

Ecology and Evangelization

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(from the [Alphonsian Academy](#) blog)

Ecology has to be present in the evangelization of the Church. Evangelizing is witnessing a life consistent with the gospel, including our behavior in the field of ecology. Indeed, “living the vocation of being protectors of God’s work is an essential part of a virtuous existence” [1] .

The perspective has to be comprehensive, since we form a big family and everything is related. Consequently, “the action of the Church not only attempts to remind us of the duty to care for nature, but at the same time it must protect, above all, man against the destruction of himself” (LS 79; CV 51).

This evangelizing announcement “embraces all dimensions of human existence” (EG 181). Commenting on a text from the *Confessions* (X 6,8) of Saint Augustine, J. Moltmann shows an incarnated spirituality, which includes all the senses.

“When I love God, then I love the beauty of the bodies, the rhythm of the movements, the shine of the eyes, the hugs, the feelings, the perfumes, the sounds of this varied creation. I would like to embrace everything when I love you my God, because I love you with all my senses focused on the creatures of your love. You wait for me in all the things that meet me” [2] .

The gospel of Mark concludes with these words: “Proclaim the Good News to all creation” (Mk 16:15), thus indicating that the evangelizing announcement is also addressed to other creatures. The earth “eagerly awaits this revelation” (Rom 9:19) and longing for it, its groaning joins the cry of the poor and abandoned. Both are inseparable. The prophet Hosea expresses it in these words:

“There is no longer faithfulness, love, or knowledge of God on this earth; but perjury and lies, murder and theft, adultery and violence, blood following blood. Therefore, the earth mourns, and everything that lives in it withers, with the beasts of the field and the birds of the air; and even the fish of the sea disappear” (Hos 4:1-3).

Evangelization is not so much a linear process of transmitting content, but rather an interactive, dynamic process, a reciprocal search for the “seeds of the Word” already present in all men. This interactivity must also occur, in a certain way, with other creatures, since each of them “carries within itself a properly Trinitarian structure” and, therefore, we can “read reality in a Trinitarian key” (LS 239).

Francis of Assisi has fully lived this reciprocity. The creatures “sensed the sweetest love he felt for them” [3] . On the other hand, Francis benefits from the help that the creatures offer him. By joining in his song of praise, Francis manages to overcome his own unworthiness, because “no man is worthy of mentioning you” (*Cant* 2). In fact, “we, wretched and sinners, are not worthy to name you” (*Rnb* 23,5), while “all the creatures under heaven, in themselves, serve, know and obey their Creator better than you.”(*Adm* 5,2). Thus, “with ” all creatures (*Song* 3) and “ through ” them (*Song* 5-9), Francis praises the Creator.

All creatures exist in divine Love and proclaim it by the simple fact of being themselves. We are called to join in that song of praise, as we try to anticipate the arrival of the new heavens and the new earth (2Pt 3:13).

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[1]_LS 217. Part of the content of these paragraphs is taken from the monographic number: M. Carbajo-Núñez, «“Proclaim the Good News to all creation” (Mc 16,15). Integral ecology and evangelization» (Monographic issue), in *Frontera Hegian* . VR Permanent Training Notebooks, no. 121/3 (2023) 91 pages.

[2] J. Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life. For an integral pneumatology* , Brescia 1994, 119.

[3]_1Cel 59. Franciscan abbreviations: *Adm* , Admonition; *Cant* , Canticle of the sun brother; *Rnb* , Rule not bubbled; *1Cel* , Life first; in: War JA (ed.), *St. Francis of Assisi. Writings, biographies, documents of the time* , BAC, Madrid 2013.