

Section 61:
Spirituality of the Heart:
A Spirituality of Dialogue

In his Apostolic Letter "Evangelii Gaudium" (The Joy of the Gospel") Pope Francis shares his vision of the Church's vocation in the third millennium. In that document of 24 May 2015, he foresees a major role for dialogue in evangelization. The Church is no longer the authority that from above prescribes how others should think and act, but more like a parent, who searches for solutions to outstanding issues, while listening to, and discussing with, his adult children.

The Pope writes: "*Evangelization also involves the path of dialogue. For the Church today, three areas of dialogue stand out where she needs to be present in order to promote full human development and to pursue the common good: dialogue with states, dialogue with society – including with cultures and the sciences – and dialogue with other believers, who are not part of the Catholic Church*" (EG 238).

In chapter 5 of his encyclical "Laudato Si", titled "*Lines of Approach and Action,*" Pope Francis elaborates on the program, outlined in "Evangelii Gaudium." He describes paths of dialogue "*which can help us to escape from the spiral of self-destruction that is currently engulfing us*" (LS 163). Through dialogue the world must arrive at a "*common plan*" for the whole of society (LS 164-175); dialogue is also needed in local and national politics to arrive at long-term planning (LS 176-181); the whole process of decision-making needs transparent dialogue in order to eradicate corruption (LS 182-188); dialogue between politics and economics is demanded to promote the common good (LS 189-198); while religions should enter into dialogue with science "*to grasp the ultimate meaning and purpose of things*" (LS 199-201).

For Pope Francis, dialogue does not just mean an exchange of ideas or an attempt to convince others of our own truth. The milieu crisis in which we find ourselves, "*requires that we all look to the common good, while embarking on a path of dialogue which demands patience, self-discipline and generosity*" (LS 201).

REFLECTION

Pope Francis writes:

“I urgently appeal for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all” (LS 14).

“Our openness to others, each of whom is a “thou,” capable of knowing, loving and entering into dialogue, remains the source of our nobility as human persons.

A correct relationship with the created world demands that we not weaken this social dimension of openness to others, much less the transcendent dimension of our openness to the “Thou” of God.

Our relationship with the environment can never be isolated from our relationship with others and with God” (LS 119).

“The majority of people on this planet profess to be believers. This should spur religions to dialogue among themselves for the sake of protecting nature, defending the poor, and building networks of respect and fraternity” (LS 201).

(Pope Francis in his Encyclical “Laudato Si”. Rome, the Solemnity of Pentecost, **24 May** 2015).