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June 1, 2020

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READ

Chapter 2, Section 7: The Gaze of Jesus

The ending of chapter 2 offers the example of Jesus and how "the mystery of Christ is at work in a hidden manner in the natural world as a whole" (99). Pope Francis describes Jesus in this way: "The Lord was able to invite others to be attentive to the beauty that there is in the world because he himself was in constant touch with nature, lending it an attention full of fondness and wonder." (97).

Additionally, Francis writes: "The New Testament does not only tell us of the earthly Jesus and his tangible and loving relationship with the world. It also shows him risen and glorious, present throughout creation by his universal Lordship: 'For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross' (Colossians 1:19-20). This leads us to direct our gaze to the end of time, when the Son will deliver all things to the Father, so that 'God may be everything to every one' (1 Corinthians 15:28). Thus, the creatures of this world no longer appear to us under merely natural guise because the risen One is mysteriously holding them to himself and directing them towards fullness as their end. The very flowers of the field and the birds which his human eyes contemplated and admired are now imbued with his radiant presence" (100).

REFLECT

Francis is saying the gaze of Jesus is embedded in the world around us. My post from May 25 mentioned the idea of human sin caused a rupture within the Holy Trinity in the form of broken relationships with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself. In a similar vein, if Jesus is in all living things, and we fail to treat other people, other creatures and the environment with care, then what does that say about our relationship with Jesus?

ACT

Think of caring for the poor and protecting the planet as a way to honor Jesus and God’s creations. Consider the following prayer.

Dear God,

Please bless the sapphire globe

and the diamonds on the water.

Please cleanse the ground

and heal the air,

and save them all from us.

Forgive us

our trespasses

and make not the earth

trespass on us

as we have so trespassed

on her.

Have mercy on us,

and on her,

and heal our broken bond.

Amen

From *Illuminated Prayers* (1997) by Marianne Williamson (p 48-49).

Source material:
Document
LS 2.7.pdf

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