciscan sister and scientist Ilia Delio writes

*(Saint Francis) did not consider himself
superior to the non-human creation.
Rather, Francis saw himself as part of creation.*

*His spirituality
(was) a spirituality of descending solidarity
between humanity and all of creation . . .*

*He found God in all creatures
and identified with them as brother and sister . . . ,
because he knew they shared with him the same beginning.*

*By surrendering himself
and daring everything for love's sake,
the earth became his home
and all creatures his brothers and sisters.
That led him to love and respect the world around him
and made him truly a man of peace.*

*Only prayer {inspired by}
the Spirit of God breathing in us,
dwelling in our hearts and joining us to Christ,
can lead us, like Francis,
to the contemplative vision of God's goodness
in every creature and in every living thing. . . .*

*The God within us is the God who permeates
every aspect of our world —
the One who is the source and goal of creation.”*

Quoted by Richard Rohr OFM
Daily Meditation
From the Center for Action and Contemplation
Cultivation Not Domination
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