

Daily Meditation 9-14-2026

Creation Spirituality, Original Blessing & Evil in the News This Week

Good morning.

I'm reflecting with you more on this new document from the Vatican. The International Theological Commission put it together, called *Taking Care of Our Common Home: A Responsible and Fraternal Response to the Triune God*, and it is an effort to bring religion and the theology into the important movement and action and discussion around saving the Earth at this time in history from human degradation, and climate change is happening as a result.

The preface begins, interestingly enough and happily in my terms, with a quote from Saint John of the Cross's great poem, "The Spiritual Canticle," where he says, "A 1,000 thanks pouring passed hastily for these groves, and looking at them only with his figure, he left them dressed in beauty." A very Creation-centered poem.

This is, as I point out in my new book on John of the Cross, it comes out in just one month, entitled *Let Beloved Be Your Guide: John of the Cross and the Triple Dark Night of Our Times*. And "Triple Dark Night" includes the Dark Night of Mother Earth, the Dark Night of Democracy and Society, with the breaking down of democracy, as well as the Dark Night of Our Souls. So very much welcome now, this whole document — it is a long document. It begins with the poetry of John of the Cross, who was thoroughly Creation-centered, as I explain in my book.

Also, in the preface, it talks about the anthropocentric and predatory view of our attitude toward Nature, that is suicidal in character, and talks about how theology and science need to work together, that the role of a human being is to take responsibility and be good administrators of Nature, with a set of guidelines and principles for the care of our common home. "We all have to undergo an ecological conversion," as they put it.

And it ends with a declaration that names other religions of the world, and how they too are saying what amounts to similar things regarding our responsibility for the planet and the reverence we should have for Creation.

In the first paragraph of the first chapter, there's a fine quote from Pope Leo XIV: "Creation bears an imprint of original goodness, that the human gaze must guard, cultivate, and mature." Obviously, I love that phrase, "original goodness," because that is exactly what "Original Blessing" means. And previous Popes, previous to Pope Francis, Pope Benedict in particular, and Pope John Paul II did not take kindly to that term, "Original Blessing." It's good to see a pope talking about original goodness early in this document. He was being quoted, of course. He did not write this document, though he approved it. He approved it in its final form.

It talks about how action being goodness, and "beauty of creatures reflect the converging and loving action of one God." And of course we are destined to be in relationship with all these other creatures.

"All creation carries within it the foundations of the Logos," and this is a way of talking about the Cosmic Christ. So it's curious they do not use that phrase in the entire document, and they only cite Pierre de Chardin in a footnote once. It is not in the body of the document at all, which I think is really curious.

"The incarnation acquires a cosmic dimension. The Word in its humanity assumes Creation and participates in it." It does allude to continuous creation, but it doesn't elaborate on that, unfortunately, as much as it deserves to be elaborated.

It cites Hildegard of Bingen, which is good to see, and her teaching of the macrocosm and the microcosm, and Creation as a "second scripture," as she puts it. That's interesting because Aquinas, the next century after Hildegard, said that there are "two books of Revelation: the Revelation of Nature and the Revelation of the Bible." So really, this is already alluded to by Hildegard of Bingen before him.

It gives quite a lot of space to Saint Bonaventure, who of course was a Franciscan. And Saint Francis is cited this document as well. And Bonaventure says, "All creation is like a book where we can read the properties of the Creator." Well, again, that is like Aquinas saying that Nature is a book of revelation. It's not just any book. Therefore, Nature is a Bible.

It talks about "all Creation being wounded from the sin of the human being." And of course it brings us up to today, where our greed and our technology and so forth, and our economic systems can overwhelm us and overwhelm the rest of Creation. So this rupture that humans create, this battle against Creation, goes way back to our origins, but it continues and is on a fast track in our time.

Now it goes into an elaborate theological discourse on the Trinity being present in all Creation and all creatures, but I have a little trouble with this because beginning a document that that ends with an appeal to all the religions, an invitation, I don't think it was a very good way to begin because it's really quite narrow to go into this detailed theologizing from the Fourth century about the Trinity in creatures. You would think they might have kept that for the end of the document and put the invitation to all religions up front, if you want to be serious about environmental action. You don't want to exclude people at the very beginning of the major document to whom all this is quite new and ancillary. And so I think the order is a bit distorted here. In my daily meditation for tomorrow, I will speak to some elements that I think could have been done better in this document.

I'm happy to see that it talks about panentheism and spells it out in a good way, and talks frequently about interconnectivity, which is of course not only the basis of today's science, but the basis of compassion itself. So it feeds the whole discussion about compassion and Creation and our responsibility for Creation.

It talks about liturgy and how the Eucharist itself has a cosmic dimension to it, and how, in many ways, it's the high point of bringing people together to celebrate and remember our common home, which is the Earth.

There's a whole section on blessing, I'm happy to say, and then a section on the sins against Creation, and including, of course, the greed that has us never satiated, and our desire and greed carry us away, especially if our economic systems are not guiding us, by creating structures that discourage avarice.

It's like Pope Leo represents "an urgent need that goes beyond simple protection of the environment. It's a question of social, economic, and anthropological dimensions and theology too. We must always take into account the common good and the technocratic paradigm, and its capacity for destructive anthropology, predatory anthro-centrism, humans putting rogue agendas first."

So these are part of this document. It's a worthy document to study, and it's quite lengthy, but it's good news, I think, that the churches and religion in general today, are paying more and more heed to the suffering of Mother Earth, and our capacities, in religion's capacity to help do something about it.

Thank you. We'll see you next week.