

The Mysticism of the Papal Encyclical on Climate Change

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“Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul. And the other things on the face of the earth are created for man and that they may help him in prosecuting the end for which he is created. From this it follows that man is to use them as much as they help him on to his end, and ought to rid himself of them so far as they hinder him as to it” (St. Ignatius Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*).

1. Introduction: A “*philosophical and theological vision of the human being and of creation*” of a pantheist and evolutionist flavor

Among the unfavorable reactions to Pope Francis’ recent Encyclical *Laudato si’*, there is an aspect which has received little attention in anti-modernist publications: its nebulous “**philosophical and theological vision of the human being and of creation.**” (no. 130)¹. Yet, this new Anthropology and Cosmology— pantheist²) and evolutionist in flavor—are unacceptable when considered from the perspective of Catholic theology and sound philosophy. Indeed, God’s absolute transcendence is not affirmed (except in passing, as in no. 79), nor is the distinction between creature and Creator or yet the metaphysical notion of creation *ex nihilo*, by a free act of God.

These notes are written with the full respect owed to the Supreme Pontiff, but in the present circumstances the truth must be unveiled entirely for the honor of Holy Mother Church and preservation of the integrity of good doctrine.

Without wanting to diminish the criticisms already formulated to the document’s economic, social and scientific aspects, which, in general, are solidly grounded, it seems to us that such aspects are both less profound and less serious than this new conception of man and the universe.

A more in-depth study of the metaphysical principles that inspired the Encyclical *Laudato si’* would have to examine in detail each of its sustained propositions according to the sound rules of traditional Catholic apologetics; this, however, does not seem necessary in these brief notes, which are intended more as a public denunciation and a cry of alert to the faithful. This is not an exhaustive analysis of the

¹ Unless otherwise noted the emphasis is always ours.

² *Pantheism*: as the name itself says, it is the doctrine according to which everything is God. Its several doctrinal constructs vary.

encyclical. We restrict ourselves to the above-mentioned philosophical and theological vision, highlighting some points that speak for themselves to Catholics with a good formation, since they are our targeted audience.³

2. A Pantheist and Evolutionist Mysticism Inspired in Teilhard de Chardin

In the Encyclical *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis proposes to present a “**philosophical and theological vision of the human being and of creation.**” (no. 130) From this conception of man and the universe he undeniably develops, though in a non-systematic way, a new Theology, a new Morality, a new Liturgy, a new notion of the Sacraments and of prayer, a new spirituality, and even a new Mariology. Based on those concepts he also offers solutions that end up by proposing the establishment of an international authority over national governments (cf. no. 175).

This philosophical and theological vision runs along the lines of the pantheist and evolutionist mysticism of Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ, who is referred to in the document (no. 83). Let us see a few examples:

- “The ultimate destiny of the universe is in the fullness of God, which has already been attained by the risen Christ, *fulcrum*⁴ of universal maturation” (no. 83, fn. 53).

This immanentist and evolutionary-flavored statement is very similar to the Teilhardian concept of “Omega Point,” the unifying point in the evolution of all created beings, which is identified with Christ. Leaving no doubt that it drew its inspiration from Teilhard, the Encyclical refers readers to the Jesuit’s writings, in a footnote:

- “**Against this horizon we can set the contribution of Fr Teilhard de Chardin.**” (no. 83, fn. 53)

It is indeed the Teilhardian conceptions that provide the key to the reading of the document and to understanding the nebulous “**philosophical and theological vision of the human being and of creation**” proposed by the Encyclical, with all of its consequences (see Appendix I).

It is well to recall that Teilhard de Chardin’s works were the object of a *Monitum* (warning) by the Holy Office on June 30, 1962, affirming that his writings “abound in such ambiguities and indeed even serious errors, as to offend Catholic doctrine.”⁵

³ We have followed the text and paragraph numbering of the English translation of the Encyclical as posted on the Vatican website. *Encyclical Letter Laudato si' of the Holy Father Francis on Care for our Common Home*, May 24, 2015, accessed July 30, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html. References to the Encyclical are made exclusively by indicating paragraph numbers, for example, (no. 239). We compared that translation with the Italian original and, in some cases modified it to better express the thought of the Encyclical

⁴ Editor’s note: Merriam Webster (on line): **fulcrum** : “the support on which a lever moves when it is used to lift something.” Here we follow the Italian original that says: “... Cristo risorto, **fulcro della maturazione universale.**”

⁵ “**WARNING REGARDING THE WRITINGS OF FATHER TEILHARD DE CHARDIN,**” June 30, 1962, confirmed by **the Communiqué of the Press Office of the Holy See** (appearing in the English edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*, July 20, 1981) at <https://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/CDFTEILH.HTM> , accessed August 1, 2015.

3. An Obscure Trinitarian Conception

The Encyclical's strange mysticism is reflected in the very relationships between the Trinity and Creation:

- “The Father is the ultimate source of everything, the loving and self-communicating foundation of all that exists. **The Son**, his reflection, through whom all things were created, **united himself to this earth** when he was formed in the womb of Mary. **The Spirit**, infinite bond of love, **is intimately present at the very heart of the universe, inspiring and bringing new pathways.**” (no. 238)
- “One Person of the Trinity **entered into the created cosmos, throwing in his lot with it, even to the cross.** From the beginning of the world, but particularly through the incarnation, the mystery of Christ is at work in a hidden manner in the natural world as a whole, without thereby impinging on its autonomy.” (no. 99)
- “For Christians, all the creatures of the material universe find their true meaning in the incarnate Word, for **the Son of God has incorporated in his person part of the material world, planting in it a seed of definitive transformation.**” (no. 235)
- “Christ has taken unto himself **this material world** and now, risen, dwells within every being **surrounding it with his affection and penetrating it with his light**” (no. 221).
- “**The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely**” (no. 233).

4. The Sacraments: Divinized Matter

In the Encyclical, these conceptions, which appear to divinize the material universe as if by “supernaturalizing” matter, are reflected in a new theology of the Sacraments and a new Liturgy:

- “**The Sacraments are a privileged way in which nature is taken up by God to become a means of mediating supernatural life. Through our worship of God, we are invited to embrace the world on a different plane.**” (no. 235).

The Encyclical characterizes the Holy Eucharist (Christ's Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity) as “**a fragment of matter**”:

- “It is **in the Eucharist** that all that has been created finds its greatest exaltation. Grace, which tends to manifest itself tangibly, found unsurpassable expression when **God himself became man and gave himself as food for his creatures. The Lord, in the culmination of the mystery of the Incarnation, chose to reach our intimate depths through a fragment of matter.**” (no. 236).

The Encyclical also presents the Eucharist as an “*act of cosmic love*” that involves the whole Universe:

- “In the Eucharist, fullness is already achieved; it is the living centre of the universe, the overflowing core of love and of inexhaustible life. Joined to the incarnate Son, present in the Eucharist, the whole cosmos gives thanks to God. Indeed **the Eucharist is itself an act of cosmic love.**” (no. 236)

In Teilhardian parlance, the universe, **which came from God, would return** to God through a progressive **unification** of all material beings, including man. Thus, the **primeval whole is reconstituted** in its entirety. In this line of thought, not only does God create the universe, but the universe recreates God.

Quoting the schismatic Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, the Encyclical says:

- “As Christians, we are also called **‘to accept the world as a sacrament of communion...** It is our humble conviction that the divine and the human meet in the slightest detail of the seamless garment of God’s creation, even in the last speck of dust of our planet.’” (no. 9)

5. “Ecological Spirituality”

Throughout the document, “ecology,” the “environment,” “nature” are presented as absolutes which should guide all human activity – moral, spiritual, economic, educational, etc. Based on these principles, Francis proposes an “ecological spirituality”:

- “I would like to offer Christians a few suggestions for an ecological spirituality grounded in the convictions of our faith, since the teachings of the Gospel have direct consequences for our way of thinking, feeling and living.... A commitment this lofty cannot be sustained by doctrine alone, without a spirituality capable of inspiring us, without an “interior impulse which encourages, motivates, nourishes and gives meaning to our individual and communal activity”. [Evangelium Gaudium, 261] Admittedly, Christians have not always appropriated and developed the **spiritual** treasures bestowed by God upon the Church, where **the life of the spirit is not dissociated from the body or from nature or from worldly realities, but lived in and with them, in communion with all that surrounds us.**” (no. 216).

The Pope asks for an “ecological conversion” and presents “ecologism” as being in the essence of a virtuous life:

- “**...the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion.... an “ecological conversion”**, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. **Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.**” (no. 217)

This “ecological conversion” implies the **“awareness that we are not disconnected from the rest of creatures, but joined in a splendid universal communion.”** (no. 220.)

This “ecological spirituality” makes us sober, humble, bereft of the desire to dominate (cf. nos. 224-225), and helps us listen to nature’s “words of love.” (Cf. no. 225.)

6. A New Ecological Mariology

This new “spirituality” also modifies devotion to Mary Most Holy on an ecological key:

- “Mary, the Mother who cared for Jesus, now cares with maternal affection and pain for this wounded world. **Just as her pierced heart mourned the death of Jesus, so now she grieves for the sufferings of the crucified poor and for the creatures of this world laid waste by human power.**” (no. 241)

7. Resorting to a “Spiritual Master” of Islamic Gnosis

To buttress his new “ecological spirituality” Pope Francis quotes a “spiritual master” of Sufi Islamic Gnosis:

- “The spiritual writer Ali al-Khawas stresses... ‘**The initiate** will capture what is being said when the wind blows, the trees sway, water flows, flies buzz, doors creak, birds sing, or in the sound of strings or flutes, the sighs of the sick, the groans of the afflicted....’” (no. 233, fn. 159)

8. The Earth, Treated as a Living Being

In several places, the Encyclical deals with the earth, nature, and the environment as if they were rational beings:⁶

- “This sister [**the earth**] **now cries out** to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her.” (no. 2.)
- “This is why our **oppressed** and devastated **earth is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor**; she ‘groans in travail’ (Rom. 8:22)” (no. 2)

Note the employment of the Marxist category of the “poor” as the “oppressed.”

- The Encyclical recommends an ecological approach in order for one “to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.*” (no. 49. Emphasis in the original.)
- “These situations have caused **sister earth**, along with all the abandoned of our world, **to cry out**, pleading that we take another course.” (no. 53)

The Encyclical speaks of an “internal relationship” of man with himself, , “with others, with God and with the earth.” (no. 70.)⁷ Further on, it says that Leviticus calls on men to “ensure balance and equity in their relationships with others and with the land on which they lived and worked.” (no. 71). Now, equitable relationships can exist only among rational beings, persons. Thus, according to the Encyclical, **man ceases being the king of corporeal creation** (in this regard, see Appendix II).

9. Conclusion

⁶ True, many authentic mystics and even the Scriptures often employ anthropomorphic language when referring to inanimate or irrational creatures. But the Encyclical’s ecological-pantheistic context casts a shadow of suspicion over this metaphorical resource.

⁷ Our translation of the Italian original.

For all that we have just discussed, the **“philosophical and theological vision of the human being and of creation” presented by the Encyclical is incompatible with Catholic dogma and sound philosophy, and is, therefore, unacceptable.** We regret being obliged to point this out but note that it is unacceptable not only for the grave errors it contains but also for its insinuations, ambiguities, omissions, and biases, all favoring a pantheistic worldview.

As can be seen, one does not recognize in the Encyclical *Laudato si'* the faithful, gentle and firm voice of the Good Shepherd the Church has always presented to us. Nor does one recognize the supernatural traits of St. Paul's teachings according to which one must not accept another Gospel even if announced by “an angel from heaven.”⁸

This begs the question: can an official Church document, even one as solemn as an Encyclical Letter, merit such serious reservations without undermining the principles of indefectibility of the Church and infallibility of her Magisterium? I have addressed this issue in my work on the *Theological Hypothesis of a Heretical Pope*.⁹

“I opposed him to his face because he clearly was wrong.” With this phrase the Apostle Paul justifies his resistance to St. Peter regarding the observance of Jewish rites by Christians.

Is it legitimate, in extreme cases, to oppose papal teachings not guaranteed by infallibility or to resist decisions by the Supreme Pontiff? In response to this question, we quote some texts below on public resistance to acts of the Pope.

■ **SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS** — The Angelic Doctor teaches, in several of his works, that in extreme cases it is licit to publicly resist a papal decision, as Saint Paul resisted Saint Peter to his face:

If the faith were endangered, a subject ought to rebuke his prelate even publicly. Hence Paul, who was Peter's subject, rebuked him in public, on account of the imminent danger of scandal concerning faith, and, as the gloss of Augustine says on Galatians 2:11, “Peter gave an example to superiors, that if at any time they should happen to stray from the straight path, they should not disdain to be reproved by their subjects.”¹⁰

■ **SUAREZ (1548-1617):**

If [the Pope] lays down an order contrary to right customs one does not have to obey him; if he tries to do something manifestly opposed to justice and to the common good, it would be licit to resist him; if he attacks by force, he could be repelled by force, with the moderation characteristic of a just defense (*cum moderamine inculpatæ tutelæ*).¹¹

■ **SAINT ROBERT BELLARMINE (1542-1621):**

...just as it is licit to resist the Pontiff who attacks the body, so also it is licit to resist him who attacks souls, or who disturbs the civil order, or, above

⁸ Gal. 1:8.

⁹ In *Considerations on the 'Ordo Missæ' of Paul VI*, mimeographed edition, 1970, São Paulo; published in French under the title *La Nouvelle Messe de Paul VI: Qu'en Pense-t-on?* (Chiré-en-Montreuil, Vouillé, France: Diffusion de la Pensée Française, 1975).

¹⁰ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Q. 33, art. 4 “Whether a man is bound to correct his prelate,” 2, <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/3033.htm#article4>

¹¹ Suarez, *De Fide, disp. X*, sect. VI no. 16.

all, who tried to destroy the Church. I say that it is licit to resist him by not doing what he orders and by impeding the execution of his **will**; it is not licit, however, to judge him, to punish him or depose him, for these acts are proper to a superior.¹²

■ **CORNELIUS A LAPIDE (1567-1637)** — The illustrious exegete shows that, according to Saint Augustine, Saint Ambrose, Saint Bede, Saint Anselm, and many other Fathers, the resistance of Saint Paul to Saint Peter was public “...so that in this way the public scandal given by Saint Peter was remedied by a rebuke which was also public.”¹³

After analyzing the diverse theological and exegetical questions raised by the attitude assumed by Saint Paul, Cornelius a Lapide writes:

...that superiors can be rebuked, with humility and charity, by their subjects, in order that the truth be defended, is what Saint Augustine¹⁴, Saint Cyprian, Saint Gregory, Saint Thomas, and the others cited above declare on the basis of this passage.¹⁵ They clearly teach that Saint Peter, being superior, was reprimanded by Saint Paul.... Rightly, then, did Saint Gregory say (Homil. 18 in Ezech.): “Peter held his tongue in order that, being the first in the apostolic hierarchy, he would be also the first in humility.”¹⁶

10. Post scriptum

A specialist in Teilhard de Chardin

These Notes had already been written when we learned of an email interview Prof. Deborah Terezinha de Paula gave the *Revista IHU on-line* of Instituto Humanitas of UNISINOS University, Brazil, published under the title *Laudato si’: um texto impregnado de Teilhard de Chardin* [*Laudato si’: A text imbued with Teilhard de Chardin*]. The interviewee graduated in Pedagogy at the Federal University of Juiz de Fora, has a Master’s degree in the Science of Religion, and recently defended her doctoral thesis, “*Diáfania de Deus no Coração da Matéria: a Mística de Teilhard de Chardin*” [God’s Diaphany in the Heart of Matter: the Mysticism of Teilhard de Chardin]. It is worth noting that the interview was given to a publication of the UNISINOS University, which is run by the Jesuit Fathers of Rio Grande do Sul, which warmly welcomed it, and which, in 2005, on the fiftieth anniversary of Teilhard’s death, promoted a symposium with great repercussion in specialized circles, all of it revealing the telltale adoption by prestigious Catholic circles, and especially by UNISINOS, of the theses of Teilhard de Chardin.

Teilhard Is Present Between the Encyclical’s Lines

The UNISINOS magazine observes that the French thinker is very much present in this Encyclical and reports that the interviewee “reveals that the mystic’s thinking appears not only in the direct quotations.” “**It is as if it were between the lines,**” Prof.

¹² St. Robert Bellarmine, *De Rom. Pont.*, lib. II c. 29.

¹³ Cornelius a Lapide, *ad. Gal.* 2: 11.

¹⁴ Epist. 19.

¹⁵ Gal. 2:11.

¹⁶ Cornelius a Lapide, *ad. Gal.* 2: 11.

de Paula writes. And she continues: “when the Pope highlights the presence of God in the elements of nature, one has the impression to be listening to Teilhard himself;” and: “the Encyclical’s very title, which calls us to universal praise through care for our common home, reminds me of Teilhard de Chardin.”

The Universal Christ

The interviewee writes: “The Universal Christ of Teilhard is not a new Christ but the same Christ of the evangelical Faith.” She continues: “He is a man born of a woman, a boy born in Bethlehem, God who, through the Incarnation, assumed the material world to elevate it with him. He is the young man who defied the [established] power to defend the weak, paying the price for that boldness with his own life. It is the one who, through the Resurrection now inhabits and illuminates all being. It is Christ who, having passed by the world, now inhabits the cosmos, convoking all of us to a conversion of love.”

Prof. de Paula continues: “When he talks about the human duty of collaborating with the Creator in the work of Creation (LS 14, 124ff), the Pope again certainly takes up Teilhard, who spoke many times about this duty, which he considers sacred. When we realize the link that unites us to everything that exists, finally, when that which the French mystic would define as **cosmic sense** grows within us, we arrive at the perception of our molecular nature.”

She goes on to write that “Teilhard assumes evolution as a backdrop of his explanation of the world. In *Comment je crois*, he summarizes his creed saying: **‘I believe that the Universe is an Evolution. I believe that the Evolution marches toward the Spirit. I believe that the Spirit completes itself in the Personal. I believe that the supreme Personal is the Universal Christ.’**”

Given the radical tenor of these texts, one cannot but ask whether evolution, starting from creation and followed by Incarnation would not pass by the stage which, as Prof. de Paula says, **Christ “now inhabits the cosmos,”** arriving, **through a process of maturation** and “conversion of love,” as one reads in the Encyclical, **at God’s “transcendent plenitude” “where the resurrected Christ embraces and illuminates all things” – “the Universal Christ” of Teilhard de Chardin** (no. 83). As can be seen, the whole language of Teilhard de Chardin and his followers is an ensemble of confusing literary metaphors aimed at disguising their doctrines’ underlying pantheism. They call this mysticism, whereas true Catholic mysticism is clear, intelligible, and fits squarely into the logic and rationality of Scholasticism.

Christian Pantheism?

The interviewee writes: “This singular capacity to see God in all things, this profound welcoming of the Pauline spirituality of the God who is all things in all people ended up by causing Teilhardian mysticism to be erroneously associated with the pantheist mysticisms, by which Teilhard himself says he was seduced.”

She continues: “In his process of interior evolution he felt tempted by pantheism and – being a man of harmony par excellence – he arduously worked to refute it and at the same time to integrate it into his worldview. In his autobiography he speaks of the risk he faced, not of pantheism but of being lost in ‘...an inferior form (the banal and easy form) of the pantheistic Spirit: the pantheism of effusion and dissolution.... To be everything, to merge myself with everything.’ This type of pantheism is rejected by

the mystic [Teilhard] who, while capturing God, does not identify God with the world. While pantheism seduces through the idea of a perfect union in which all differences would be annulled, in Teilhardian mysticism, differences are valued. The Creator, as understood by the Jesuit, embraces creatures but his embrace does not absorb them in himself. True union does not cause the loss of personality. It is necessary to unite oneself to another without ceasing to be what one is. In fact, the religious man from Auvergne explains, this is the aspiration of all mysticism: ‘to... unite oneself (that is, to become the Other), while remaining oneself,’ an aspiration which, in **Teilhard’s** understanding, only Christianity saves through the person of Christ, the human-divine who is man without ceasing to be God and is God without ceasing to be man.”

In Rome, Teilhard is said to have earned his place in the sun

About the *Monitum* against Teilhard’s works published by the Holy See in 1962, the interviewee writes that his writings “have passed and today they are gaining stature in the very ambience that sought to silence him, a sign of new times, of a Church capable of allowing herself to be vivified by the Spirit that blows where it wants. Even before *Laudato si’*, two popes had taken up Teilhard: John Paul II and Benedict XVI, but none of them in an encyclical or in such a hard-hitting fashion. While there was only one direct reference to Fr. Teilhard, I would say that this [Encyclical] Letter is wholly imbued with his thought.”

Appendix I

Teilhard, What Sayest Thou of Thyself?

The Explicit Pantheism of Teilhard de Chardin

Let us briefly recall the essential tenets of Teilhard de Chardin’s thought while highlighting that which, in one way or another, underlies the text of the Encyclical *Laudato si’*.

1. Teilhard: “I am essentially pantheist in thought and temperament”

Teilhard himself affirms his pantheism in several writings. Among them, in a letter of Jan. 14, 1954:

“I do not accept the ‘anti-pantheist’ position that you ascribe to me. On the contrary, **I am essentially pantheistic in my thinking and temperament: and I spent my whole life crying out that there is a real ‘union pantheism’ (*Deus omnia in omnibus*) (a pan-Christian, said Blondel) in face of the (Eastern) pseudo-pantheism of dissolution, *Deus omnia*. And in this regard I do not find in me any sympathy for Biblical Creationism (except to the extent that it substantiates the possibility of Union). Instead, **I find the idea of biblical creation rather infantile and anthropomorphic**”(a).**

As the Greeks used to say and as Saint Paul repeated, all is in all. The expression is dangerous because, if misunderstood, it would lead to pantheism. Its true meaning is that God is the efficient cause of all creatures (because He created and sustains them in being), and He is also their exemplary cause and final cause.

Created beings are real beings as they have real essences, real properties etc. But the being, essence, properties etc. of created beings are so different from those of God, that these words apply analogously to God and to creatures. It is this analogy that marks the rejection of any pantheism in Catholic doctrine, while explaining the true meaning of the principle *omnia in omnibus*.

In another letter dated Jan. 2, 1951, Teilhard proposes

“[A] superior and synthetic form of ‘mysticism’ in which the strengths and seductions of Oriental ‘pantheism’ and Christian personalism converge and culminate!” (b).

He explains his goal:

“What I am proposing to do is to narrow that gap between pantheism and Christianity by bringing out what one might call the Christian soul of pantheism or the pantheist aspect of Christianity” (c).

Paraphrasing Tertulian, who said that the human soul is naturally Christian, Teilhard de Chardin affirms that it is naturally pantheistic.

“The tendency to pantheism is so universal and so persistent that there must be in it a soul (a naturally Christian soul) of truth which calls for 'baptism'” (d).

He intends to create a new Christian-pantheist “spirituality”:

“Concerning my ‘gospel,’ ... my possibilities and tendencies ... [are] to help to create a kind of spiritual atmosphere ... This is, of course, essentially the Christian attitude, but made richer by a confluence with the best and subtle essence of what is hidden behind the various pantheisms” (e).

In a letter to his friend Lucille Swan, he again reaffirms his pantheism:

“I am first and essentially a ‘born-pantheist!’” (f).

2. Christ: The “Ultimate Center toward Which Every Evolution Marches”

J. L. Illanes Maestre, professor of dogmatic theology at the University of Navarra, Spain, in an article on Teilhard de Chardin, after describing his evolutionism and speaking about the “Omega point,” summarizes:

“Having thus postulated the existence of God as a cosmic principle of convergence, Teilhard finishes expounding his system by superposing the Christ of Faith to the Omega point of evolution. Christ is thus presented by Teilhard as God who submerges himself in things and introduces himself into the total psyche of the earth, and in this way becomes the ultimate center of universal convergence towards which the entire evolution marches” (g).

This would be a pan-psychism in which the spirit is immersed in matter, from which it gradually liberates itself through the evolutionary process propelled by Christ.

(a) Apud A.M. y C.C., Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre - *Opera omnia*, accessed July 31, 2015, http://www.opuslibros.org/Index_libros/Recensiones_1/teilhard_obr.htm

(b) Letter from Paris, of Jan 2, 1951, in *Letter to Two Friends*, https://archive.org/stream/LettersToTwoFriends/Letters_To_TwoFriends_djvu.txt

(c) Christianity and Evolution, p. 56, in https://archive.org/stream/ChristianityAndEvolution/Christianity_and_Evolution_djvu.txt

(d) The Heart of the Matter, p. 207, in https://archive.org/stream/HeartOfMatter/Heart_of_Matter_djvu.txt

(e) https://archive.org/stream/LettersToTwoFriends/Letters_To_TwoFriends_djvu.txt

(f) https://archive.org/stream/TheLettersOfTeilhardDeChardinAndLucilleSwan/Letters_to_Lucille_Swan_djvu.txt

(g) J. L. Illanes Maestre, s.v. "Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre," in *Gran Enciclopedia Rialp* (Madrid: Ed. Rialp, 1975), 22:138.

Appendix II

Man Ceases to Be the King of Corporeal Creation

In several passages, the Encyclical *Laudato si'* says or implies, without making due distinctions, that non-rational beings give glory to God by themselves on account of their existence, and that man should take this into account and not treat them without the respect due to a creature of God.

1. - Traditional Doctrine

There is no doubt that every created being renders to God what theologians call *objective* glory. But through man they also give *formal* glory. They are like a magnificent instrument through which man plays a harmonious symphony to the glory of God.

According to the traditional interpretation of the book of Genesis and to the principle enunciated by Saint Thomas Aquinas that the less perfect exists for the more perfect (II-II, q. 64, a.1), man has always been considered the King of corporeal Creation. In the entry *Création*, in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, H. Pinard says:

"... all [Church] Fathers and theologians indeed consider man as the providential crowning of the sensible world: everything is ordained to him, since without him things would not fulfill their end; nature would have no voice to praise God.... Man was created last, the Fathers say, precisely because it was fitting that everything should be ready before introducing the king of the universe" (III, col. 2172).

Fr. José F. Sagües S.J., in his treatise *De Deo Creante et elevante*, says with precision:

"Our assertion ... that **the world exists because of man and certainly to serve him in order to glorify God, is of divine and Catholic faith; and if considered in relation to each one of the things that exist in the world, it is a certain truth in theology**" (*Sacrae Theologiae Summa*, v. II, Tractatus II, no. 204).

2. The New Doctrine

The Encyclical changes this traditional approach. Right in its second paragraph the idea of man's dominion over the earth is contested:

"We have come to see ourselves as her lords and **masters**, entitled to **plunder her** at will" (no. 2)

Note the subterfuge: Linking the notion from Genesis that man must dominate the earth with that of "looters". This same approach is used later to undo the clarity of the holy book's mandate:

"And God blessed them, saying: 'Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and rule over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures that move upon the earth'" (Gen. 1:28).

The Encyclical says:

"[I]t is true that we Christians **have at times incorrectly interpreted the Scriptures, nowadays we must forcefully reject the notion that our being created in God's image and given dominion over the earth justifies absolute domination over other creatures**" (no. 67)

The Church has never taught that man's dominion over nature and animals was absolute in the sense that he could do whatever he wanted regardless of the ultimate end of all things. But by saying that the Scriptures were "sometimes" incorrectly interpreted, it is suggested that the classical doctrine on man's dominion over nature has stemmed from incorrect understandings in days past. This idea is strengthened further on:

"In our time, **the Church does not say in a simplistic manner that other creatures are completely subordinated to the good of human beings**, as if they have no worth in themselves and can be treated as we wish..." (no. 69.)¹⁷

According to the same text, there is "**a relationship of responsible reciprocity between human beings and nature**" (no. 67)¹⁸ How can there be responsibility and reciprocity between the (rational) "human being" and (irrational) "nature"?

Further on, the Encyclical craftily connects "dominion" with "arbitrariness":

"Yet it would also be mistaken to view other living beings as mere objects subjected to **arbitrary human domination.**" (no. 82)

¹⁷ Original Italian "in maniera semplicistica"

¹⁸ Original Italian: "Ciò implica una relazione di reciprocità responsabile tra essere umano e natura."

Nowhere does the Encyclical mention man as king of creation, but rather insists on deposing him from that condition. Thus, in no. 68 (*in fine*) it affirms that “the Bible has no place for a **tyrannical anthropocentrism** unconcerned for other creatures.”

In short, the Encyclical presents man, not as the master of nature, of the sensible world, a condition which man uses to give glory to God, but virtually reverses that order by placing him not as master but as the servant of sensible nature, to which he must submit and which he must obey.