

# Citizens Both On Earth And In Heaven?

## Reflections on *Laudato si'* and the Message of Saint Josemaría Escrivá

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**Summary:** 1. LOVE AND CARE FOR CREATION. Protecting God's creation. Selfishness and poverty. Being good administrators and avoiding waste. 2. WORK AND RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP. Free and responsible citizens. Work, personal development, sanctification. Eucharistic praise and recapitulation. 3. PERSON AND RELATIONSHIP. Man, a relational being. Creatures of flesh and blood: land, exile and identity. Universal fraternity, mercy and the call to holiness.

The social encyclical *Laudato si'* [LS] considers many questions linked to the relationship of the human person with the surrounding environment.<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis, by emphasizing that “everything is interconnected,” opens up broad horizons,<sup>2</sup> urging us to “take up the commitment to creation set before us by the Gospel of Jesus” (LS 246). As St. Josemaría Escrivá insisted, the good news of the Gospel is meant to vivify every human situation. “The task that awaits us is immense. It is a sea without shores.”<sup>3</sup>

*Laudato si'* can be read in the same light as we view the early paintings of Brueghel, with their large cast of characters. But now it is no longer only villages and the countryside that we see. Our gaze is directed to the city and its busy streets—to a really existing humanity, both happy and unhappy, and often in rebellion against God's creation; a humanity that is sometimes poor and joy-

1. See Pope Francis, Discourse to mayors at the meeting on Modern Slavery and Climate Change: the Commitment of the Cities organized by the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, Rome, July 21, 2015, in *L'Osservatore Romano*, July 23, 2015, 8.

2. See Pope Francis, Encyclical *Laudato si'*, May 24, 2015, nos. 117, 120, 125, 137-140 (“ecosystems”), 142, and 220. See Víctor Manuel Fernández, “*Dentro la Laudato si. Nemmeno un passerotto è dimenticato da Dio*,” *L'Osservatore Romano*, June 26, 2015, 5 (orig. in *La Nación* and Agencia Informativa Católica Argentina, June 20, 2015): “Underlying all the reflections we find some firm philosophical convictions. For example, the certainty that ‘everything is interconnected’ and that therefore no phenomenon can be understood in an isolated way.”

3. St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Conversations with Msgr. Escrivá*, ed. *Critico-historica* (ed. José Luis Illanes), Rialp, Madrid 2012, no. 57.

ful at the same time. And as in the Flemish painter's works, it is the person, each unique one, created in God's image, whose face comes ever clearer into focus.

Pope Francis points to the ethical and spiritual causes underlying the deterioration of the environment, and stresses the need to "care for our common home."<sup>4</sup> St. John Paul II also uses this expression in his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, warning that today "the State is no longer the 'common home' where all can live together on the basis of principles of fundamental equality."<sup>5</sup> If here the expression "common home" makes us think of peace and equality in society, now Pope Francis invites us to broaden our view to embrace the whole world in the light of ecology (a word coined at the end of the nineteenth century from the Greek word "*oikos*," home).

*Laudato si'* takes up again favorite topics of Pope Francis that have also been considered by various bishops' conferences.<sup>6</sup> Many of these topics were also central to his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. In reflecting there on the world economic situation undermined by the current moral and anthropological crisis, the Bishop of Rome stressed the social dimension of the faith. He urged a greater awareness of the reality of poverty and the flagrant inequalities found in today's world. He asked that the markets raise their sights to pressing social questions, and denounced corruption and destructive competition. He challenged the financial sector to put itself at the service of the economy and the common good, and deplored usury and the idolatry of money.<sup>7</sup>

In a recent article, Giuseppe Tanzella-Nitti has pointed to a broadening of the concept of "quality of life" in this encyclical, which gives a central role to the "principle of solidarity" in attaining the common good (see LS 156-158), of which the climate forms a part,<sup>8</sup> closely tied to agriculture.<sup>9</sup> The encyclical points to the danger of a technical expertise that can lead to domination over nature (see LS 108), and calls for a unity in all human knowing,<sup>10</sup> restoring the role of the light of faith (see LS 62-64) and placing truth and wisdom as the goal of scientific progress (see LS 105, 117).<sup>11</sup>

4. *Laudato si'*, title: see nos. 1, 3, 13, 17, 53, 61, 155, 164, 232, 243.

5. St. John Paul II, Encyclical *Evangelium vitae*, March 25, 1995, no. 20.

6. *Laudato si'* includes 20 citations from these conferences.

7. See Martin Schlag, "*Le parole di Papa Francesco ai leader dell'economia*," in *Notizie dalla Santa Croce* (2014) 10-11.

8. See LS 23-26; and also 8, 52, 169-175, 181. On this topic, see the symposium that took place in the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross on May 20, 2015, "The new climate economy: How economic growth and sustainability can go hand in hand," in [www.pusc.it](http://www.pusc.it).

9. See LS 23, 25, 34, 51, 131, 164, 180. On this topic, see *Ambiente, alimentazione e agricoltura: le opportunità dell'EXPO e la lettera enciclica di Papa Francesco*, a seminar held on September 17, 2015, organized by the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross for the UCID (*Unione Cristiana Imprenditori Dirigenti*), with the presentation of *Il cibo per tutti – Agricoltura, nuovo modello di sviluppo e valori sociali della Chiesa*, LEV, 2015.

10. Including philosophy and social ethics: see LS 110-111, 136; this is eminently the role of the university.

11. See Giuseppe Tanzella-Nitti, "*Una lettura dell'enciclica Laudato si'. Il senso di un'ecologia integrale*,"

Moreover, technology itself can result in “the imposition of a dominant lifestyle” (LS 145) without just regulation (see LS 173). As a result, the world needs to be reoriented (see LS ch. 3). As Antonio Porras points out, Pope Francis is inviting us to take up a new “lifestyle” (LS 16)<sup>12</sup> in conformity with an “integral ecology” (LS 10).<sup>13</sup> *Laudato si'* laments the degradation of the quality of life in cities (see LS 149-154) and rural areas (see LS 45, 134, 151-152, 154, 180), the result, for example, of poor waste management (see LS 173).

As a social encyclical, *Laudato si'* is a rich document calling for a reform of society through specific solutions that still have to be identified and implemented. It is also a magisterial document on the theology of creation. The encyclical develops themes and perspectives that the founder of Opus Dei did not have an opportunity to deal with in depth. But it also includes other topics, such as the importance of work and our mission to perfect the created world, that are very much present in the teachings of Josemaría Escrivá. The message of the saints can be very fruitful for theological thought, as shown by the breath of mysticism and the example of St. Francis of Assisi and other saints in *Laudato si'*.<sup>14</sup>

In reading the encyclical, I find many important affinities with St. Josemaría, although at times employing different terminology than his. To cite just a few examples: the importance of the dogma of creation, both for the moral and spiritual life; the value of the created world; an awareness of how close God is to us at every moment; respect and care for material realities, including very small ones. My purpose here is not to treat each of these topics in depth, but rather to try to delve more deeply into the perspectives presented by *Laudato si'* and the theological intuitions of St. Josemaría. To do so, I will focus on three key ideas in constant interaction: the call to care for creation, present in the Gospel and setting conditions on science; the meaning of work and responsible citizenship; and finally, the relational identity of the human person.

in *Notizie dalla Santa Croce* (2015) 14-15; *Partecipare del dono della creazione. Il senso di un'ecologia integrale*, June 2015, in [www.disf.org](http://www.disf.org).

12. See also LS 5, 23, 59, 107-108, 111, 122, 145, 161, 164, 203-208, 211, 222, 225, 228.

13. See also LS 11, 62, 124, 137, 159, 225, 230. See Antonio Porras, *Una pasión por el cuidado del mundo*, in *Palabra* (July-August 2015) 91-97; *Laudato si'. Un canto de esperanza*, July 2, 2014, in [www.opusdei.org](http://www.opusdei.org). See Guillaume Derville, *Saint Josémaría et l'amour de la création. À propos de l'encyclique Laudato si'*, in [www.opusdei.org](http://www.opusdei.org) (ed. in French, Italian and Spanish).

14. On St. Francis of Assisi, see LS 1, 10-12, 66, 87, 91, 125, 218, 221; St. John of the Cross, see LS 234; St. Therese of Lisieux, see LS 230; Blessed Charles de Foucauld, see LS 125. On the saints and theology, *San Josemaría e il pensiero teologico, Atti del Convegno Teologico*, PUSC, Rome, November 14-16, 2013, vol. 1 (ed. Javier López Díaz), EDUSC, Rome 2015, especially *I santi e la teologia* (81-147) with contributions by Robert Wielockx, Kurt Koch, François-Marie Léthel OCD. On St. Josemaría, see *Ibid.*, Javier Echevarría and Fernando Ocariz, 33-77; see also Guillaume Derville, “*Une connaissance d'amour. Note de Théologie sur l'édition critico-historique de Chemin,*” I and II, in *Studia et Documenta: First part*, vol. 1, Rome 2007, pp. 191-220; Second part, vol. 3, Rome, 2009, pp. 277-305.

## 1. Love and Care for Creation

“The world came about as the result of a decision” (LS 77). “The creating word expresses a free choice” (LS 77), and “we are called to respect creation and its inherent laws” (LS 69; see LS 140, 221). Every creature has an intrinsic value (see LS 69). “The biblical texts are to be read in their context, with an appropriate hermeneutic, recognizing that they tell us to ‘till and keep’ the garden of the world (cf. *Gen* 2:15). ‘Tilling’ refers to cultivating, plowing or working, while ‘keeping’ means caring for, protecting, overseeing and preserving. This implies a relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature” (LS 67).

Man and nature care for one another mutually. Therefore man, who “is in himself a gift of God,” “should respect the natural and moral structure of what has been given.”<sup>15</sup> Bossuet comments on *Gen* 2:15 as follows: “In the garden of paradise, God gave two orders to man: to ‘cultivate it,’ and ‘to care for it,’ that is to say, to preserve its beauty, which also applies to culture . . . God thereby taught man to care for himself and, at the same time, to preserve his place in paradise.”<sup>16</sup>

We find in the encyclical a joyful declaration of love for creation, for nature, along with a “dramatic” (LS 246) denunciation of the selfishness that permits flagrant situations of human misery—together with a call to true poverty. *Laudato si’* is centered on the degradation of the environment owing to human intervention, a problem that is seen as urgent. And it reminds us that we are called to perfect creation: “God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it” (*Gen* 2:15). As the Catechism comments, “God thus enables men to be intelligent and free causes in order to complete the work of creation, to perfect its harmony for their own good and that of their neighbors.”<sup>17</sup>

It is worthwhile citing here the relevant paragraph from *Laudato si’* in full: “Yet God, who wishes to work with us and who counts on our cooperation, can also bring good out of the evil we have done. ‘The Holy Spirit can be said to possess an infinite creativity, proper to the divine mind, which knows how to loosen the knots of human affairs, including the most complex and inscrutable.’<sup>18</sup> Creating a world in need of development, God in some way sought to limit himself in such a way that many of the things we think of as evils, dangers or sources of suffering, are in reality part of the pains of childbirth which he uses to draw us into the act of cooperation with the Creator.

15. *Laudato si’* 115, which cites St. John Paul II’s Encyclical *Centesimus annus*, May 1, 1991, 38.

16. Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, *Élévations sur les mystères*, Fifth week, first elevation, J. Vrin, Paris 1962.

17. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 307.

18. St. John Paul II, *Catechesis* (April 24, 1991), 6: *Insegnamenti* 14/1 (1991), 856.

God is intimately present to each being, without impinging on the autonomy of his creature, and this gives rise to the rightful autonomy of earthly affairs. His divine presence, which ensures the subsistence and growth of each being, ‘continues the work of creation’<sup>19</sup> (LS 80).

### *Protecting God’s Creation*

Pope Francis reminds us that, when considering specific technical solutions to the “great deterioration of our common home” (LS 61), a legitimate “diversity of opinions” exists (LS 60–61). The Pope insists that “on many specific questions the Church does not have any reason to propose a definitive word” (LS 61).<sup>20</sup> But the Bishop of Rome warns against facile doubt here: “we are tempted to think that what is happening is not entirely clear” (LS 59). Therefore *Laudato si’* invites us to “an honest and open debate” (LS 188).

God comes first, the Pope reminds us. “Our human ability to transform reality must proceed in line with God’s original gift of all that is” (LS 5). Pope Francis laments that the relationship of man with nature has been reduced to a form of disrespectful domination (see LS 106). Technology has emancipated itself from nature in a way that ends up conditioning everything, so that the objects it produces “are not neutral” (LS 107). The economy itself is suffering from an overriding concern for the maximization of profit in detriment to the good of the person (see LS 109, 128, 187) and of the environment (see LS 190, 195). He asks Christians for an “ecological conversion,”<sup>21</sup> since we are called to protect God’s creation. Moreover, “the human environment and the natural environment are being degraded together” (LS 48).

Created things have an intrinsic value, and need to be protected against human exploitation. “It is not enough, however, to think of different species merely as potential ‘resources’ to be exploited, while overlooking the fact that they have value in themselves” (LS 33). The encyclical cites many specific examples: “In tropical and subtropical seas, we find coral reefs comparable to the great forests on dry land, for they shelter approximately a million species, including fish, crabs, molluscs, sponges and algae. Many of the world’s coral reefs are already barren or in a state of constant decline” (LS 41; see LS 23). The deterioration of the ecosystem needed for the cultivation of mangroves is another example mentioned (LS 39).<sup>22</sup>

19. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 104, art. 1, ad 4.

20. See also LS 188: “The Church does not presume to settle scientific questions or to replace politics.”

21. See LS 5, 216–221. See Wenceslao Vial, *Un mondo per tutti. La conversione personale nell’Enciclica Laudato si’*, in [www.pusc.it](http://www.pusc.it); orig. Spanish in *El Mercurio* (Santiago de Chile), July 7, 2015.

22. See, for example Martine Valo, *Le mangrove, un barrage perdu contre l’océan*, in *Le Monde*, August 14, 2015, also published in *Le Monde*, weekly summary, August 22, 2015, p. 7.

These problems stem from human disorder and ignorance. “God created the world, writing into it an order and a dynamism that human beings have no right to ignore” (LS 221). “The Bible has no place for a tyrannical anthropocentrism unconcerned for other creatures” (LS 68). Creation contains a message: “nature is filled with words of love” (LS 225). Pope Francis points to a concern for the welfare of birds in the Old Testament (see *Deut* 22: 4, 6), and to Jesus’ words about God’s providential care for sparrows (see *Lk* 12:6; *Mt* 10:29): “How then can we possibly mistreat them or cause them harm?” (LS 221, see LS 68).

A sparrow is very small, but God cares for it. The love we should have for creation is also shown in care for little things, a frequent theme in St. Josemaría preaching: “You will usually find few opportunities for dazzling deeds, one reason being that they seldom occur. On the other hand, you will not lack opportunities, in the small and ordinary things around you, of showing your love for Christ. As St. Jerome writes, ‘Even in small things, the same (greatness of) spirit is revealed. We admire the Creator, not only as the framer of heaven and earth, of sun and ocean, of elephants, camels, horses, oxen, leopards, bears and lions, but also as the maker of tiny creatures, ants, gnats, flies, worms and the like, things whose shapes we know better than their names: and in all of them (big or small) we reverence the same skill. So too, the person who is dedicated to Christ is equally earnest in small things as in great.’”<sup>23</sup>

Pascal said: “do the little things as if they were great things, because of Christ’s majesty, who has done them in us, and who lives our life; and the great things as if they were small, because of his omnipotence.”<sup>24</sup> For the Word of God, in becoming man, has made himself small.

Our model here is Christ, perfect God and perfect Man: “By the revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love, [Christ] fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear.”<sup>25</sup> It is up to us to incarnate Christ’s message in the epoch in which we live, a concern very much present in the preaching of St. Josemaría. “I see all the circumstances of life—those of every individual person’s existence as well as, in some way, those of the great cross roads of history—as so many calls that God makes to men, to bring them face to face with truth, and as occasions that are offered to us Christians, so that we may announce, with our deeds and with our words strengthened by grace, the Spirit to whom we belong. Every generation of Christians needs to redeem, to sanctify its own time. In order to do this, it must understand and share the desires of other men—one’s equals—in order to make known to

23. St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Friends of God*, Scepter, 1978, no. 8, citing St. Jerome, *Epistolae*, LX, 12 (PL 11, 596),

24. Blaise Pascal, *Le Mystère de Jésus*, in *Pensées*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, Seuil, Paris 1963, Lafuma-Brunschvicg 919-553 and 791, p. 621; our translation.

25. Second Ecumenical Vatican Council, Pastoral Const. *Gaudium et Spes*, 22.

them, with a gift of tongues, how they are to correspond to the action of the Holy Spirit, to that permanent outflow of rich treasures that comes from our Lord's heart. We Christians are called upon to announce, in our own time, to this world to which we belong and in which we live, the message—old and at the same time new—of the Gospel.”<sup>26</sup>

When he speaks about the environment and social exclusion, the Pope is confronting real problems that, though often ignored, are everyone's concern.<sup>27</sup> St. Josemaría emphasized that the revelation of God's goodness takes place in a world called to be saved: “You could make a good motto for Christian life out of these words of St. Paul: ‘All things are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's’ (1 Cor 3:22-23), and so carry out the plans of that God whose will it is to save the world.”<sup>28</sup> He invited us to “passionately love the world,”<sup>29</sup> the title of a well-known homily of his. “The world is good,” said St. Josemaría, “for the works of God are always perfect.” And he added that “it is we men who make the world bad, through our sins.”<sup>30</sup>

Santiago Sanz rightly speaks about a “creational optimism”<sup>31</sup> in St. Josemaría. The founder of Opus Dei's teaching about Christian love for the world and the call to sanctify it—respecting its intrinsic laws and leading it to its full potential—offer us a rich storehouse of reflections on care for our environment, especially when seen in light of *Laudato si'*'s ardent call for social justice.

### *Selfishness and poverty*

Pope Francis strongly proclaims the dignity of the poor (see LS 158), based on respect for all human life: “Instead of resolving the problems of the poor and thinking of how the world can be different, some can only propose a reduction in the birth rate” (LS 50). Treating the human person as an object, overlooking the intrinsic value of each human being in God's eyes, is the logical outcome of relativism. “The culture of relativism is the same disorder which drives one person to take advantage of another, to treat others as mere objects” (LS 123).<sup>32</sup>

26. St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Christ Is Passing By*, Scepter, New York 1974, no. 132.

27. See *Laudato si'* 49, 54, 56, 61, 92, 101, 106, 109-110, 115-117, 129, 132, 139-141, 163, 189-191, 194-195, 199, 201, 204, 215-216, 222, 229, 242.

28. St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Conversations*, 70.

29. See St. Josemaría Escrivá, Homily “Passionately Loving the World” (October 3, 1967), in *Conversations*, especially nos. 117-118.

30. St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Conversations*, 70.

31. See Santiago Sanz Sánchez, “L'ottimismo creazionale di san Josemaría,” in *San Josemaría e il pensiero teologico*, 217-254.

32. See Mariano Fazio, “Da Benedetto a Francesco,” in *Studi Cattolici* (May 2015) 651, p. 335, where Fazio points to this line of continuity between Benedict XVI and of Pope Francis.

In *Laudato si'* we breathe a Christian spirit that rebels against the coexistence of great poverty with an entrenched personal and collective selfishness which, if not its cause, is at least its corollary (see LS 105, 149, 204, 230). Pope Francis calls for a true revolution: “to accept decreased growth” (LS 193), “redefining our notion of progress” (LS 194), recovering the meaning of sacrifice and goodness in order to learn how to live together (see LS 199), educating people in “ecological citizenship” (LS 211). The challenge of this cultural and social revolution is addressed to businesses, schools, and centers of higher education,<sup>33</sup> to every citizen and country.

*Laudato si'* does not hesitate to denounce “corruption” (LS 54, 142, 172). With globalization, the pace of social change has undergone an astonishing acceleration. Pope Francis calls this a “rapidification” of life today (LS 18), closely tied to the danger of becoming superficial: the danger of not asking ourselves about “the purposes and the meaning of everything” (LS 113) owing to the “fast pace induced by contemporary technological advances” (LS 133). *Laudato si'* coincides here with some of Toni Judt’s observations on the dangers of rapid progress and innovation: the fear of the uncontrollable rapidity of change, the fear of losing one’s job and being harmed by an increasingly less equitable distribution of resources.<sup>34</sup>

*Laudato si'* shows, in short, a certain impatience with the state of today’s world. The situations of poverty and inequality in the world also led St. Josemaría to become indignant: “It is easy to understand the impatience, anxiety and uneasiness of people whose naturally Christian soul<sup>35</sup> stimulates them to fight the personal and social injustice which the human heart can create. So many centuries of men living side by side and still so much hate, so much destruction, so much fanaticism stored up in eyes that do not want to see and in hearts that do not want to love!

“The good things of the earth, monopolized by a handful of people; the culture of the world, confined to cliques. And, on the outside, hunger for bread and education. Human lives—holy, because they come from God—treated as mere things, as statistics. I understand and share this impatience. It stirs me to look at Christ, who is continually inviting us to put his new commandment of love into practice.”<sup>36</sup>

33. As an example of university teaching and research linked to the social doctrine of the Church, we could mention the efforts of IESE (Barcelona, University of Navarra) regarding business ethics, management of human resources, social responsibility of businesses, the economy of health, development of emerging nations, business and the family, promotion of women and leadership, technology, the person and education, the public sector and social justice, and ecology. See Martin Schlag-Domènec Melé, *Humanism in Economics and Business. Perspectives of the Catholic Social Tradition*, Springer, 2015; the authors develop the metaphysical and ethical foundation for a social ethics.

34. See Tony Judt, *When the Facts Change: Essays (1995-2010)* (ed. Jennifer Homans), New York 2015, First Part, end of ch. 1.

35. See Tertullian, *Apologetics*, 17 (PL 1,375).

36. St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Christ Is Passing By*, no. 111.

Impatience, anxiety and uneasiness.... It is easy to understand why the recent encyclical often becomes a cry of suffering (see *Jas* 5:4), taking on a prophetic tone that is also a song of love.<sup>37</sup> *Laudato si'* denounces the injustices found in present-day social structures. Social relations have become deformed because the consumer has become the sole criteria, and we are witnessing the emergence of new forms of poverty (see LS 158). Pope Francis reclaims here the role of the State (see LS 197). Since human beings are not merely consumers (see LS 226), they should be, above all, good administrators.

*Being good administrators and avoiding waste*

What attitude should we adopt towards the goods of this world, our common home? Clearly the first step is to refuse to reduce man to a mere consumer, which goes hand in hand with waste (see LS 109). The Successor of Peter offers a number of specific suggestions in this regard: not wasting water (see LS 185) or paper (see LS 22, 211), and economizing on energy (see LS 211), to cite just a few. "A minority believes that it has the right to consume in a way which can never be universalized" (LS 50).

The founder of Opus Dei also offers many examples based on his own ardent spiritual life and his vivid experience of war and scarcity. As St. Bernard said, the virtue of poverty does not consist merely in being poor but in loving poverty. St. Josemaría described the virtue of poverty in these terms: "Not to have anything as one's own; not to have anything superfluous; not to complain when the necessary is lacking; when one can choose, to choose the poorest and least attractive; not to mistreat the objects that we use; to make good use of time."<sup>38</sup>

He also used to say: "It is not enough to want to be poor. We have to learn to be poor."<sup>39</sup> The material goods we may possess oblige us to try to remedy the needs of our neighbor. "True poverty does not consist in not having things, but in being detached: in voluntarily renouncing one's control over things."<sup>40</sup> To avoid wasting paper Josemaría Escrivá, "when taking notes or making rough

37. See Arturo Bellocq Montano, "El destino común de los bienes," in *Comentarios a la Laudato si'*, BAC, Madrid 2015; see Luigi Accatoli, "Laudato si': un 'canto' coraggioso e profetico," in *Voce di Padre Pio* (September 2015) 9, 43-47. *Laudato si'* reminds me of Zygmunt Bauman's denunciations against injustices linked to postmodernity.

38. St. Josemaría Escrivá, cited by Blessed Alvaro del Portillo in *Immersed in God*, Scepter, Princeton, 1996, p. 148.

39. St. Josemaría Escrivá, AGP, *Biblioteca*, P10, 50.

40. St. Josemaría Escrivá, *The Way: Critical-Historical Edition* (ed. by Pedro Rodríguez), Instituto Historico San Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, Scepter, London, 2009, 632, which adds: "Thus there are poor who are really rich. And the reverse." See St. Leo the Great, "Homily on the Beatitudes," PL 54, 462: "Many rich people have this spirit, because they put their abundance at the service not of their prestige, but of works of charity. For them the greatest gain is in what they employ to alleviate the misery and the suffering of their neighbor."

drafts, always used the back sides of used sheets of paper. He liked to joke that he would ‘write on the edges if that were possible.’”<sup>41</sup> As far as electricity was concerned, he was very observant of any possible waste: “Look, they turned on the lights up there in order to open the shutters on the windows, and since the whole room was flooded with natural light they forgot to turn them off . . . Please go up and ask them politely to turn off the lights, since they are wasting electricity.”<sup>42</sup> He invited people to pay attention to small things, doing so out of charity: the act of economizing on resources and avoiding waste is a way of feeling united to those who are suffering need. In this regard, I recall the decision by students in a residence in Nairobi to economize on the use of hot water out of solidarity with the poor.

According to Blessed Alvaro del Portillo, the founder of Opus Dei encouraged people “to be detached from material things—we are only administrators (see LS 116)—and to act with common sense, without wasting or squandering goods, administering as well as possible whatever we have to manage.”<sup>43</sup> More than a matter of money, it is a question of a spiritual attitude. This is how Pope Francisco perceives it, while also emphasizing the gravity of overlooking the lack of social justice. We can thus understand why the Pope mentions prayer before and after meals as an anti-consumerist effort (see LS 227), and why the culinary art can be related to ecology (see LS 133-134).

## 2. Work and Responsible Citizenship

Caring for creation, a responsibility that comes with being a good citizen, is exercised especially in one’s work. St. Paul was proud of being a Roman citizen, as he firmly declared before the centurion (see *Acts* 22:25-28).<sup>44</sup> He invited the Philippians to be “citizens worthy of the Gospel of Christ” (see *Phil* 1:27). The Greek word used here, “*politeuesthe*,” “to be citizens,” often does not appear in translations of the Bible, even though it is the literal meaning of the word in that verse.<sup>45</sup> *Laudato si’* frequently stresses the need for responsible citizenship and emphasizes the importance of work, a reality closely linked to the Eucharist, which is also central to the encyclical.

41. Blessed Alvaro del Portillo, in *Immersed in God*, p. 155.

42. St. Josemaría Escrivá, Notes taken during a conversation, AGP, Biblioteca, P01, 1996, 397.

43. Blessed Alvaro del Portillo, note 94 in St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Instruction*, May-1935/14 September 1950, 56.

44. See “*politeuomai*” in Horst Balz – Gerhard Schneider, *Dizionario esegetico del Nuovo Testamento*, Paideia, Brescia 2004, col. 1043.

45. See “*politeuomai*” in Horst Balz - Gerhard Schneider, col. 1043-1044. Paul takes up again here a concept current in the Christian community of Philippii; therefore, it does not signify simply “to be” or “to conduct oneself.” See La Bible. *Traduction officielle liturgique* published by the Catholic bishops of the French-speaking countries, Mame, Paris 2013, 1954, note e. See also, *Sagrada Biblia*, School of Theology of the University of Navarra vol. 5, Pamplona 2004, note on Phil 1:27-30, p. 1162.

*Free and responsible citizens*

Pope Francis invites citizens to become aware of their responsibilities (see LS 118) and to exercise them. He uses the expression “ecological citizenship” (LS 211), and links it to the exercise of personal virtues: “Only by cultivating sound virtues will people be able to make a selfless ecological commitment” (LS 211). Moreover, “unless citizens control political power—national, regional and municipal—it will not be possible to control damage to the environment” (LS 179). Thus being a citizen implies not only belonging to a community but also sharing in political power in some way.

In St. Josemaría, the concept of citizenship appears in the framework of a Christian vision of life. He dedicates a chapter in *Furrow* to the topic of “citizenship” (Numbers 290-322), since for him every Christian who lives “in the midst of the world” is “another citizen” (no. 321).

The focus of St. Josemaría here is love for the world in God: “we love the world passionately because God has taught us to” (no. 290). “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (*Jn* 3:16). Every Catholic should be characterized by “a careful awareness of trends in science and contemporary thought; and a positive and open attitude towards the current changes in society and in ways of living” (no. 428). All human values need to be integrated “in the hope of Christ”: friendship, the arts, science, philosophy, theology, sport, nature, culture, souls” (no. 293). All these realities need to be brought to God (see no. 295), renouncing the “pleasant but insubstantial enchantment of the world” (no. 294).

Josemaría Escrivá invites us to “the proper fulfillment of our duties as citizens,” but also asks to “demand our rights and place them at the service of the Church and society” (no. 300). This entails paying our taxes, being concerned for the common good, taking part in political and social life, etc. All of this can be summed up in putting into practice the Church’s social teachings.<sup>46</sup>

As in *Laudato si’*, the focus here is clearly on God, on “eternal happiness” (no. 305), on the joy and the daring of “the children of God” (no. 306). A Christian’s responsible citizenship includes realities such as:

—the fundamental freedom of a child of God: “How sad it is to have the mentality of a Roman Emperor, and not to understand the freedom other citizens enjoy in the things God has left to the free choice of men” (no. 313). St. Josemaría holds up a true “doctrine of civic freedom,”<sup>47</sup> which includes the

46. See, for example, Vatican II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, ch. III-1V; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 1915, 2238–2240, 2255, 2273.

47. St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Conversations*, 118.

personal responsibility of fulfilling one's duties as citizens in political, economic, university, and professional life;<sup>48</sup>

—respect for the “rights of other peoples” (no. 316), because “if patriotism becomes nationalism, which leads to looking at other people, at other countries, with indifference, with scorn, without Christian charity and justice, then it is a sin” (315).

St. Josemaría did not try to offer a specific program of social action for Opus Dei, since that is not part of the mission of this prelature, which is open to all social programs admissible for Christians, and which encourages them to freely take on their civic responsibilities.<sup>49</sup> He strove to spread the evangelical call to holiness and apostolate in professional work and daily life, in the fulfillment of one's civic duties, with respect for the created world.

All this demands personal formation. Pope Francis especially deplores “the fragmentation of knowledge” (LS 110). St. Josemaría saw the great need for unity among all the fields of human knowing, which should be the special concern of the university.<sup>50</sup> And he had an ardent hope that a catechism of the Church's social doctrine might soon see the light of day. Cardinal Van Thuân recalled that “Josemaría Escrivá wanted the catechism of Christian doctrine to include the social and political duties of Christians in civil society, and thus foster in Catholics a unity of life from childhood: a good Christian should also be a good citizen.”<sup>51</sup> He wanted Catholics to make a positive contribution to

48. See *ibid.*

49. See *ibid.*, 37.

50. See *ibid.*, 76: “College years are a period of preparation for finding solutions to these problems. Everyone should be welcome in the university. It should be a place of study and friendship, a place where people who hold different opinions which, in each period, are expressions of the legitimate pluralism which exists in society, may live together in peace.” In a time of heightened specialization, the unifying role of the university is even more important (people say that a “specialist” is someone who knows everything about a very tiny area: everything about practically nothing). On faith and philosophy, see St. John Paul II Encyclical *Fides et ratio*, September 14, 1998, 73 (on “circularity” between philosophy and theology). On inter-disciplinary exchange, especially between philosophy and science, see Lluís Clavell, “*La Summa contra gentiles di san Tommaso, anticipo e modello del Cortile dei gentili*,” in *Creder e vivere la verità, “Doctor Communis”* (2014) Fac. 1-2, LEV, 180-182.

51. François-Xavier Nguyễn Van Thuân, Communication (January 11, 2002), in *La grandezza de la vida ordinaria*, vol. I, *Vocazione e missione del cristiano in mezzo al mondo*, Edizioni Università della Santa Croce, 2002, 174; the Cardinal was at that time President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. See St. Josemaría Escrivá, Letter January 9, 1932, 45: “I will tell you, in regard to this, what my great desire is: I would like to see, in the catechism of Christian doctrine for children, clear teaching regarding what these firm points are, on which one cannot give in, when taking part in public life; and that it also make clear the duty of acting, of not abstaining, of making a personal effort to serve the common good with loyalty and personal freedom. This is a great desire of mine, because I see that thus Catholics would learn these truths from childhood and would know how to practice them later when they become adults,” in Ángel Rodríguez-Luño, *Moral Cristiana*, in *Diccionario de San Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer*, Monte Carmelo, Burgos 2014, 850-851. That desire has been fulfilled thanks to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, various national and diocesan catechisms and, more recently, thanks to Martin Schlag (ed.), *Economia e società: Le sfide della responsabilità cristiana. Domande e risposte sul Compendio della*

society.<sup>52</sup> He recommended that each Catholic join forces with other people and institutions, whether Christian or not, to tackle the problems of society (see LS 219), fulfilling one's duties out of love.<sup>53</sup>

Besides carrying out our daily work and duties with love, which is the first step in diminishing poverty in the world, we have to do what we can to eradicate it directly. We can mention here the forty social initiatives urged forward by St. Josemaría's successor, Blessed Alvaro del Portillo, to help underprivileged people all over the world: hospitals in Africa, programs for the social advancement of women in Latin America, schools for professional training in the Philippines, food banks in Europe, centers for the social integration of immigrants in the United States, etc.<sup>54</sup>

The awareness of the need to be a responsible citizen has to be strengthened by an integral education that fosters wisdom, not at all an easy challenge (see LS 209). A great help to responding effectively to these challenges is found in the teachings of Vatican II. Although it took place many decades ago now, we are still in need of "a patient assimilation of the Second Vatican Council's teaching, striving to implement them ever more effectively."<sup>55</sup> This is especially important in all that refers to "the harmony and collaboration between faith and reason:"<sup>56</sup> to be citizens on earth with our eyes set on heaven.

The Council emphasized that "what specifically characterizes the laity is their secular nature."<sup>57</sup> Ángel Rodríguez Luño has pointed to the "positive theological dimension"<sup>58</sup> of secularity in St. Josemaría Escrivá. Rising above a merely sociological viewpoint, he places his focus on the Incarnation and the Paschal mystery: "What illuminates our conscience is faith in Christ, who has

*Dottrina Sociale della Chiesa*, EDUSC, Roma 2015; in English, updated with the contribution of *Laudato si': On Earth as it is in Heaven: A Summary of Catholic Social Teaching*, Midwest Theological Forum, Downers Grove (IL) 2015.

52. See St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Conversations*, 11; Discourse during the inauguration of Centro Elis (Rome) by Paul VI, November 21, 1965.

53. See Guillaume Derville, *Praying 15 days with St. Josemaría Escrivá*, Midwest Theological Forum, Woodridge (Illinois) 2008, pp. 13-16 ("4. St. Joseph, the Artisan: Daily Work, a Labor of Love") and pp. 58-62 ("15. Other Christs: Constructing the New City of Love"). Among many others, I cite here a wonderful example: in the 1970's in Québec, Doctor André Allaire (1934-2007) created a committee to clean the water of the Saint-François river, on the banks of which he lived, with the involvement of four industrial sectors; he was a pioneer of ecology: see *Journal L'Express* (Drummondville), October 31, 2007 and *Romana* 45, (July-December 2007) p. 328.

54. See *Romana* 59 (July-December 2014), pp. 364-366.

55. Lluís Clavell, "Mons. Álvaro del Portillo e la Pontificia Università della Santa Croce," in *Vir fidelis multum laudabitur: Nel centenario della nascita di Mons. Álvaro del Portillo*, vol. 1 (ed. Pablo Gefaell), EDUSC, Roma 2014, p. 135.

56. *Ibid.*

57. Vatican II, Dogmatic Const. *Lumen gentium*, 31: "Laicis indoles sæcularis propria et peculiaris est."

58. Ángel Rodríguez Luño, "San Josemaría e la teologia morale," in *San Josemaría e il pensiero teologico*, p. 302.

died and risen and is present in every moment of life. Faith moves us to play our full part in the changing situations and in the problems of human history. In this history, which began with the creation of the world and will reach its fulfillment at the end of time, the Christian is no expatriate. He is a citizen of the city of men, and his soul longs for God. While still on earth he has glimpses of God's love and comes to recognize it as the goal to which all men on earth are called."<sup>59</sup>

For "here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come" (*Heb* 13:14). This future city already exists as an eschatological reality. The Paschal mystery has brought us the first fruits of glory in the praise of God and communion with our brothers and sisters in charity.<sup>60</sup> All of this is made present in Christian worship, to which work is closely tied. Joseph Ratzinger wrote that "there is a reality that immediately stands out when one considers the life of Msgr. Escrivá or comes into contact with his writings: a very vivid sense of Christ's presence."<sup>61</sup> This close presence of Christ is central to his teachings on human work, as is also true in Pope Francis: "Jesus worked with his hands, in daily contact with the matter created by God, to which he gave form by his craftsmanship" (LS 98).

*Work, personal development, sanctification*

Work plays an important role in Pope Francis' recent encyclical (see LS 98, 124-129). The Holy Father stresses the need for work if people are to lead a dignified human life (LS 127-129). He reminds us of the value given to work by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Laborem Exercens* (see LS 124). He cites the beautiful Benedictine saying "*ora et labora*" (LS 126) and evokes the message of Charles de Foucauld (LS 125). The encyclical stresses the "rich personal growth" (LS 127) that should take place in work, which dignifies the human person (see LS 128). "Underlying every form of work is a concept of the relationship" (LS 125) with the others.

It is well known that the sanctification of work is an essential feature of the spirit of Opus Dei, together with the reality of our divine filiation as the ground of all Christian life, and the centrality of the Eucharist, the mystery which in some way crowns the encyclical (see LS 236-237). Josemaría Escrivá also stressed the great importance of friendship and service to those around us: "the spirit of service, the desire to contribute to the well being of other people"<sup>62</sup> implies a certain professional competence: "It's not enough to want to do good; we must know how to do it. And, if our desire is real, it will

59. St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Christ Is Passing By*, 99.

60. See Albert Vanhoye, *L'Épître aux Hébreux. Un prêtre différent*, Gabalda, 2010, pp. 326-327.

61. Joseph Ratzinger, "Mensaje," in *Santità e mondo, Atti del Convegno teologico di studio sugli insegnamenti del beato Josemaría Escrivá*, Rome, October 12-14, 1993, LEV, Rome 1994, 21.

62. St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Christ Is Passing By*, 51.

show itself in the effort we make to use the right methods, finishing things well, achieving human perfection.”<sup>63</sup>

Escrivá liked the formula: “*para servir, servir*” (to be useful, serve).<sup>64</sup> The theologian Antonio Aranda comments that “servir” can have two meanings: to do one’s work well, that is, to be a good professional, but also to work with a spirit of service, thinking of others.<sup>65</sup> The same idea appears in the homily that Pope Francis gave in Havana: “Whoever does not live to serve, does not understand how to live [in Spanish: *no sirve para vivir*].”<sup>66</sup> Therefore “to love means to renew our dedication every day, with loving deeds of service,”<sup>67</sup> with a self surrender that “is a consequence of freedom.”<sup>68</sup> As Jesus himself said: “The Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (*Mt 20:28*).

Seeing our work as an opportunity to serve those around us means, Escrivá said, giving “priority to spirit over organization,”<sup>69</sup> which entails the exercise of the human virtues: courage, serenity, patience, magnanimity, concentration, diligence, truthfulness and justice, temperance and prudence; and also of the supernatural virtues, especially the theological ones, doing everything with joy.<sup>70</sup> The value of a job is closely tied to the love we put into it.<sup>71</sup> Each should see him or herself as child of God in every job,<sup>72</sup> “capable of being raised to the supernatural plane, that is, inserted into the constant flow of Love which defines the life of a child of God.”<sup>73</sup> Here we see Pope Francis’ constant stress on the need to “give glory to God” (LS 127), and to share God’s “fatherly tenderness” (LS 73, see 77, 96) with those around us.

*Laudato si’* thus leads us right to St. Josemaría teachings on sanctifying

63. *Ibid.*, 50. The desire to work as well as possible seems to be engraved on the human heart. In Mandarin, “work” is written with a capital “i,” with two large horizontal strokes at each extreme of the vertical line; this expresses the reality that work unites or joins together two or more pieces, with rules or measurements. The Chinese character refers to the concept of fine and precise work, carrying something out perfectly. I owe these insights to Professors Cristoforo Josemaría and María Tou.

64. *Ibid.*

65. See Antonio Aranda, in St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Es Cristo que pasa*, ed. crítico-histórica, 51b, pp. 361-362. See St. Josemaría Escrivá, Homily “In Joseph’s Workshop,” in *Christ Is Passing By*, 39-56.

66. Pope Francis, Homily, Plaza de la Revolución, Havana, September 20, 2015.

67. St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Friends of God*, 31

68. *Friends of God*, 30; on the central role of freedom in the Saint’s teachings, see Ernst Burkhardt – Javier López, *Vida cotidiana y santidad en la enseñanza de san Josemaría: estudio de teología espiritual*, vol. 2, ch. 5, “La libertad de los hijos de Dios,” Rialp, Madrid 2013, pp. 161-283.

69. See St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Conversations*, 63.

70. St. Josemaría Escrivá, Homily “Human Virtues,” in *Friends of God*, 73-93.

71. See St. Josemaría, when speaking to the people in care of maintenance at the University of Navarra: “Your work, in the sight of God, is just as important as that of the researchers and professors” (cited by Blessed Alvaro del Portillo in St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Instruction*, May 1935/September 14, 1950, note 238); and referring to the same tasks he said: “I don’t know which of these jobs is more important: but certainly, the one that is done with more love for God” (notes taken during a family gathering, July 27, 1974, in AGP, Biblioteca, P05, vol. 2, 395).

72. See St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Conversations*, 67.

73. St. Josemaría Escrivá, Homily “Working for God,” in *Friends of God*, 60.

daily life, grounded in Genesis and Christ's life in Nazareth (see *Mk* 6:3; see LS 98).<sup>74</sup> With regard to the expression "*Ora et labora*," St. Josemaría fully agreed with Blessed Alvaro del Portillo's remark: "We must not forget the great good that the Benedictines have done for the Church and for civil society by their diligent work, preserving the cultural treasures during the dark era of the Middle Ages, teaching a great part of Europe how to raise crops, etc."<sup>75</sup>

Charles de Foucauld, in his approach to work, focuses on Christ's hidden life at Nazareth. For the fiery convert the key element is Jesus' self-lowering or kenosis: "In love, adoration, immolation, supplication, manual labor, poverty, humiliation, recollection, silence, we imitate as faithfully as possible the hidden life of Jesus of Nazareth."<sup>76</sup> In St. Josemaría teachings on work "the tonality is different,"<sup>77</sup> as Laurent Touze points out, despite the fact that humility is always the foundation of everything.

St. Josemaría insists: "Sanctity, for the vast majority of men, implies sanctifying their work, sanctifying themselves in it, and sanctifying others through it. Thus they can encounter God in the course of their daily lives."<sup>78</sup> For Escrivá this means transforming work into prayer: work becomes true contemplation.<sup>79</sup> Worshipping God, in Hebrew, means at the same time adoration and service ("*avodat Elohim*"). We could even speak analogically of a "liturgy" of work.<sup>80</sup>

Besides being an important means of sanctification, work for Escrivá needs to be carried out with a professional outlook. Here we see the importance of apprenticeship, preparation, continual formation, being up to date, striving for the professional competence that enables us to offer a better service. Our work should be marked by the "effort to build up the earthly city,"<sup>81</sup> "our common home" (LS 13), "a habitable city" (LS 143). By doing our work as well as possible and respecting professional ethics, the human being exercises the human

74. See Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhort. *Verbum Domini*, September 30, 2010, no. 48 on the saints and the interpretation of Scripture.

75. Blessed Alvaro del Portillo, note 108 in Saint Josemaría Escrivá, *Instruction*, May-1935/September 14 1950, 59.

76. Blessed Charles de Foucauld, "Letter to Suzanne Perret," December 15, 1904, cited in Denise and Robert Barrat, *Charles de Foucauld et la fraternité*, (Maîtres Spirituels, 15) Seuil, Paris 1958, 53.

77. Laurent Touze, "*La contemplation de la vie ordinaire. À propos de Josémaría Escrivá*," in *Esprit et Vie* 112 (2002), pp. 9-14. This article traces in broad strokes the lines of convergence and the differences between Charles de Foucauld and Josemaría Escrivá.

78. St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Conversations*, 55. See, for a more comprehensive study of this topic, Ernst Burkhardt - Javier López, *Vida cotidiana y santidad en la enseñanza de san Josemaría: estudio de teología espiritual*, vol. 3, Rialp, Madrid 2013, pp. 134-221.

79. See Pier Paolo Donati, "*Senso e valore della vita quotidiana*," in *La grandezza della vita quotidiana*, Rome 2002, vol. 1, 245; See Ernst Burkhardt - Javier López, *Vida cotidiana y santidad*, vol. 3, Rialp, Madrid 2013, 140.

80. See Guillaume Derville, "*La liturgia del trabajo. 'Levantado de la tierra, atraeré a todos hacia mí'*" (*Jn* 12, 32) in *la experiencia de San Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer*," *Scripta Theologica* 38 (2006) 821-854.

81. St. Josemaría Escrivá, *The Forge*, 703.

virtues, animated by charity: one becomes a better person, grows in love for God and neighbor, and attains sanctity.

Moreover, by working in this way, we perfect the world with our work. We read in Genesis: “God rested from all his work which he had done in creation.”<sup>82</sup> Literally this verse reads: “God rested from the work that *El Elohim* had created to do.” “To do” here can be understood as referring to human beings, since *Elohim* [God] is the subject of “create.” In other words, the continuity of the creative action is also found in the fact that God creates so that others may do or work. Man is associated with the work of creation and participates in the divine power.<sup>83</sup> Love for creation becomes an act of co-creation.<sup>84</sup>

José Luis Illanes unfolds the richness of work in the teaching of the Founder of Opus Dei.<sup>85</sup> The sanctification of work goes far beyond a struggle against laziness and the need to support oneself (see *Mt* 10:10), since it is an express command of God and the hinge for one’s holiness and apostolate. We each are asked to develop our talents (see *Mt* 25:26), to yield fruit (see *Mk* 11:13), so as not to be the withered fig tree. Work done as perfectly as possible, but without a sterile perfectionism, is raised to the supernatural order and becomes an instrument of sanctification.

This spirit of work is contagious. St. Josemaría even said that “our constant daily work is so connatural for us that even our hobby is work: by one form of working, we rest from another.”<sup>86</sup> Thus someone who is unemployed needs to work hard in seeking a job. On the day following the publication of *Laudato si’*, the Prelate of Opus Dei said: “The importance of work for a humanly dignified life is deeply sensed by a person who is unemployed and experiences the anguish of not having an income. Therefore those who are out of work should hold a central place in the prayer and concern of every Christian. As the Pope said, helping the poor or the unemployed by giving money ‘must always be a

82. Gen 2:3: *Revised Standard Version: Catholic Edition*.

83. See St. Josemaría Escrivá, Homily “Working for God,” in *Friends of God*, 57–60. See St. John Paul II Address at the centennial of the birth of Josemaría Escrivá (January 12 2002), in *La grandeur de la vie ordinaire*, vol. I, *Vocazione e missione del cristiano in mezzo al mondo*, Edizioni Università delle Santa Croce, 2002, 26: “In sanctifying their own work and respecting the objective moral laws, the lay faithful contribute effectively to building a society more worthy of man and to liberating creation which groans and travails in pain while awaiting the revelation of the children of God (see *Rom* 8:19-22). Thus they help to mold the face of a humanity attentive to the demands of the person and the common good.” Edith Stein says that man’s vocation entails “working for the development of creation, as and how God has given it over to the free initiative of the human being:” “*Die Frau. Ihre Aufgabe nach Natur und Gnade*,” in *E.S. Werke*, XVIII: *Obras completas, IV Escritos antropológicos y pedagógicos (Magisterio de vida cristiana, 1926-1933)*, Ed. Monte Carmelo—El Carmen de Espiritualidad, Burgos 2003, 285.

84. Amaury Derville directed my attention to this point and its basis in the rabbinical exegesis (“*laasot*”: man associated with creation). Bernardo Estrada confirmed for me that in this case it was not a matter of the rhetorical figure of *zeugma* which could unite two subjects of the same verb.

85. See José Luis Illanes, “*Trabajo, santificación, del*,” in *Diccionario de San Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer*, Monte Carmelo, Burgos 2014, 1202-1210.

86. St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Letter*, September 29, 1957, 73.

provisional solution in the face of pressing needs.’ The broader objective ‘should always be to allow them a dignified life through work’ (*Laudato si’*, 128). The encyclical also reminds us that ‘to stop investing in people, in order to gain greater short-term financial gain, is bad business for society’ (*Ibid.*).”<sup>87</sup>

The first challenge for a person who is unemployed might be to regain confidence in himself and his relationship with others, especially if work defines his identity to a large extent. The search for work is also closely tied to the need to preserve relationships with others. A person who is unemployed may need to accept work he is able to do, even if it doesn’t completely satisfy his legitimate expectations. Thus he will regain the relationships that “humanize” his life, a life in which he can now once again give and receive.

Work truly sanctified should lead to “the humanization of the world,”<sup>88</sup> helping to overcome what *Laudato si’* calls “persistent situations of dehumanizing misery.”<sup>89</sup> I think of that seller of oranges in La Paz, Bolivia, who replied to a customer asking to buy all of his remaining oranges: “only a dozen; what would I do for the rest of the day?” His response echoes some verses of the Greek poet Hesiod: “Work is no disgrace, but idleness truly is shameful.”<sup>90</sup>

### *Eucharistic praise and recapitulation*

Work reinforces each person’s dignity and leads to human and spiritual growth, and finds its fullest meaning in God. “The ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us. Rather, all creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God, in that transcendent fullness where the risen Christ embraces and illumines all things. Human beings, endowed with intelligence and love, and drawn by the fullness of Christ, are called to lead all creatures back to their Creator” (LS 83).

This transformation of the world is possible through union with Christ in the Eucharist, since in each Eucharistic celebration “Jesus attracts all things to

87. Javier Echevarría, “Working for Love,” *Avvenire*, Milan, June 26, 2015. Translation available online: <http://opusdei.us/en-us/article/40th-anniversary-of-saint-josemaria/>.

88. See José Luis Illanes, “*Trabajo, santificación del,*” in *Diccionario de San Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer* Monte Carmelo, Burgos 2014, 1210. Women have an important role to play in this “humanization,” Edith Stein said, stressing the “blessing” women bring to social life: see “*Die Frau: Ihre Aufgabe nach Natur und Gnade,*” in E.S. Werke, XVIII.

89. LS 109, citing Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, June 29, 2009, 22.

90. Hesíod, “Work and days,” in Roberto Heredia Correa, Germán Viveros, José Tapia Zúñiga, *Antología de textos clásicos grecolatinos*, UNAM, Mexico City. 1994, 48. In fact, according to Alain Fouchard, it would be an error to interpret these verses as a reaction against a Greek aristocratic ideology that condemned work in the 8th Century B.C. But these words reflect very well the lack of prestige with which work was viewed by the French nobility during the 18th century. Could it be that Hesiod considered work as the best vehicle for liberation and that, therefore, he is expressing here a protest against poverty? However the problem here is that “the term ‘work’ does not have an equivalent in Greek,” as Fouchard emphasizes in *Aristocratie et démocratie: idéologies et sociétés en Grèce ancienne*, Institut des Sciences et Techniques de l’Antiquité, CNRS, Annales Littéraires de l’Université de Franche-Comté, Les Belles Lettres, 122-123. Autores disputant, see Malick Ndoeye,

himself.”<sup>91</sup> This is a central theme in St. Josemaría preaching and also in *Laudato si'* (see 233-237). In a homily during the celebration of a Mass on a university campus, St. Josemaría said:

“We can, therefore, rightfully speak of a ‘Christian materialism,’ which is boldly opposed to that materialism which is blind to the spirit. What are the Sacraments, which early Christians described as the footprints of the Incarnate Word, if not the clearest manifestation of this way which God has chosen in order to sanctify us and to lead us to heaven? Don’t you see that each Sacrament is the Love of God, with all its creative and redemptive power, giving itself to us by way of material means? What is this Eucharist which we are about to celebrate, if not the adorable Body and Blood of our Redeemer, which is offered to us through the lowly matter of this world (wine and bread), through the ‘elements of nature, cultivated by man,’<sup>92</sup> as the recent Ecumenical Council has reminded us.”<sup>93</sup>

Pope Francis invites us to respect creation, including the vegetable and animal worlds (see LS 124, 130). St. Josemaría did the same, making reference to the Eucharist. In the mystery of the altar, the wheat and grapes symbolize nature, the material world. Having become bread and wine through human work, we offer our work, culture, the arts, sciences, history, interpersonal relationships, in order to transform everything into Christ, the Son of God and our Lady, in praise of God, in the joy of the Holy Spirit: “When I celebrate Mass with just one person to serve it, the people are present also. I feel that there, with me, are all Catholics, all believers, and also all those who do not believe. All God’s creatures are there—the earth and the sea and the sky, and the animals and plants—the whole of creation giving glory to the Lord.”<sup>94</sup>

We can therefore speak of a “liturgy of creation.”<sup>95</sup> It is, as it were, an “anticipation of the universal transformation of this world at the end of time.”<sup>96</sup> This liturgical action, which raises earth to Heaven and which has a cosmic dimension, points to the recapitulation of all things in Christ (see LS 100). In words of St. Thomas Aquinas, at the end of time “every material creature will receive a certain newness of glory.”<sup>97</sup>

*Groupes sociaux et idéologie du travail dans les mondes homérique et hésiodique*, 109. The Greek word “oneidos,” translated here as “disgrace” and “shameful,” alludes to the idea of guilt and dishonor.

91. St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Christ Is Passing By*, 94. See Ángel García Ibáñez, Eucaristía, in *Diccionario de San Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer*, pp. 468-470.

92. Vatican II, Pastoral Const. *Gaudium et Spes*, i 38.

93. See St. Josemaría Escrivá, Homily “Passionately Loving the World” (October 8, 1967), in *Conversations*, no. 115.

94. St. Josemaría Escrivá, Homily “A Priest Forever,” April 13, 1973, in *In Love with the Church*, 44.

95. See Guillaume Derville, *La liturgia del trabajo*, op. cit., 821-854.

96. See José Luis Gutiérrez-Martín, “La narración de lo sagrado en una sociedad secular,” in *Adorar a Dios en la liturgia* (ed. Alfonso Berlanga), EUNSA, Pamplona 2015, pp. 56-57.

97. St. Thomas Aquinas, in *Epist. ad Romanos*, c.8, lect.4.

What can we say in this regard? This question, apparently so far removed from the concerns of modern man, takes on new force during a personal conversion, a natural catastrophe or the death of a beloved person. Death, which so often is hidden in our postmodern societies, is a reality that is certain and unavoidable. Fernando Ocariz tells us that, according to Aquinas, for the blessed there is no rupture or lack of proportion between the immediate and loving contemplation of the Trinity that the soul will have, and the vision of the material world to the person's glorified eyes: "The plenitude of historical Revelation and the plenitude of cosmic Revelation not only coincide in Christ the Revealer, but they also coincide in their eschatological consummation, to the extent possible for the glorified material world, in the highest revealed reality: the Divine Trinity."<sup>98</sup>

After celebrating the Eucharist, the founder of Opus Dei loved to pray a hymn taken from the Book of Daniel (chapter 3) that is joined to the Psalm *Laudate* (Ps 150): the *Trium Puerorum* or *Benedicite*, whose use goes back to at least the third century. This hymn invites all creation to bless the Lord. Our gaze is turned towards the sun, the moon, the stars; it embraces the immense expanse of the oceans; it rises to the snow-covered peaks and contemplates the variety of atmospheric conditions, cold and heat, light and darkness; it pauses on the mineral and vegetable world, then summons up the animal species, to finally culminate with man, the image of God. Merely by their existence, all creatures bless God and give him glory (see LS 69), despite the fact that, setting aside the angels, only the human being can direct himself to God in a voluntary and free act.

As the Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* teaches, "Though made of body and soul, man is one. Through his bodily composition he gathers to himself the elements of the material world; thus they reach their crown through him, and through him raise their voice in free praise of the Creator."<sup>99</sup>

Pope Francis invites us to join in this praise, an echo of St. Francis Assisi's *Canticle of the Creatures*. This song praises the Creator in his creatures, in a way analogous to our praise of the saints in the liturgy, given that in them we exalt God who, in crowning their merits, crowns his own gifts.<sup>100</sup> Certainly not everything is God: the world and its transformation are not God. But our faith teaches that "each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God's infinite wisdom and goodness."<sup>101</sup>

Moved by a deep awareness of his divine filiation, the author of *The*

98. Fernando Ocariz, *Naturaleza, gracia y gloria*, EUNSA, Pamplona 2000, p. 354. See Rom 8:19; Col 1:20; Rev 21:1. See St. Thomas Aquinas, *IV Sent.*, d.48, q.2, a.1, c.

99. Vatican II, Pastoral Const. *Gaudium et Spes*, 14.

100. See *Roman Missal*, Preface I of the Saints.

101. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 339.

Way was not yet thirty years old when he wrote in his *Apuntes íntimos* [Intimate notes] these burning words “[Child,] get used to lifting your heart to God, in acts of thanksgiving, many times a day. Because he gives you this and that. Because you have been despised. Because you haven’t what you need or because you have. Because he made his Mother so beautiful, his Mother who is also your Mother. —Because he created the sun and the moon and this animal and that plant. —Because he made that man eloquent and you he left tongue-tied... Thank him for everything, because everything is good.”<sup>102</sup>

This is an act of thanksgiving that, far from being passive, spurs us to act, as Pope Francis also invites us to do throughout his encyclical (see, for example, LS 13, 19, 189, 217). Christian charity involves much more than just material assistance: “If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing” (1 Cor 13:3). Pope Francis has frequently stressed that the Church is not a humanitarian organization, since it is a sign and sacrament of intimate union with God and of the unity of the whole human race, as Vatican II teaches. The Church was born of God’s love and returns us to him, giving us what we cannot give ourselves, including the sacraments that unite us. Thus it turns out that the human person and relationships are at the heart of *Laudato si’*.

### 3. Person and Relationship

What are the features that characterize our society today? There is no unanimity on this point. I will limit myself to a certain universal recognition of the dignity of the human person and his or her subjective value; the decisive importance of the new technologies, which are changing the world of communication; the closer relationships between the different religions, but also at times their collisions; the loss of the meaning of life, against the backdrop of relativism and nihilism.<sup>103</sup> We could also mention here the manipulation of scientific research to achieve a proud dominion over good and evil (see Gen 2:9, 17; 3:22), the failure to view human life as a good (something almost spontaneous in the past), individualism (see LS 162, 208), the ideology of gender and the Cyborg mirage<sup>104</sup> that is trying to create an artificial man. To complete the list, I will add that after the achievements of modernity and its “myths”—“individualism, unlimited progress, competition, consumerism, unregulated market” (LS 210)—along with its crises (see LS 119), we have entered a postmodern

102. St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Apuntes íntimos*, December 28, 1931, cited in *The Way: Critical-Historical Edition*, commentary on no. 268, p. 450; see *The Way*, no. 268.

103. See José Luis Illanes, “El CEC en el contexto cultural contemporáneo,” in Antonio Aranda (ed.), *Creemos y conocemos. Lectura teológica del Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, Eunsa, Pamplona 2012, 39.

104. See [www.mercatornet.com/articles/view/focus\\_on\\_transhumanism\\_the\\_quest\\_for\\_proactive\\_evolution](http://www.mercatornet.com/articles/view/focus_on_transhumanism_the_quest_for_proactive_evolution). In the end, it is a matter of the rejection of created reality (see Gen 1:27: “Man and woman he created them”) and of giving in to the original temptation (Gen 3:5: “You will be like God”). However “we are not God” (LS 67).

era in which the “lack of identity is a source of anxiety” (LS 203). Man has become acutely aware of his vulnerability and even fragility.<sup>105</sup> Affectivity, often exaggerated, becomes an essential part of postmodern man, who often suffers heartbreak and, in turn, has difficulty in “knowing how to love.”<sup>106</sup>

A particularly important passage in the recent encyclical stresses the “qualitative newness” of the human person, whose being cannot be explained by a hypothetical evolutionary process in which God does not intervene: “Human beings, even if we postulate a process of evolution, also possess a uniqueness that cannot be fully explained by the evolution of other open systems. Each of us has his or her own personal identity and is capable of entering into dialogue with others and with God himself. Our capacity to reason, to develop arguments, to be inventive, to interpret reality and to create art, along with other not yet discovered capacities, are signs of a uniqueness which transcends the spheres of physics and biology. The sheer novelty involved in the emergence of a personal being within a material universe presupposes a direct action of God and a particular call to life and to relationship on the part of a ‘Thou’ who addresses himself to another ‘thou.’ The biblical accounts of creation invite us to see each human being as a subject who can never be reduced to the status of an object” (LS 81).

### *Man, a relational being*

This is the context in which the “human ecology” Pope Francis speaks of can be rightly understood (LS 5, 148, 152, 155, 156). His observations in this regard develop ideas already present in Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI.<sup>107</sup> As Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo points out, in *Laudato si’* Pope Francis stresses that “when all is said and done, nature, the earth, is our common home and therefore it is related in a fundamental way with man.”<sup>108</sup> *Laudato si’* gives great importance to the concept of relationship: “underlying every form of work is a concept of the relationship which we can and must have with what is other than ourselves” (LS 125).

The concept of relationship is also very present in the message of St. Josemaría. François-Xavier Guerra has written about “the terms that Escrivá employs to express the bonds between persons and their articulation with the

105. See especially Pascal Ide, “L’homme vulnérable et capable,” in Bernard Ars (ed.), *Fragilité, dis-nous ta grandeur*, Serf, Col. *Recherches morales*, pp. 31-88. See also Alain Finkielkraut, *L’identité malheureuse*, Stock 2013.

106. See Guillaume Derville, *Amor y desamor. La pureza liberadora*, Rialp, Madrid 2015, ch. 1: *Corazón*; ch. 2: *Don de sí*; ch. 5: *Equilibrio*.

107. See, for example, St. John Paul II, Encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, May 1, 1991, 38-39; Encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, March 25, 1995, 42. See Pope Benedict XVI, Message for the celebration of the Fortieth World Peace Day, January 1, 2007, 8, which mentions the canticle of St. Francis; Address on the occasion of the visit to the German Federal Parliament, September 22, 2011.

108. Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, interview with Álvaro Valenzuela, *El Mercurio*, Santiago de Chile, August 23, 2015, cited in *L’Osservatore Romano*, 24-25 of August 2015, p. 8.

collectivity . . . The terms most frequently employed are ‘relation,’ ‘relationship,’ ‘life of relationship.’ These are found with some frequency in the books following *The Way*, and refer to various types of relationships, from the most elevated and intimate to the most ordinary. The ‘relationships with God’ or with ‘the three Divine Persons’ occupy the first place in this scale, in a lexicon of usage that makes reference to ‘conversation,’ ‘intimacy,’ ‘friendship’ (an eminently interpersonal relationship, in a sense that it is also very present in all that refers to the ‘relationship between spouses’). We also find, branching out in concentric circles, other relationships: ties of kinship, friendship, work, neighborhood, cultural or political affinity, belonging to various associations. . . . The kind of community that emerges here is, in fact, a ‘civil society’ and not an organic whole; an interweaving of relationships that, although it includes permanent cores of relationship—the family, friendship—is essentially mobile, fluid, voluntary. It is these relationships that Christians are called to sanctify, to Christianize, to humanize; in a natural way, far from any kind of organizational volunteerism, as though every human relationship were destined to resemble the highest interpersonal relationships.”<sup>109</sup>

Guerra has rightly stressed that Escrivá suggests “a quiet transformation of the relational fabric that is modern society, rejecting any clericalism that might limit the freedom of Catholics’ temporal action.”<sup>110</sup>

*Creatures of flesh and blood: land, exile and identity*

More than having a body, we are at the same time both body and soul. Respect for human nature (see LS 155) and the meaning of the incarnation (see LS 99) are very present in the thought of Pope Francis. “The acceptance of our bodies as God’s gift is vital for welcoming and accepting the entire world as a gift from the Father and our common home” (LS 155). This acceptance entails three key manifestations.

—The first is the recognition of an obvious fact, our sexual condition. “Learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning, is an essential element of any genuine human ecology. Also, valuing one’s own body in its femininity or masculinity is necessary if I am going to be able to recognize myself in an encounter with someone who is different” (LS 155). The Pope thus strongly rejects the gender theories prevalent today, a veritable ideology, since they are detached from reality and aim to transform the structures of society, doing violence to personal freedom and trampling on the truth (see *Gen* 1:27; *Jn* 8:32): “We can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and find mutual enrichment. An atti-

109. François-Xavier Guerra, “Josémaría Escrivá, le chrétien et la cité,” in *La grandeur de la vie ordinaire*, vol. II *San Josemaría Escrivá, Contesto storico, Personalità, Scritti* (ed. Mariano Fazio), Edizioni Università delle Santa Croce, 2003, 86.

110. *Ibid.*, 90.

tude that would seek to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it, is not a healthy one”<sup>111</sup> (LS 155).

—Another consequence of our bodily condition is the irreplaceable need to meet people face to face. Certainly one can dialogue by Internet, chat rooms and video-conferences between people separated by thousands of miles. But in the end nothing can take the place of a direct personal encounter. “Real relationships with others, with all the challenges they entail, now tend to be replaced by a type of internet communication” (LS 47). The Pope detects in this a number of drawbacks: choosing or eliminating relationships “at whim,” which can give rise to artificial emotions; along with the danger of being shielded “from direct contact with the pain, the fears, and the joys of others and the complexity of their personal experiences” (LS 47). This concern is also present in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*: “Many try to escape from others and take refuge in the comfort of their privacy or in a small circle of close friends, renouncing the realism of the social aspect of the Gospel. For just as some people want a purely spiritual Christ, without flesh and without the cross, they also want their interpersonal relationships provided by sophisticated equipment, by screens and systems which can be turned on and off on command. Meanwhile, the Gospel tells us constantly to run the risk of a face-to-face encounter with others, with their physical presence which challenges us, with their pain and their pleas, with their joy which infects us in our close and continuous interaction.”<sup>112</sup>

Here we are called to confront the real world, with an invitation to true charity. We can’t be content to meet others in the “mirror” of the Internet, adapting a metaphor used by St. James (see *Jas* 1:22-24). As Aristotle suggested, many apparent friends are not such in reality, because “it is not possible to be a real friend of a great number of people.”<sup>113</sup>

Certainly the Internet offers wonderful opportunities for evangelization.<sup>114</sup> Pope Benedict XVI pointed out: “The digital environment is not a parallel or purely virtual world, but is part of the daily experience of many

111. Pope Francis, Catechesis (April 15, 2015): *L’Osservatore Romano*, Spanish weekly edition (April 17, 2015) 2. “‘Gender theory’ tends to propagate itself in the form of ‘ideological colonization,’” said Pope Francis in his press conference during his return trip from the Philippines to Rome, on January 19, 2015. See Aaron Kheriaty–Paul McHugh, *Sexuality and Identity: Scientific Findings*, 2-4, particularly about the danger of labeling people.

112. Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhort. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 88.

113. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 9, ch. 10.

114. See, for example: a) Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, 64; Message for the 48th World Conference of Social Communications, Communication at the Service of an Authentic Culture of Encounter, January 24, 2014. b) Benedict XVI, Message for the 45th World Conference of Social Communications, Truth, Proclamation and Authenticity of Life in the Digital Age, January 24, 2011; Address to the participants in the plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, February 28, 2011; Message for the 43rd World Conference of Social Communications, New Technologies, New Relationships: Promoting a Culture of Respect, of Dialogue, of Friendship, January 24, 2009.

people, especially the young. Social networks are the result of human interaction, but for their part they also reshape the dynamics of communication which builds relationships.”<sup>115</sup>

The great danger is abusing the social networks. In reality, Pope Francis is inviting us to not fall into materialism. Today we find ourselves in a paradox: the race to become rich—which the Bishop of Rome denounces—along with an excessive care for the body (which becomes a mask) or contempt for it (impurity, abortion: see LS 1120). Man thinks that he has a body, when in reality he is body and soul. In the house of Simon the Pharisee, Christ’s deserved to be perfumed by that woman; her gesture had a natural meaning that Christ appreciated (see *Lk* 7: 36-50). However, the significance of human gestures can also be altered, as with Judas’ kiss, which provoked our Lord’s reproach (see *Lk* 22:48).<sup>116</sup> Judas, who had protested when Mary of Bethany poured out the perfume, claiming that its price could have been better employed in helping the poor, also provoked our Lord to prophesy: “The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me” (*Jn* 12:8).

—Finally, our material condition leads us necessarily to put down roots in a specific place and epoch. The incarnation of the Word is linked to the Judea of Herod. This is a theme that the Pope we have gone to find “almost at the end of the world”<sup>117</sup> has spoken about from time to time: that of memory, and specifically that of places. Judt has remarked that we seem to have less and less in common with the rapidly changing worlds of our contemporaries, and even less with those of the past.<sup>118</sup>

Our relationship with the environment in which we live profoundly affects us (see LS 147). We need to feel ourselves “at home” (LS 151). “The life of the spirit is not disassociated from the body or from nature or from worldly realities” (LS 216). Returning to certain places connected with our childhood reinforces our identity (see LS 84). They are linked to a history and a culture (see LS 143). Our origins are rooted in the land of our ancestors (see LS 146). We are invited to better grasp the theme of exile as a return to the land, so present in universal literature, especially in the Bible. We could mention here Psalm 137, whose song evokes both the memory of the fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile, a recurrent theme in various cultures.<sup>119</sup> Exile and dispersion are linked to sin.<sup>120</sup> The drama of exile is at the center of our history and our

115. Benedict XVI, Message for the 47th World Conference on Social Communications, Social Networks: Portals of Truth and of Faith; New Spaces for Evangelization, January 24, 2013.

116. See Rafael Díaz Dorronsoro, “*Natura e grazia nel matrimonio*,” in *Matrimonio e famiglia: La questione antropologica* (ed. Héctor Franceschi), col. *Subsidia canonica*, EDUSC, Roma 2015, p. 90.

117. Pope Francis, First greeting as Pope, March 13, 2013.

118. See Tony Judt, op. cit., ch. *What did we learn?* I would point out that priests, called to be at the service of all souls, often have the impression of passing from one world to another.

119. We could mention here the song *Va, pensiero* of Verdi in *Nabucco*, and the success of Boney M. in the 1970’s with *Rivers of Babylon*.

120. See Jean Danielou, *Essai sur le Mystère de l’histoire*, Seuil, Paris 1953, especially the first part, ch 4, *Déportation et hospitalité*.

identity, from the nostalgia for the lost paradise to the longing for Heaven, which is life in God; universal literature echoes all of this drama.<sup>121</sup> Family names are often place names. Moreover, a name, nomen, is also noumen, memory; and—more than an omen (prediction)—the name may be chosen as an inspiration (see LS 10), a program or expression of a vocation that, in some cases, will contribute to the renown of a person.

The Christians who memorialized Christ from the time when they dispersed because of the persecutions (see *Acts* 11:26), considered themselves as exiles here below, as we sing in the *Salve Regina: post hoc exilium*, “after this exile.” Hospitality is the response to the sorrow of exile (see LS 71). The Old Testament already invited its readers to love the stranger as oneself (see *Lev* 19:33-34). “Great motivations . . . make it possible for us to live in harmony, to make sacrifices, and to treat others well” (LS 200). Christ was linked with his village, Nazareth (see *Mt* 21:11; *Jn* 1:45-46). The great illegal immigrant is God made man in Christ Jesus. Fleeing to Egypt, clandestine, and after being rejected by his own, we see him also return to Galilee after his resurrection (see *Mt* 28:11). Some people worship him, others doubt. Nothing prevents us from thinking that Jesus returned to the places of his infancy, his work, his first preaching, the sites also of so many failures, with the emotion and recollections of that perfect Man who is, essentially and eternally, the Son engendered by the Father.

The theme of exile can also be associated with the return home, which sometimes can lead to great suffering, when it is no longer what the soldier dreamed about after a long absence. This is a topic Paul Claudel gave penetrating expression to, and that has also been represented artistically, for example, in movies.<sup>122</sup> However, in Claudel’s work the return home can be cruel, even sadder than the farewell. “The traveler returns home as a guest; he is a stranger to

121. Including *Ulysses* and *The Lord of the Rings*, as well as *El Cid*, *Don Quijote*, and *The Betrothed* (“Good bye, mountains which came forth from the waters, and you are elevated to heaven . . . How sad it is that one who was raised among you has to abandon you!” Alessandro Manzoni, *I promessi sposi* [*The Betrothed*] chapter 8); also Rilke and Péguy. In French literature, Chateaubriand often laments that exile whose melancholic nostalgia for places crowns the finale of the *Mémoires d’outre-tombe* (Recapitulation of my Life): “I found myself on horseback for two centuries, as at the confluence of two rivers; I had submerged myself in its turbulent waters, distancing myself against my will from the old shore where I had been born, swimming with hope towards an unknown shore.” About Camus, see, for example, François Livi, *Albert Camus. Alla ricerca della verità sull’uomo*, Casa editrice Leonardo da Vinci, col. La filosofia nella letteratura 2; especially p. 92: Camus had originally planned to entitle his tragedy *Le Malentendu* (1944) as *The Exile*; also, later, he considered *The Exiles* as the title for *La Peste* (1947). For Saint-John Perse, his exile is what turned him into a poet: “*J’habiterai mon nom*” (Exil VI). In *Romeo and Julie*, Shakespeare had Romeo say that exile (“banishment”) is worse than death. As for Dostoyevsky, his exile (in Geneva, Florence, Dresden), only increased his patriotic feelings. About nostalgia for paradise, see Jean Daniélou, “*Le thème du Paradis perdu dans la littérature contemporaine*,” in *Cahiers de Neuilly* 13 (1946) 1-17; “*Terre et paradis chez les Pères de l’Église*,” in *Bulletin des amis du cardinal Daniélou* 20 (1994) 5-6; “*Catéchèse pascale et retour au Paradis*,” in *La Maison Dieu* 45 (1956) 99-119; “*Terre et paradis chez les Pères grecs*,” in *Bulletin* 20 (1994) 2s [433s.], cited in *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 22 (1953) 433-472. See “*Le baptême et l’Église, ou le paradis retrouvé*,” in Guillaume Derville, *Histoire, mystère, sacrements: L’initiation chrétienne dans l’œuvre de Jean Daniélou*, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris 2015, pp. 475-476.

122. Among many other films: *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Exodus*, and *American Sniper*.

everyone, and everything is strange to him . . . The separation becomes complete, and his exile continues.”<sup>123</sup>

Claudél himself said of Rimbaud: “What you sought so far beyond the sea and the cities, your mother and your sister knew without having left Charleville.”<sup>124</sup> For the worst exile is the exile from oneself. There is a “relationship of each person with himself” (LS 141; see LS 10). As Cardinal Carlo Caffarra says in his commentary on the parable of the prodigal son, “man is exiled from the deepest core of his personality.”<sup>125</sup> He needs to return to the memory of an original and foundational relationship, the memory of the Father’s house (see *Lk* 15:11-32), understood as Source. For the great and definitive return brings us to the house of the Father in the company of our fellow men.

*Universal fraternity, mercy and the call to holiness*

God’s universal fatherhood is the basis of the “universal fraternity” (LS 228) that embraces the family—where life is accepted (see LS 213)—and the local community, along with one’s native land and the entire world (see LS 142, 157). The family is a social good.<sup>126</sup> In the family, Cardinal André Vingt-Trois reminds us, there exists a social bond because “the children are loved for themselves,”<sup>127</sup> just as they are, as an echo of God’s love.<sup>128</sup> Thomas Aquinas spoke about paternal love and parents who see in their children a part of themselves: ut *aliquid* sui existentes.<sup>129</sup> Here God’s fatherhood is not only seen; it shines forth and communicates itself.<sup>130</sup> The gratuity of fraternal love, Pope Francis insists, shows us that “it is possible to love our enemies” (LS 228). Love for one’s enemies is the jewel of the Gospel message. We are taught to differentiate between an offense and its author. And we unite ourselves to Christ’s prayer of intercession on the Cross: “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do” (*Lk* 23:34). Love for one’s enemies is proof of growth in filial intimacy with the Father: “But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who per-

123. Paul Claudel, *Pensée en mer*, in *Connaissance de l’Est*, NRF, Gallimard, Paris 1993, pp. 42-43.

124. Paul Claudel, cited by Jean Daniélou, *L’oraison, problème politique*, Le Signe, Fayard, Paris 1965, 150: “Ce que tu cherchais si loin par-delà la mer et au-delà des villes, ta mère et ta sœur le savaient sans avoir quitté Charleville.”

125. Carlo Caffarra, *L’urgenza di un nuovo umanesimo. Verso il superamento dell’individualismo libertario*, Conference at the Istituto Veritatis Splendor, November 29, 2014; [www.chiesadibologna.it/caffarra-carlo-cardinale-arcivescovo-metropolitana-testo-del-2014-11-29.html](http://www.chiesadibologna.it/caffarra-carlo-cardinale-arcivescovo-metropolitana-testo-del-2014-11-29.html). See St. Augustine, *De vera religione*, 39, 72: “Noli foras ire, in teipsum redi; in interiore homine habitat veritas”: “Instead of going outside, go into yourself, it is in the heart of man that truth resides.”

126. See Social Trends Institute, *Why Marriage Matters, Twenty-Six Conclusions from the Social Sciences*, Institute for American Values, New York, 2005 (2nd ed.)

127. Cardinal André Vingt-Trois, *Famille et société*, Conference at the Institut Français - Centre Saint-Louis, Rome, November 19, 2012.

128. See Javier Echevarría, Homily at the Mass of thanksgiving for the beatification of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, Madrid, September 28, 2014, in *Romana* 59 July-December 2014.

129. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 26, a. 9, co. See St. Jerome, *Com. in Matthaeum*, lib. IV (Mt 24:36): “Omnis enim pater filii nomen est.” See Leo Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, Second part, ch. 11: Prince Andréi says in regard to his son, his sister, and his father: “They are the same as me. The rest are not.”

130. See Karol Wojtyła, *Rayonnement de la paternité*, col. Épiphanie, Le Cerf, Paris 2014.

secute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven” (*Mt* 5:44-45; see *Mt* 6:12). Our Lord invites us to this love, this understanding for our enemies, through St. John, who is always speaking about fraternal love. St. Augustine, in his commentary on St. John’s epistle, sees in his enemy a brother called to the same holiness as he: “If in loving your enemy you wish him to be your brother, in loving him, you love your brother. For you do not love what he is, but what you wish him to be.”<sup>131</sup>

By loving our enemies we also further our own good, as Antoine de Saint-Exupéry shows provocatively.<sup>132</sup> Pope Francis cites St. Thomas in viewing nature as a work of divine art: “The Spirit of God has filled the universe with possibilities and therefore, from the very heart of things, something new can always emerge: ‘Nature is nothing other than a certain kind of art, namely God’s art, impressed upon things, whereby those things are moved to a determinate end. It is as if a shipbuilder were able to give timbers the wherewithal to move themselves to take the form of a ship’”(LS 80).<sup>133</sup> For Saint-Exupéry the sea, which is seen as a symbol of menace and enmity, also contributes to giving form to the ship.<sup>134</sup> St. Josemaría prayed each day this verse of Psalm 27[26]:3: “Though a host encamp against me, my heart shall not fear.” And he wrote: “Never feel yourselves to be anyone’s enemy,”<sup>135</sup> “I haven’t needed to learn how to forgive, because God has taught me how to love.”<sup>136</sup>

As the Catechism teaches, “Sin is before all else an offense against God, a rupture of communion with him.”<sup>137</sup> Obviously Pope Francis is not falling into moral casuistry or inventing new “sins” by speaking about “sins against creation” (LS 8, 66, 218). We can sin when we cause a grave and unjust evil to our neighbor. Following Benedict XVI, Francis recalls that every creature is a word of God and proclaims his glory<sup>138</sup> (see LS 233). And he challenges government workers, entrepreneurs and citizens to confront their own responsibility here, which requires adequate training (see LS 105). The Pope stigmatizes

131. St. Agustín, “Commentary on the Epistle of St. John to the Parthians,” Treatise 8, X, in “Exposition of various New Testament letters,” *Obras completas de San Agustín*, XVIII, BAC, Madrid 1959, p. 321.

132. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Citadelle*, Gallimard, Paris 1948; CVIII: “Without enemies you have neither form nor measure” (p. 240 [page numbers are from Spanish ed. Alba, Barcelona 1997]); CLXIX: “Because of this I do not have enemies. In an enemy I see a friend. And he is converted into one” (p. 361); CLXVIII: “One who walks in the same direction as myself offers fewer occasions of meeting and interchange than one who is coming against me” (p. 356). See St. John Paul II, Encyclical *Veritatis splendor*, August 6, 1993, 72, on “the essential link between the moral value of an act and the ultimate end of man.”

133. LS 80 cites St. Thomas Aquinas, *In octo libros Physicorum Aristotelis expositio*, lib. II, lectio 14.

134. See Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Citadelle*; op. cit., CXXI: “The opposite of the ship is the sea. But it has shaped and sharpened the stem and hull. And the opposite of fire is the ash; but it protects the fire” (p. 272).

135. St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Christ Is Passing By*, 124.

136. St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Furrow*, Scepter, New York, no. 804. See St. John Paul II, Encyclical *Dives in misericordia*, November 30, 1980, 15 and note 52 in fine, on *hamal* and *hesed*.

137. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1440; 1033: “against him, against our neighbor or against ourselves.”

138. See Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhort. *Verbum Domini*, 8, which cites the tradition of the Greek Fathers and St. Bonaventure. Nature is an object of contemplation (see LS 12, 85-86, 97, 100, 112, 125, 214). The song of a bird can provoke true personal prayer: see Tugdual Derville, *Animaux dans l’Évangile*, France-Catholique-Ecclesia/Salvator, Paris 2010, 92.

consumerism (see LS 34, 50, 203, 210, 219), whether related to ecology or not, because it harms in the long run the common good (see LS 184), and creates a certain addiction (see LS 204).

In the creation accounts, man and women are complementary beings (see *Gen* 2:18-23), called to be God's image and likeness, to be fertile and to rule the earth (see *Gen* 1:26-29). With original sin, however, the human person's relationship with himself and with God was damaged, along with our relationship with our neighbor (represented here by the child, fruit of fertility) and with the earth.<sup>139</sup> Pope Francis offers a definition of sin in the framework of man's vocation as a relational being: "The creation accounts . . . suggest that human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbor, and with the earth itself. According to the Bible, these three vital relationships have been broken, both outwardly and within us. This rupture is sin" (LS 66).

Christ came to mend what had been broken. And thus, for example, Francis of Assisi was able to live "in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature, and with himself" (LS 10).

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With his encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, Leo XIII began the development of the Church's social doctrine within the Pontifical magisterium, which forms part of the message of the Christian faith and contains a moral teaching: it guides human behavior and reaches to the "moral core of problems."<sup>140</sup> Similarly *Laudato si'* could mark the beginning of an organic set of teachings on the theology of creation. Undoubtedly, its repercussions go beyond the present problems about caring for the environment. *Rerum Novarum* (1891) was followed by the doctrinal developments in Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno*, Paul VI's *Octogesimo adveniens*, and other texts, including *Centesimus Annus* by John Paul II and *Caritas in Veritate* by Benedict XVI. These new magisterial texts on creation, were they to appear one day, could be applied to new situations, and provide an ever more consistent view of the Gospel of Creation. For

139. Edith Stein (St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross) has profound observations in this regard; see *Die Frau. Ihre Aufgabe nach Natur und Gnade*, in *E.S. Werke*, XVIII, 19-21. See Edith Stein, *Obras completas, IV Escritos antropológicos y pedagógicos (Magisterio de vida cristiana, 1926-1933)*, Ed. Monte Carmelo – El Carmen de Espiritualidad, Burgos 2003, 282. See Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz, "La cuestión de la mujer según Edith Stein," in *Anuario filosófico* 1998 (31) 753-784. Joseph Ratzinger has emphasized that the rejection of creation as a gift from the Creator, a gift filled with meaning (end, covenant), and a sign of God's goodness, has undermined man's call to live in a relationship of love: man is free and authentic if he accepts his right relationship to the world and to others, if the measure of what has been created is respected in all (see Joseph Ratzinger, *Im Anfang schuf Gott. Vier Münchener Fastenpredigten über Schöpfung und Fall*; especially, in the Italian translation of Carlo Danna, *Creazione e peccato. Catechesi sull'origine del mondo e sulla caduta*, Paoline, Milan 1986, pp. 50-57).

140. Arturo Bellocq, "I fondamenti teologici della dottrina sociale della Chiesa. Un bilancio del pontificato di Giovanni Paolo II," in *Annales Theologici* 27 (2013), p. 474.

example, they might go more deeply into this passage from *Laudato si'*: “Developing the created world in a prudent way is the best way of caring for it, as this means that we ourselves become the instruments used by God to bring out the potential which he himself inscribed in things” (LS 124).

The teaching of the saints contributes to this progress. They have seen the world as the inheritance of God’s children, who take possession of it when, with the power of the cross—the seal of the Holy Spirit (see *Eph* 1:12-14)—they sanctify temporal activities, helping to purify all created realities of sin, so that they reflect the glory of the Creator (see *Rom* 8:16-18, 29; *Gal* 4:4-7).

Starting from created realities, Francis writes, we can rise up towards a loving divine mercy (see LS 77).<sup>141</sup> There is a direct relationship between the Year of Mercy and *Laudato si'*, which reminds us of “what the great biblical narratives say about the relationship of human beings with the world” (LS 65). As John Paul II commented on Genesis: “This dominion over the earth, perhaps understood in a one-sided and superficial way, seems to have no room for that mercy,”<sup>142</sup> revealed to us in Christ.

Shown in an eminent way in Christ, God’s mercy is communicated intimately in his passion, death, resurrection and ascension, and in the sending of the Holy Spirit—mysteries closely tied to his work in Nazareth and to his public life. It is not a matter of a mere empathy with others’ misery. It is a mercy that entails an interior transformation through suffering (see *Heb* 2:10; 4:15).<sup>143</sup> We see this clearly in our Lady: “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” (LS 241).

This divine mercy, so central to the preaching of Pope Francis, is also demanding. It is not just a matter of forgiving. “Sin no more” (*Jn* 5:14), Christ tells the paralytic at Bethsaida after curing him. “Go, and do not sin again” (*Jn* 8:11) he tells the sinful woman. Even God’s anger is compatible with his mercy, says Jean Daniélou.<sup>144</sup> Mercy requires that we recognize the sin, without presumption (see *Sir* 5:5-6), even though, in the Bible, the root “*jdh*” appears both in the confession of sin (see for example, *Dan* 9:4 and *Mk* 1:5), as well as in the praise of divine power, which is salvific and merciful (see, for example, Psalm 18[17]:50 and *Mt* 11:25).<sup>145</sup>

141. See Pope Francis, Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy: *Misericordiae Vultus*, April 11, 2015.

142. St. John Paul II, Encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*, 2; see Gen 1:28.

143. See Albert Vanhoye, *L’Épître aux Hébreux. Un prêtre différent*, Gabalda, 2010, p. 82, p. 118.

144. See Jean Daniélou, *Jean Baptiste témoin de l’agneau*, Seuil, Paris 1964, pp. 147-148 and 165.

145. See “*exomologeō*” in Horst Balz - Gerhard Schneider, *Dizionario esegetico del Nuovo Testamento*, op. cit., col. 1257 sq.

“In the Bible the God who liberates and saves is the same God who created the universe, and these two divine ways of acting are intimately and inseparably connected” (LS 73). This focus is the leitmotiv of the theology of Jean Daniélou.<sup>146</sup> In the unity of the divine plan, there are essential categories that manifest God’s way of acting: *bara*, the initiative is always divine; *emet*, the truth characterizes the promise because *hesed*, God, who is merciful, establishes an irrevocable covenant (*bérith*), because his justice, *tsédeq*, is seen in the fulfillment of his promise that is the realization of the divine plan of salvation.<sup>147</sup> In *Laudato si’* all divine history is implicitly present, from creation to the eschaton (the last days), as the *magnalia Dei* (*Sir* 18:4). The time of mercy is also the time of convocation, of calling (see *Rom* 1:17; *1 Cor* 1:2), the time of kerygma, of evangelization, of holiness.<sup>148</sup> In the teaching of Josemaría, the invitation to live ordinary life in a holy way is “the most moving manifestation of the *magnalia Dei*, of those prodigious mercies which God has always worked, and does not cease to work, in order to save the world.”<sup>149</sup>

In the Jubilee Year 2015-2016, it is encouraging to hear that the loving paternity of God is not a “bland” paternity, but rather the “climate” in which the effort of each Christian “to behave as a child of the Father” is situated.<sup>150</sup> With the Love that is the fire of the Holy Spirit, the Father “loves his children so much that he sends the Word, the Second Person of the most Blessed Trinity, so that by taking on the nature of man he may die to redeem us.”<sup>151</sup> He “leads us gently to himself, through the action of the Holy Spirit who dwells in our hearts,”<sup>152</sup> inviting us to follow Christ, to imitate him, in a word, to identify ourselves with him: “letting his life show forth in ours to such an extent that each Christian is not simply *alter Christus*: another Christ, but *ipse Christus*: Christ himself!”<sup>153</sup> This divinization requires a constant and heroic response to allow God to act,<sup>154</sup> a self-conquest.

Josemaría Escrivá trusted in our capacity to rise ever higher, with God’s grace: “Let’s listen to our Lord: ‘He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he who is dishonest in very little is dishonest also in much’ (*Lk* 16:10). It is as if he were saying to us: ‘Fight continuously in the apparently unimportant things which are to my mind important; fulfill your duty

146. I have tried to offer a synthesis in Guillaume Derville, *Histoire, mystère, sacrements*, 191-210. See Derville, “Risonanze dei misteri della vita di Gesù nei sacramenti,” in Jonah Lynch – Giulio Maspero (ed.), *Finestre aperte sul mistero. Il pensiero di Jean Daniélou*, Marietti, Milan 2012, pp. 49-75, especially, pp. 53-55.

147. See *Histoire, mystère, sacrements*, pp. 181-207. See St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to Polycarp* 1, 2-3 in *Sources Chrétiennes* 10bis (1998) 147.

148. See *Histoire, mystère, sacrements*, p. 222.

149. St. Josemaría, *Conversations*, 123.

150. St. Josemaría, *Christ Is Passing By*, 8.

151. *Ibid.*, 84.

152. *Ibid.*

153. *Ibid.*, 104. See Enrique Molina, “Santidad,” in *Diccionario de San Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer*, pp. 1113-1123.

154. See José María Galván, “Inhabitación trinitaria,” in *ibid.*, pp. 638-639.

punctually; smile at whoever needs cheering up, even though there is sorrow in your soul; devote the necessary time to prayer, without haggling; go to the help of anyone who looks for you; practice justice and go beyond it with the grace of charity.’

“These and many others are the inspirations we feel inside us every day, little silent reminders encouraging us to outdo ourselves in the supernatural sport of overcoming our self. May the light of God show us the way to understand his directions. May he help us to fight and be with us in victory. May he not leave us when we fall but always help us to get up and return to the struggle.”<sup>155</sup>

Therefore, mercy is a call to conversion. The “awareness that God is our Father brings joy to our conversion: it tells us that we are returning to our Father’s house.”<sup>156</sup> This joy is the result of the action, both sweet and burning, of the Holy Spirit within us. Divine mercy is in no sense a blessing of mediocrity, but rather an invitation to draw fruit from the talents we have received. St. Josemaría often preached about God’s mercy.<sup>157</sup> He also had a personal devotion to God’s merciful love, a devotion spread by a French Visitation Sister.<sup>158</sup> Love brings with it self-giving, self-sacrifice. “With our Lord the only measure is to love without measure,”<sup>159</sup> because “the truth of a Christian’s life is this: self giving and love . . . Love for God, that is, and, for God’s sake, love for one’s neighbor.”<sup>160</sup>

The corporal works of mercy are quite demanding: visiting the sick, giving to the poor, burying the dead; and freeing prisoners—an arduous task also shown in making headway against the “new forms of slavery in modern society,”<sup>161</sup> such as alcohol and drugs. And among the spiritual works of mercy, counsel and correction may be difficult to accept, and it is not always easy to receive a teaching (see *Prov* 15:32).

The encyclical *Laudato si’* directs our gaze towards our common home, teaching us to contemplate those who inhabit it, and to ask ourselves about our interpersonal relationships. This path invites us once more to raise our eyes to heaven. We understand the moral value of respect for creation when

155. St. Josemaría, *Christ Is Passing By*, 77.

156. *Ibid.*, 64.

157. See St. Josemaría, *The Way*, 309, 431, 711, 914; *Furrow*, 35, 601; *The Forge*, 173, 210, 293, 346, 416, 476, 822, 897; *Christ Is Passing By*, 7, 33, 66, 78, 84, 161, 162-312 (“Finding peace in the Heart of Christ”), etc.

158. See Federico M. Requena, “San Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer y la devoción al Amor misericordioso (1927-1935),” in *Studia et documenta* 3 (2009), 139-174; see by the same author, *Católicos, devociones y sociedad durante la Dictadura de Primo de Rivera y la Segunda República, La Obra del Amor Misericordioso en España (1922-1936)*, Biblioteca Nueva, Madrid 2008, 359 pages.

159. St. Josemaría, *Friends of God*, 232.

160. St. Josemaría, *The Forge*, 528.

161. Pope Francis, *Motu Proprio Misericordiae Vultus*, 16.

we realize that this world is called to be a figure of what, one day, will be the new heavens and the new earth (see *2 Pet* 3:13). “The whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now” (*Rom* 8:22; see LS 80): a clear call to a “social ecology” and to an “interior ecology.”<sup>162</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that *Laudato si’* is both down-to-earth and spiritual at the same time: the “ecological culture” should be “a style of life and a spirituality” (LS 111). At the same time, “a spirituality which forgets God as all-powerful and Creator is not acceptable” (LS 75). Pope Francis saw himself forced to “say, with regret, that the worst discrimination which the poor suffer is the lack of spiritual care.”<sup>163</sup>

*Laudato si’* is an insistent call to an examination of conscience: firm in our radical condition as daughters and sons of God, we encounter, in the beauty of divine creation, a common space for dialogue and work, where “we come together to take charge of this home which has been entrusted to us” (LS 244). It is in this world’s history, and with the collaboration of our freedom, that the unity between creation and the Redemption is being carried out.<sup>164</sup> It is a dynamic process, a result of what Josemaria Escrivá called “unity of life.

“In this life, the contemplation of supernatural reality, the action of grace in our souls, our love for our neighbor as a result of our love for God—all these are already a foretaste of heaven, a beginning that is destined to grow from day to day. We Christians cannot resign ourselves to leading a double life: our life must be a strong and simple unity into which all our actions converge. Christ awaits us. We are ‘citizens of heaven,’ (*Phil* 3:20), and at the same time fully fledged citizens of this earth, in the midst of difficulties, injustices and lack of understanding, but also in the midst of the joy and serenity that comes from knowing that we are children of God.”<sup>165</sup>

This is how Christians are called to care for creation, which is progressing toward its plenitude. And as Pope Francis said at the inauguration of his ministry in the chair of Peter: “The vocation of being a ‘protector,’ however, is not just something involving us Christians alone; it also has a prior dimension which is simply human, involving everyone. It means protecting all creation . . . Let us be ‘protectors’ of creation, protectors of God’s plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment. Let us not allow omens of destruction and death to accompany the advance of this world. To protect cre-

162. See Antonio Porras, “La creazione geme nelle doglie del parto... (Rom 8,22). Anche un’etica ecologica? in Manlio Sodi - Paul O’Callaghan (ed.), *Paolo di Tarso: tra kerygma, cultus e vita*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City 2009, pp. 265-279, especially 269; summed up in PATH 8 (2009), 281-295. Idem, “A visão cristã da ecologia,” in *Celebração Litúrgica* 41 / 3 (2010), 608-615.

163. Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 200.

164. See Santiago Sanz, op. cit., pp. 229-231.

165. St. Josemaría Escrivá, *Christ Is Passing By*, 126. See Ernst Burkhardt - Javier López, *Vida cotidiana y santidad*, vol. 3, Rialp, Madrid 2013: *Epílogo, Unidad de vida*, 617-653. *Phil* 3:20: the noun combination *hápxax legomenon* in the New Testament literally means “we have our citizenship in the heavens.”

ation, to protect every man and every woman, to look upon them with tenderness and love, is to open up a horizon of hope; it is to let a shaft of light break through the heavy clouds; it is to bring the warmth of hope.”<sup>166</sup>

In the city of man, where the soul experiences so strongly the desire for God, “love always proves more powerful” (LS 149), and awakens hope (see *Rom 5:5*). “All it takes is one good person to restore hope!” (LS 71).

166. Pope Francis, Homily at the Solemn Mass for the inauguration of his pontificate, Rome March 19, 2013. With regard to to professional work, see St. Josemaría Escrivá, “In Joseph’s Workshop,” in *Christ Is Passing By*, 46.