

August Word of Life

‘The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made.’ (Psalm 145:9)

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This psalm is a hymn of glory that celebrates the kingly nature of the Lord who governs the whole of history. He is eternal and majestic but expresses himself in justice and goodness. He is more like a father close by than a powerful ruler.

God is the focus of this hymn, which reveals his abounding motherly tenderness. He is merciful, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love, good to all ...

The goodness of God was shown to the people of Israel, but it extends over all that he has made, over all people and the whole of creation.

At the end of the Psalm, the author invites all living beings to make this hymn their own, so adding a harmonious chorus of voices to his own proclamation.

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God himself entrusted creation to the hands of man and woman like an open ‘book’ in which his goodness is written. They are called to collaborate with the work of the Creator, adding pages that speak of justice and peace, walking according to His plan of love.

Unfortunately, what we actually see around us are the many wounds inflicted on people, who are often defenceless, and on the natural environment. This happens because many people don’t seem to care and others are selfish and greedy, exploiting the great wealth of the environment purely for their own ends, at the expense of the common good.

In recent years, Christian communities have acquired a new awareness of and sensitivity to creation. In this context, we recall the many appeals made by Church leaders who encourage the faithful to rediscover nature as a mirror of divine goodness and a heritage for all humankind.

In his message for the Day of Prayer for the Protection of the Environment last year, Patriarch Bartholomew said, *‘We need to have constant vigilance, information and education in order to understand clearly the relationship between today’s ecological crisis and our human passions ... which result in and lead to the current crisis that we face. Therefore, the only way out of this impasse is our return to the original beauty ... of frugality and asceticism, which can guide us toward a more careful management of the natural environment. In fact, the voracious need to satisfy our material needs assuredly causes spiritual poverty, which in turn culminates in the destruction of the environment.’*

And in the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis wrote, *'Care for nature is part of a lifestyle which includes the capacity for living together and communion. Jesus reminded us that we have God as our common Father and that this makes us brothers and sisters. Fraternal love can only be gratuitous. ... This same gratuitousness inspires us to love and accept the wind, the sun and the clouds, even though we cannot control them. ... We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it.'*

Let's take advantage of our free time, perhaps when we are not at work, or other opportunities we have during the day, to look up at the sky, or see majestic mountain peaks or vast oceans, or even just a blade of grass growing by the side of the road. This will help us understand the greatness of the Creator who 'loves life'. We will rediscover the source of our hope in his infinite goodness, which embraces and accompanies all things.

Let's choose a moderate lifestyle for ourselves and our family, one that is respectful of the needs of the environment and measured against the needs of others, so as to enrich ourselves with love. Let's share the goods of the earth and of our work with those who are poorest. We can bear witness to this fullness of life and joy by becoming bearers of tenderness, goodness and reconciliation wherever we are.

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