

The Mysticism of *Laudato Si'* 21

THE WORLD FROM WITHIN

Economics and politics make us look at the world as if we were superior to it. We can spend much time spectating things as if they meant little or nothing to us. But as minor mystics, we try to gaze in on created reality from the divine perspective. The Pope asks us to become more conscious of our bondedness with all beings: we all started out together, and while we are indeed distinct we are tightly interwoven on Planet Earth. We are joined in a splendid universal communion, the dance of the species, and that dance will endure forever, for we have a common destiny, the transfigured glory of our common home, where all creation will rejoice together.

The pope says: *'As believers, we do not look at the world from without but from within, conscious of the bonds with which the Father links us to all beings'* (216). *'Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional aspect of our Christian experience'* (217).

This spirituality, nourished by the truths that science unfolds about the cosmos, can motivate us to passionate concern for the protection of our world. An authentic spirituality cannot be otherworldly and remote from human concerns. We cannot live piously as if the Incarnation had never happened. We need an *ecological conversion*, whereby the effects of our encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in our caring relationship with the world around us.

We are to join with Jesus in his way of seeing the world. He remarks that not one bird is forgotten before God (Lk 12:6). He has taken to himself this material world and is now intimately present to each being, surrounding it with his affection and penetrating it with his light. How then can we possibly mistreat creatures or cause them harm? We are to be caring mystics, living out our lives with sensitivity and love for all our fellow-creatures.