

***Laudato Si'* Mysticism 7**

DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS

Our topic is the mysticism underpinning Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*. We try to make this mysticism our own. In other words, we try to meet God in nature's limitless manifestations. A flower, a fly, a snail, a sunbeam, a shadow, a silhouette, a cloud, is *more than just itself*. Each of these simple things is a manifestation of God, and we are invited to catch on to their revelatory quality. Before being a problem to be cleared away, a messy pile of autumn leaves is a poem! Nightfall is not simply a moment when you have to turn on the light: deeper down it is a moment for awe, which leads us into mystery, and there God resides. The Pope says:

'Alongside revelation properly so-called, contained in sacred Scripture, there is a divine manifestation in the blaze of the sun and the fall of night'(85).

The Pope picks out two everyday events that act as book-ends for the mystery and wonder which are crammed into our waking hours: dawn and dusk. Sunrise and sunset—whenever we are lucky to see them—can evoke a sense of the wonder of their Creator. They can inspire silent adoration in us, for the word 'adoration' means '*putting your hand to your mouth*' (*ad* = towards; *ora* = the mouth), and we instinctively put our hands to our mouths when we encounter something mysterious or wonderful. Every time you catch on to the mystery or beauty of a person or thing, you are experiencing a moment of revelation. Our days are brim-full to overflowing with little revelations of the divine. Revelation interrupts our everyday ways of thinking, and opens us up to something better. As the beholders of the divine display, we ask to catch on and to 'adore', for God is truly present in these moments, even if in a humbler way than in the Eucharist. It is not accidental that across the globe people choose to pray at dawn and at dusk, when nature is often 'showing off' in the nicest possible way.

- Brian Grogan SJ