



IV. THE MESSAGE OF EACH CREATURE IN THE HARMONY OF CREATION (84-88)

Each person is an image of God, and every creature has its own purpose: “everything is, as it were a caress of God” (84).

The Canadian Bishops “pointed out that no creature is excluded from the manifestation of God: ‘From panoramic vistas to the tiniest living form, nature is a constant source of wonder and awe. It is also a continuing revelation of the divine’” (85).

God’s goodness cannot be represented fittingly by any one creature, and thus we need God’s gift of ‘multiplicity and variety’. This gift is reflected in creation and the interdependence of all creatures. No creature, no person is self-sufficient: “Creatures exist only in dependence on each other, to complete each other, in the service of each other” (86).

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. St. Paul reflects on the unity and diversity in the body. Reflect on the parts of the human body and how the parts interact. Consider the diversity and unity found in community or in nature. Thank God for your gifts, the gifts of others, the beauty of all creation! Look for the presence of God in all creation, in each person.

V. A UNIVERSAL COMMUNION (89-92)

Everything belongs to God. Each one of us and all of creation is interconnected. We need to care for creation, but we need to care for each other: “Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society” (91). Universal communion and living in fraternal love must lead us to understand that “Peace, justice and the preservation of creation are three absolutely interconnected themes” (92).

While we all share in this universal communion, there are great inequalities in our world. Some people seem to believe they deserve a greater slice of the economic and material pie. Consider what this to the harmony of creation. Reflect on Luke 16:19-31 – The Rich Man and Lazarus.

VI. THE COMMON DESTINATION OF GOODS (93-95)

The goods of the earth are meant to benefit all. We have a duty to care for all creation and to distribute its goods so that all benefit. Each person – those who are rich and those who are poor, the old and young, males and females, people from different nationalities and cultures – has dignity and we should ensure that all people are cared for. During the extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy, Pope Francis called on all people, especially leaders, to ensure that each person has access land, labour and lodgings. These are fundamental rights.

St. Basil the Great, reminding us of our responsibility to help others, especially those most in need, said: If you have two coats, one belongs to the poor. Consider how we might redistribute our wealth.

VII. THE GAZE OF JESUS (96-100)

Reflecting on the life of Jesus we notice his close relationship with others and all of creation: Jesus lived in full harmony with creation, and with others (98). As St. Paul reminds us Christ was present from the beginning: “All things have been created through him and for him (Col 1:16). We are called to approach and contemplate each other and all creation seeking the presence of Jesus’ radiant presence. (100). Remember all is from God and all returns to God.

The prologue of the Gospel of John (1:1-18) reveals Christ's creative work as the Divine Word (Logos). But then, unexpectedly, the prologue goes on to say that this same Word "became flesh" (Jn 1:14). 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 (99).

The Word Became Flesh (John 1:1-18)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

How might we see each other and all creation differently if we understood that all came into being through Jesus, the Word of God; that all creation, through the resurrection of Jesus will return to God; and, that all of us and all creation have received grace upon grace?

