

"Watchman, what of the night?"

"The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you,
the hour and the end!"

Ezekiel 7:6 (Moffatt)

**THE SUNDAY ISSUE, REDUX
THE PAPAL POSITION:
Re-examined in Light of Pope
Francis' New Encyclical Letter on
the Environment - LAUDATO SI'**

FRANCIS: THE FIRST JESUIT POPE pg. 7

Editor's Preface

In issue # 12 of WWN, we concluded a two-part re-examination of The Lord's Day Alliance of the United States (LDA) entitled *The Sunday Issue*. At the time of publishing, we had just become aware that the Pope's recent encyclical, *Laudato Si'* (Latin for "Praise to you" and released on June 18, 2015)¹ contained information and teaching apposite to the Sunday question under consideration in the two preceding thought papers. However, by the time we had thoroughly read the rather lengthy document, there was neither the time nor the space to include an evaluation of the paragraphs within its content which address this topic, either directly or by association.

Unlike previous papal encyclicals which are usually written specifically to the "Catholic world," Francis makes the point that this letter is a message for "every person living on this planet" (paragraph 3). Subtitled, *On Care For Our Common Home*, this Pope claims to be entering "into dialogue with all people about our common home" (Ibid. 3) and speaks authoritatively on nearly every personal, political, social, economic, and religious / spiritual aspect which purportedly impacts all life on the earth. This is linked and woven together systematically into what appears to be



an indisputable ethical, moral whole. This emphasis must not be overlooked. Nature, the earth, and the environment are placed in and expounded upon within this overall unified context. And while it is not the scope of this article to examine all the various component parts (paragraphs) of this encyclical, we are convinced that it is a very cunning, deceptive, and dangerous mixture of truth and error - cloaked in a garb of professed Christian sanctity - which continues the progression of the Vatican's attempted 'moral' leadership among the nations.

Particularly alarming, are the stealthily advanced underpinnings of pantheism (the creation / nature is God) permeating much of this letter; despite, at times, double-talking repudiations to the contrary. Unbeknownst to many, pantheism and the Roman Catholic conception of the "sacraments" (ordinances) are related and their close connection are set forth quite pointedly in portions of the text from the paragraphs chosen for examination and consideration.

The document is divided into 246 paragraphs consisting of six chapters, each of which is further sub-divided into a number of sections. The following five paragraphs (nos. 233 thru 237) were selected from the final chapter of the encyclical (chapter six) entitled: *Ecological Education and Spirituality*. These paragraphs are found within one of the nine sections of the chapter (section VI. - sub-titled: *Sacramental Signs And The Celebration Of Rest*) and, due to their close proximity to the conclusion of the letter, appear to form - at least partially - a

summary of the Vatican's overarching position on this subject. (*Note: The editorial comments within the text are italicized and set between brackets).

VI. SACRAMENTAL SIGNS AND THE CELEBRATION OF REST

233. The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person's face. The ideal is not only to pass from the exterior to the interior to discover the action of God in the soul, but also to discover God in all things. Saint Bonaventure teaches us that "contemplation deepens the more we feel the working of God's grace within our hearts, and the better we learn to encounter God in creatures outside ourselves".

[This section of chapter six introduces the reader to the papal understanding of Ecological Education and Spirituality as it relates more specifically to the sacraments and Sunday "rest." It begins by echoing a pantheistic concept: That as far as "the universe" is concerned, "God ... fills it completely." This is further described as "a mystical meaning" which is found throughout nature, i.e., "in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person's face." Mysticism is highly regarded by this pope and the notion that Francis is himself a "mystic" is fast gaining acceptance and popularity inside the Roman communion as well as outside of it. Some are already acknowledging him as a "visionary" and "prophet," which the

Orthodox / Catholic type of churches, in particular, greatly admire and venerate. It is usually within the framework of the 'mystical experience,' as perceived in nature, that the various pantheistic statements pervading this entire letter are found. Here, we see "the ideal ... not only ... pass{ing} from the exterior to the interior to discover the action of God in the soul, but also to discover God in all things" (emphasis added). This devious blending of truth (God apart from nature) with error (God equated with nature) forms a basis for Romanism to promote pantheism through the experiences and teachings of the mystics. And though Catholic doctrine professes to "condemn the errors of pantheism," the unbiblical adoration of the "saints" - many of whom are believed to have obtained a higher degree of spiritual attainment through mystic experience - is often used to justify the teaching of such "errors." Thus "Saint Bonaventure," the thirteenth century sainted 'Doctor of the Church' who was an admirer and practitioner of mystical prayer exercises, is cited as teaching us that (mystic) "'contemplation deepens ... the better we learn to encounter God in creatures outside ourselves"' (emph. added).]

234. Saint John of the Cross taught that all the goodness present in the realities and experiences of this world "is present in God eminently and infinitely, or more properly, in each of these sublime realities is God". This is not because the finite things of this world are really divine, but because the mystic experiences the

intimate connection between God and all beings, and thus feels that "all things are God". Standing awestruck before a mountain, he or she cannot separate this experience from God, and perceives that the interior awe being lived has to be entrusted to the Lord: "Mountains have heights and they are plentiful, vast, beautiful, graceful, bright and fragrant. These mountains are what my Beloved is to me. Lonely valleys are quiet, pleasant, cool, shady and flowing with fresh water; in the variety of their groves and in the sweet song of the birds, they afford abundant recreation and delight to the senses, and in their solitude and silence, they refresh us and give rest. These valleys are what my Beloved is to me".

["Saint John of the Cross" was a sixteenth century Spanish mystic and a major figure of the Counter-Reformation. He was greatly admired by Pope John Paul II, who based his doctoral dissertation on John of the Cross' life, and is now considered by some as a mystic himself. Again, pantheistic notions, as expounded upon and expressed by the mystics, is reiterated: "all the goodness present in the realities and experiences of this world 'is present in God ... or more properly, in each of these sublime realities is God'" (emph. added). Notice that this is "because the mystic experiences the intimate connection between God and all beings, and thus feels that 'all things are God'" (emph. added). And despite the declaration that "the finite things of this world are {not} really divine," there is no effort put forth to "condemn" or repudiate this clearly pantheistic idea. Rather,

the equating of nature with God is embraced with the excuse that the mystic "cannot separate this experience from God (i.e., he "feels that 'all things are God'"), so therefore he "perceives that the interior awe being lived has to be entrusted to the Lord." This last statement is at best puzzling and seems irrational. If "standing awestruck before a mountain" (or anything of nature), the mystic "cannot separate this experience from God" and accordingly equates nature with God, then is not this experiential "awe being lived" by him tantamount to idolatry? (see Deuteronomy 4: 15-19; Romans 1: 20-23.). What exactly would have "to be entrusted to the Lord" of the "Lord" is nature and the mystic "perceives" God as such? This appears to be little more than an example of the "double-talking" which we referred to in the introduction. The remaining segment of this paragraph is a selection taken from The Spiritual Canticle, a poem by John of the Cross, which is reminiscent of the biblical book, The Song of Solomon. While the verses here quoted from this poem sound like they have a certain beauty similar to portions of The Song of Solomon, Francis presents them to show, at the very least, the close union that the mystics perceive exists between nature and God; one in which the line of distinction between the two coalesces into one through the mystic experience. Thus, the "'mountains are what my Beloved (God) is to me ... (the) valleys are what my Beloved (God) is to me.'" (emph. added).]

235. The Sacraments are a privileged way in which nature is taken up by God to be-

come a means of mediating supernatural life. Through our worship of God, we are invited to embrace the world on a different plane. Water, oil, fire and colours are taken up in all their symbolic power and incorporated in our act of praise. The hand that blesses is an instrument of God's love and a reflection of the closeness of Jesus Christ, who came to accompany us on the journey of life. Water poured over the body of a child in Baptism is a sign of new life. Encountering God does not mean fleeing from this world or turning our back on nature. This is especially clear in the spirituality of the Christian East. "Beauty, which in the East is one of the best loved names expressing the divine harmony and the model of humanity transfigured, appears everywhere: in the shape of a church, in the sounds, in the colours, in the lights, in the scents". For Christians, all the creatures of the material universe find their true meaning in the incarnate Word, for the Son of God has incorporated in his person part of the material world, planting in it a seed of definitive transformation. "Christianity does not reject matter. Rather, bodiliness is considered in all its value in the liturgical act, whereby the human body is disclosed in its inner nature as a temple of the Holy Spirit and is united with the Lord Jesus, who himself took a body for the world's salvation".

[This paragraph is heavily influenced by Pope John Paul II's, May 9, 1995, Apostolic Letter: Oriente Lumen , par. 11. It brings "The Sacraments" explicitly into focus within this Section as "a privileged way in which nature is taken up by God to become

a means of mediating supernatural life. This is an idea which links the sacraments with nature in the effecting of "supernatural life." And while some are aware that the Orthodox / Catholic type of churches believe that the sacraments possess within themselves the ability to impart supernatural grace, fewer understand their connection with nature and what these churches teach concerning how this is (supposedly) accomplished. "Water, oil, fire and colours ... in all their symbolic power" are associated with "our act of praise ... God's love and a reflection of the closeness of Jesus Christ ... Baptism (as) a sign of new life," and are used to demonstrate that "fleeing from this world or turning our back on nature" is not conducive to "encountering God." This summary is basically true if we understand that the "symbolic power" of material things (the sacraments / nature) is purely representative of spiritual realities and not the realities themselves. It is on this point that perhaps the greatest line of demarcation between Orthodox / Catholic denominations and Protestant denominations has historically been drawn. Sadly, this line is rapidly disappearing as the Protestant Churches eagerly continue embracing the unscriptural and (even) blasphemous traditions, teachings and practices of Rome and her sister churches. Notice, that Francis now gives a note of recognition to "the Christian East," praising them for their spiritual clarity by quoting from John Paul II's aforementioned letter: "'Beauty ... one of the best loved names ... appears everywhere: in the shape of a church, in the sounds, in the colours, in the lights, in the

scents.'" In the same segment of the letter, shortly before this statement, John Paul II places the quote within the following contextual framework: "This is why the liturgy is heaven on earth, and in it the Word who became flesh imbues matter with a saving potential which is fully manifest in the sacraments: there, creation communicates to each individual the power conferred on it by Christ" (emph. added). Francis, besides giving a nod to achieving full unity with the East, is also promoting the (supposed) liturgical union of matter with the divine - "fully manifest in the sacraments" - by continuing to further quote John Paul II from the same letter: "'Christianity does not reject matter. Rather, bodiliness is considered in all its value in the liturgical act, whereby ... its inner nature as a temple of the Holy Spirit ... is united with the Lord Jesus ... for the world's salvation." (emph. added). It is at this juncture in the encyclical where the papal stance on ecology and its relationship to worship of the divine comes into the sharpest focus. For the remaining two paragraphs of this section, the importance of a major sacrament within the Liturgy, the Eucharist, is set forth - particularly stressing the 'how' and 'why' of its connection with matter / nature.]

236. It is in the Eucharist that all that has been created finds its greatest exaltation. Grace, which tends to manifest itself tangibly, found unsurpassable expression when God himself became man and gave himself as food for his creatures. The Lord, in the culmination of the mystery of the Incarnation, chose to reach our intimate depths through a fragment of matter. He comes

not from above, but from within, he comes that we might find him in this world of ours.

[*The Eucharist (Gr., eukharistia: "thanksgiving") is explicitly referenced eight times in this one paragraph alone. The Orthodox / Catholic denominations basically teach that the Lord's Supper (the Eucharist) is a transubstantiated sacrifice. This is especially true in the Roman Church where the Eucharistic rite is referred to as the Sacrifice of the Mass. An integral element of the Mass is the concept of transubstantiation; a teaching which states that the bread and wine used in the Lord's Supper, through the words of consecration by a properly ordained priest, undergo a miraculous, supernatural "change of substance" into the actual, real body and blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, while the consecrated "species" retains all the qualities of bread and wine (the "accidents" of smell, taste, touch, etc.), it is actually no longer bread and wine but the real, living, undivided, divine person of the glorified Christ. Simply put, the consecrated bread and wine are the Lord Jesus and continue remaining so thereafter. In other words, matter (nature) through the utterance of the priest, becomes "God!" Is this not a form of pantheism (matter / nature is God)? Now, take a closer look at these first three sentences in this paragraph. Where does "all that has been created {find} its greatest exaltation (?) ... in the Eucharist!" Where does "Grace ... manifest itself tangibly ... when God himself ... gave himself as food for his creatures (?) ... in the Eucharist!" How did "The Lord ... {choose} to reach our intimate*

*depths (?) ... through a fragment of matter!" (i.e., "the Eucharist!")! And, in what does "He {come} ... from within ... that we might find him (God) in this world of ours (?) ... in the Eucharist!" (all *emph. added*). Presently, under the guise of environmentalism, the Vatican covertly continues promoting its counterfeit system of false worship progressively before the world.]*

In the Eucharist, fullness is already achieved; it is the living centre of the universe, the overflowing core of love and of inexhaustible life. Joined to the incarnate Son, present in the Eucharist, the whole cosmos gives thanks to God. Indeed the Eucharist is itself an act of cosmic love: "Yes, cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world". The Eucharist joins heaven and earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation. The world which came forth from God's hands returns to him in blessed and undivided adoration:

[*The supposed awesomeness of the Roman Catholic view of the Eucharist continues. "The incarnate Son (Jesus), present in the Eucharist (not symbolically or typologically but literally, actually and in reality), ... is the living centre of the universe, the overflowing core of love and of inexhaustible life ... In the Eucharist, fullness is already achieved ... the whole cosmos gives thanks to God ... Indeed the Eucharist is itself an act of cosmic love." Clearly, attributes of God which belong to the Deity alone, are likewise ascribed to specific*

*pieces of bread and measures of wine! As fantastic as these claims are - let alone the mind-boggling implications they invoke - it needs to be borne in mind that they are simply reiterations of doctrine which is derived primarily from the post-Apostolic tradition, embodied in the dogma of "Apostolic Succession," and held as an inspirational source of truth having an equal (or greater) authority with the Bible. The next sentence is another quote from Pope John Paul II; taken from his April 17, 2003, Encyclical Letter: Ecclesia De Eucharistia, par. 8. The quote bolsters the idea that the Eucharist, besides when, how and where "it is celebrated," possesses a universal characteristic "of cosmic love ... 'celebrated on the altar of the world.'" This "cosmic" understanding of the Eucharist supposedly "joins heaven and earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation." Accordingly, through the Eucharist: "The world which came forth from God's hands returns to him in blessed and undivided adoration." In the same encyclical which Francis quotes, John Paul II refers to this as "the *mysterium fidei* (Latin for "mystery of faith") which is accomplished in the Eucharist ... through the priestly ministry of the Church." Thus, the redemption and restoration of the world is done by the Church in its priestly mediation of the sacrament on earth; not by the Lord Jesus Christ, through His High Priestly Ministry in the heavenly sanctuary above.] >> *To be Continued.**

► **THE FIRST JESUIT POPE.** When Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected Supreme Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church on March 13, 2013, he was the first

Jesuit priest to ever officially be installed as the Pope. Almost immediately Pope Francis captured the public's eye through certain actions which the news media, in particular, attributed to his Jesuit affiliation. The positive persona that this pope outwardly projects to the world is understood by most as a reflection of the character of the Jesuit Order which he is a product of. All of this plays masterfully into the low-profile propaganda that the Order projects about itself today. Few know about its origin, history, and objectives beyond this modern era facade. With Jesuitic pontiffs in the Vatican, it behooves us all to find out before it's too late! ❖

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