

## The Mysticism of Laudato Si' 23

### A CIVILIZATION OF LOVE

A civilization of love is everyone's dream. It is also the dream of God. It was the dream of Jesus, who commanded us to love one another as he loves us. It is the task of the Holy Spirit--with our participation--to bring about this civilization of love. God's dream cannot be otherwise, since God is love, and all relationships emanating from God are relationships of love.

We are invited to enter into the divine vision of a world in harmony, where everyone is at home with one another, where all feel wanted and included, where everything is shared and each rejoices in the uniqueness of those around them. This vision would transfigure economics, politics, social life. But it demands that we move way beyond personal concerns. 'This pool of private charity must flow as a world-embracing sea.' Like God, we are to be committed to the common good, we are to be resolutely for our neighbours and our planet, even at personal cost. We live as one family in a common home, of which both the members and the contents are entrusted to us by God. This is *Laudato Si's* mystical way of seeing the world. There is a generosity all around us: we are caught into '*a universal fraternity that inspires us to love and accept the wind, the sun and the clouds*' (228). '*Nature herself is filled with words of love*' (224). We are to reciprocate that love.

The pope says: '*The Church sets before the world the ideal of a civilization of love. Love in social life – political, economic and cultural – must become the constant and highest norm for all activity. Love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, is civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world*' (231).

Blake says, 'we are put on earth a little space / that we may learn to bear the beams of love'. We are indeed to learn to the intensity of God's love as revealed in creation, but also to bear witness to the other 'beams of love', namely, those which make up Christ's cross.

Social love moves us to devise strategies to halt environmental degradation and to encourage a *culture of care* which would permeate all of society. This requires an engaged spirituality. When we join God in this project, and live out of self-

donating love, deep joy can flood our hearts, and this is a sharing in nothing less than divine joy.