

Faith and Reason from an Ecological and Interdisciplinary Perspective

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Abstract – This article articulates faith and reason as of the knowledge of Holy Trinity, that is the foundation of the faith and the basis of theological knowledge. This approach passes through the ecological dimension in an interdisciplinary perspective. Thus, we have a panoramic and contextualized reflection on the ecological problematic, as well as a valid contribution of theological science to this pertinent and current issue. From a Christian faith perspective and in-depth knowledge of God's Trinitarian mystery, reflection on life and its social, economic, cultural and political relations must have a new meaning. Ethics and spirituality that promote growth and their social and environmental relationships. Life on the planet is in the hands of the human family who must decide which path to follow, life or death. We should not prescind from the actual reference of humanity revealed by Jesus Christ in history. It has already shown us that an anthropic humanism without transcendence leads to the destruction not only of humankind itself but also of the reality, as happened in World War II. In other words, if we do not have a transcendent reference of humanity, we may fall to the existential void of our absolute nothingness. This work aims to relate theological knowing to other forms of knowledge, seeking a greater understanding of life and the cosmos, from an interdisciplinary perspective. For this reason, understanding complex thought as well as Teilhard's Natural Theology is going to give the tunes of this theological concert, which will rock our search for the perfect and definitive symphony, the simplest and softest song of existence.

Keywords – Ecology, Faith, Theology and Trinity.

I. INTRODUCTION

There has been much discussion about the Earth system recently, especially in the last two decades due to the impact of the human activity in all the globe, which has been causing a series of climatic phenomena, such as the greenhouse effect, which responsible for the global warming and the rising temperatures on Earth.

Man and environment disparities are evident, and it is made explicit by rich countries, which do not give up development and consumerism. The result could not be another but the growing pollution levels as well as natural resources depletion.

On the other hand, the so-called emerging countries seek at all costs to be in the same level as the world economic powers, for they exploit a significant number of natural resources, consequently compromising life on the planet, either by their indiscriminate extraction or by the consequences of the use and transformation of these resources.

This severe ecological crisis which has begun with the ferocious industrialization process is a reflection of the humanitarian crises that have extended over the centuries, as its causes are anthropic, that is, the human being is its primary cause.

Faced with an everyday worsening reality, we ask ourselves: what could we do to reverse this dramatic situation? Is there a solution to such a significant problem that strikes all humankind? What can we as a community of faith (Christians) do to contribute to the resolution of such a serious question? Which has our contribution been? Is there any hope anyway?

All these questions impose themselves and require an almost immediate response from us, as the fate of future generations and life on Earth is in danger and depends on our reactions and initiatives. Threatening life is and will always be not only a matter of faith but also a political, social, cultural, economic, technological, scientific and especially ecological issue.

In this regard, theology as a presupposed science of revealed faith data plays a vital role in the reflection and solution to the ecological crisis, since its mission is the affirmation of life in its totality. The environmental narrative linked with the theological discourse wants to update the pertinence and relevance of life in its entirety. Consequently, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and the ecological narrative interrelates in knowledge construction.¹

From a Christian faith perspective and in-depth knowledge of God's Trinitarian mystery, reflection on life and its social, economic, cultural and political relations must have a new meaning. Ethics and spirituality that promote growth and their social and environmental relationships. Life on the planet is in the hands of the human family who must decide which path to follow, life or death.

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¹ MARÇOLI, Amarildo. Trindade e ecologia: Uma abordagem da teologia trinitária de Jurgen Moltmann, na sua relação com o paradigma ecológico nas obras de Leonardo Boff. 2009. 284 f. Dissertação (Mestrado em

Teologia). Pontifícia Faculdade de Teologia Nossa Senhora da Assunção. São Paulo. 2009.

² "Theology," in the broad sense, means the science of God. In turn, this

this theological concert, which will rock our search for the perfect and definitive symphony, the simplest and softest song of existence.

II. THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS UNDER A THEOLOGICAL SCOPE

This work intends to offer an accredited word from theological science² on the environmental problem, which has increasingly reached global proportions. It is a matter of presenting the proper contribution from theological knowledge in its ethical-social approach from the dynamics of complexity. In this dialogical relationship of knowledge, we can evaluate the theology contribution to global ecological reflection, as well as its relevance to peoples and societies.

Our starting point is the source of the Christian mystery: The Holy Trinity, that is, the beginning and origin of all cosmic creation. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit coexist eternally intimately bound by a single nature, which guarantees and continually generates its perfect unity, and at the same time allows its diversity and peculiarity³, for the Trinity means three different Persons in a single substance or nature⁴. In this way, the Trinity is the principle and foundation of all created reality.

The Trinitarian mystery of God is known as the immanent Trinity, that is, the Trinity itself, in its perichoretic relation⁵. However, this mystery is made known by the Economy of Salvation⁶ that is, by the historical-salvific revelation of the Son of God, who reveals himself in human categories, presenting the divine face of the man and the human face of God.

The Trinitarian model is the highest goal of life and society, for it expresses communion and perfection in its totality while guaranteeing the plurality and singularity expressed in the divine Persons at the same time. Each Person is in essence, allowing the other to be itself, without divisions or separations, in a perfect communion of wills.

The fundamental goal that theology pursues is to present the understanding of Revelation and the content of faith.

expression has two meanings: objective and subjective. In the objective sense, it means the science that has God by the object; in the subjective one, the science that God himself possesses and communicates to men by grace. 1. In the subjective sense, theology is God's science of self and the created universe. God, the subsistent being, infinite and perfect, has its own and connatural purpose for himself. 2. In the objective sense, theology is the science that has as purpose God. This science can, in turn, be considered the sum of human knowledge about God (human knowledge, knowledge, Wissenschaft), or as the assimilation and intelligence by the man of this body of knowledge about God. Theology is the science about God in one way or another. LATOURELLE, Rene. *Teologia ciencia da salvacao*. Trans. Monges Beneditinos de Serra Clara. Sao Paulo: Paulinas, 1971. p. 11-14.

³ The peculiarity of the Father is to be inborn, to be generated by no one, and to be the source of all divinity; the peculiarity of the Son is to be begotten eternally by the Father, receiving all his substantial reality from the Father; the Holy Spirit peculiarity resides in the fact that IT distinctly comes from the Father alike the Son (not a second Son) or through the Son. BOFF, Leonardo. *Trindade e Sociedade. Serie II: O Deus que liberta o seu povo*. Col. Teologia e libertação. Rio de Janeiro: Vozes, 1987. p. 75.

⁴ Gregory Nazianzeno formula (329-390): "One nature (ousia) and three persons (Hypostases)" was devoted in the Council of Constantinople I (381), indicating the contribution of the Cappadocian's fathers on the nature of the unit and the peculiarity existing in the three persons of the

Thus, the exact center of its reflection must be the contemplation of the very mystery of the one and Triune God. Consequently, we have the reflection on the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God: He becomes man and then walk to passion and death, a mystery that will lead to his glorious resurrection and ascension to the right Father, from where he will send the Spirit of truth to constitute and inspire his Church. As a result, the first obligation of theology is to understand the kenosis of God, a great mystery for the human mind, because it is unsustainable for us the very fact that suffering and death expresses love offered without asking anything in return⁷.

From the anthropological point of view, we can affirm that man is a religious being, that is, that carries with it a profound spiritual dimension which is capable of God and open to transcendence. Even when not professing any faith, this ability is pulsing and sometimes intriguing. Furthermore, man somehow seeks transcendence, questioning his existence and his ultimate end.

From this perspective, theology can offer us a singular contribution, since it focuses on life in all its depth and meaning. The theology of creation, for example, reminds us that the human being lives the Adamic condition of son Earth (for it is clay ...) and son of Heaven (... modeled by the divine Potter)⁸, and therefore has a particular vocation to life and life in fullness (cf. Jn 10,10).

In the account of paradise, the human being has a mission: to "cultivate and keep the garden" (Gn 2:15). That means that he is responsible for all the life on earth rather than his own alone, as God he participated in the work of creation in a privileged way, establishing him in his image and likeness (Gn 1:26)⁹.

The ecological crisis has been aggravated in the last two decades, and therefore, the responsibility for "garden cultivation" is urgent. This cultivation is not an obligation of those who are Christian or have faith, but it is the task of all religions, peoples, nations, and cultures. In short, of every human being who lives on Planet Earth, for it is our unique common home (ecumene).

Trinity. Idem.

⁵ Perichoresis means first of all the involvement of one Person with the other two. Each Divine Person penetrates the other and lets himself be penetrated by it. This interpenetration is an expression of the love and life that constitute the divine nature. It is proper for love to communicate; it is natural for life to expand and want to multiply. Thus the three divine meet from all eternity in an infinite outpouring of love and life toward the other. BOFF, Leonardo. *A Santissima Trindade é a melhor comunidade*. Petrópolis – RJ: Vozes, 2009. p. 40.

⁶ Irenaeus of Lion is the first to use this term in his theology, narrating the salvific events wrought by God in Christ, revealing the magnanimity of his design. Irenaeus, of Lion. *Patristic*. Trans. Lourenço Costa. III. São Paulo: Paulinas, 1995. p. 338. Economy comes from the Greek word *oikonomia* (*Oikos* + *nomos*) which means the rule of the house, the administration of the house. God's saving economy means God's plan for men to make them partakers of his life, his love, his happiness. This plan is manifested in the history of salvation. BECKHAUSER. Frei Alberto. *Celebrar a Vida Cristã*. 4ª Ed. Petrópolis – RJ: Vozes, 1988. p. 24.

⁷ JOHN PAUL II. *Fides et Ratio*. Apostolic Letter. 3. ed. São Paulo: Loyola, 1998, n.93.

⁸ MAÇANEIRO, Marcial. *Religiões & ecologia: cosmovisão, valores, tarefas*. São Paulo: Paulinas, 2011. p. 71.

⁹ KRAUSS, Heinrich; KÜCHLER, Max. *As origens: Um estudo de Gênesis 1-11*. Trad. Paulo F. Valério. São Paulo: Paulinas, 2007. p. 86.

The human family must organize itself to guarantee the possibility of life for the future generations, and especially for the poor and oppressed who suffer most from the ecological crisis and face survival risk. It is a question of life or death; therefore, it is necessary faith that works through spirituality, which means a more harmonious and integrated way of living with God and His creatures.

In this sense, we should not think of salvation only in a personal or institutional perspective as it must gain a vast reach denoting recapitulation¹⁰ of all things in Christ (cf. Col 1, 15-20).

III. FAITH AND REASON: A TENSE AND INTENSE RELATIONSHIP!

At the beginning of Christianity, the Apostle Paul debated with "some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers" (Acts 17:18). Contact with other publics outside the Jewish ones made dialogue with different cultures necessary. Paul's speech in the Areopagus illustrates this effort; the first Christians had to resort to the natural knowledge of God and

the voice of the moral conscience of men (cf. Rom 1: 19-21, 2: 14-15, Acts 14: 16-17) to succeed in evangelization.

The command of Jesus Christ to the disciples to go everywhere "unto the ends of the earth" (Acts 1: 8), to spread the truth revealed by Him, made the Christian community very early realize the universality of the proclamation and obstacles resulting from the diversity of cultures¹¹. Notwithstanding, what is at stake here is the relationship between faith and reason.

Throughout history, this relationship was marked by a certain degree of tension, which is positive, because stress generates reflection. Nevertheless, in many periods of history the valorization of one to the detriment of the other frequently caused a radical polarization. This separation drama has generated extreme consequences namely the enlightenment¹², rationalism¹³ and positivism¹⁴ just to name a few.

On the other hand, the exclusive focus on faith also marked history negatively, because religion, when absolutized, becomes a lethal weapon with unimaginable reaches. Many examples throughout history corroborate it¹⁵.

¹⁰ The Pauline understanding of the scope of the saving work of Christ leads him to make statements that seem to speak of a final restoration of all. (Contrary to the view initiated by Origen, the phrase *apokatastasis pantōn* in Acts 3:21 does not indicate the conversion of all, but the "restoration of all things" [see Oepke, 391, the sense of Pantone as neutral], or the universal renewal of the earth, the hope of the Old Testament prophets to be fulfilled through Jesus Christ in his parousia, according to Peter's sermon). HAWTHORNE, Gerald F.; MARTIN, Ralph P.; REID, Daniel G. *Dicionário de Paulo e suas cartas*. In: Universalismo. Trad. Barbara Theoto Lambert. São Paulo: Vida Nova, Paulus, Loyola, 2008. p. 1218.

¹¹ Ibid. *Fides et Ratio*, No. 70.

¹² The Enlightenment is, therefore, the vast and complex European spiritual movement which is characterized by full confidence in the ability of reason to ward off the haze of the unknown and the mystery that clouds the human spirit and enlightens them to make them better and happier men. It emerged in the eighteenth century and inspired several later movements such as the Napoleonic Revolutions and the severe persecutions of the Church and its members. ZAGHENI, GUIDO. *A idade moderna: Curso de História da Igreja III*. Trad. José Maria de Almeida. São Paulo: Paulus, 1999. p. 328.

¹³ Rationalism: I - Terminology and meaning: At first sight, rationalism expresses nothing more than what is proper to reason, the scope of its powers and the field of its activity. This means that "reasonable" or according to reason is equivalent to "rationalist" or according to rationalism. This definition was the pattern with which we often interpreted phenomena of modern and contemporary life. An example would be the fact that the various interpretations of the world and life are usually considered rationalistic or irrational. The language itself is opposed to such simplification... Rationalism has oscillated between the fascination of its program, in which the rationality is enforced, the source, in turn, of justice and freedom, and deception due not only to the obstacles encountered in its realization but mainly to the internal contradictions of the rationalist conception itself. The story of the success of rationalism is also that of its failure. We may suppose that this incessant shuttle that goes back to the dawn of philosophical thought is already part of human destiny, since it is not conceived that human life cannot be based on irrational ground, which, as such, intend to be universal and therefore to have equal validity to that of the various phenomena, no matter which their nature is - something so inevitable and constructive, as with this principle the being of all the things is questioned. In this perspective of recognition, even of exaltation of the different, the theme of rationalism acquires, in contrast with the emptiness that has left and continues to leave, renewed relevance. The rationalism of the XVII-XVIII centuries: ... Rationalism, as developed throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, supposes to a good extent a progressive fall from the way centuries ago reason had

understood itself. From considering oneself as immersed and rooted in the mystery of the Trinity, one conceives God according to his measure. In a first state, it is still seen as natural, on the part of the reason, with the Absolute, transcendent, infinite, etc., but it tends to eliminate what is formally a mystery, to allow what is being filtered and distilled as a clear and distinct idea. The objective of the intellectual activity is not the Trinity at all, but the unique and simple God. This God was regarded as a personal being, though not in the Trinitarian sense. In a second phase, rationalism drifted toward complete depersonalization of God, which in a somewhat vague way is conceived as "*Omnitudo realitatis*," although it is still considered as the supreme being. In a third phase, what was initially constituted to dispense with the mystery will end in denial of God's reality, since it has been conceived as a mere projection of human activity. PIKAZA, Xabier; SILANES, Nereo. *Dicionário teológico: O Deus cristão*. Racionalismo. In: Mariano Álvarez Gómez. Trad. I.F.L. Ferreira, Honório Dalbosco e equipe. São Paulo: Paulus, 1988. p. 763-766.

¹⁴ Philosophical doctrine of Auguste Comte (1798-1857), who attributed capital importance to positive science for the progress of culture. It admitted as a deviation and anomaly to the Religion of Humanity, professing a radical historicism. In Brazil, its connections with the famous "Religious Question" of 1872 are well known. SCHLESINGER, Hugo; PORTO, Humberto. *Dicionário enciclopédico das religiões*. In: Positivismo. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 1995. p. 2092.

¹⁵ Inquisition: - (Catholicism) Ecclesiastical court for the preservation and defense of the Catholic religion. Given their competence to investigate and punish for lack of loyalty, many converted Jews fell under their jurisdiction. One of the darkest periods in the history of human persecution. The Court of the Holy Office was established in 1184 by the Council of Verona as a permanent body of investigation and combat against heresies. In 1233, Pope Gregory IX gave the Holy Inquisition a proper functioning, with an internal regiment of how to prosecute those guilty of Judaism, Protestantism, witchcraft, usury, etc. Tortures were the most commonly used means of obtaining the confessions of persons who were accused, often anonymously, or only by the testimony of a single witness. Whoever was found guilty, besides having his property confiscated, was executed in the club or in a bonfire. Pope Innocent IV officially sanctioned the use of torture in 1252. In the year 1480, the Inquisition settled in Spain and 1540 in Portugal. It is calculated that more than thirty thousand heretics were burned in these inquisitions. In 1821 it was abolished from Portugal and, in 1834, in Spain. The Inquisition developed its maximum activity in the Latin countries, where it gradually extended the scope of its powers: in addition to the heresy itself, it also punished the sacrilegious, the blasphemers, the sodomites, the authors of sorcery and the sorcerers, the magicians, and the alchemists. But neither in France nor Italy did the Inquisition succeed in completely suppressing heresy. Ibid., P. 1920. In 1480, the Inquisition

Meanwhile, faith is in part rational or rationalizable, as theology, that is, lucid exposition of revealed data, accomplishes the threefold formal characterization of all science, which is to be critical, systematic and self-amplifying¹⁶. In this sense, faith is superior to reason. As St Augustine affirms, faith purifies the heart, so that it may grasp and support the light of the great reason (*magne rationis*). And so it was right that the Prophet said: " If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established. " (Isa 7: 9)¹⁷.

Two things are clearly distinguished here: it advises to believe first so that we can understand what we believe next. Therefore, it is reason itself that requires the precedence of faith over reason. If this precept were not rational, it would be irrational. (...) There is no doubt that the same reason, which gives precedence to faith over reason when it comes to the great questions that cannot yet be understood, must itself precede faith ... "¹⁸.

Hence one cannot take the place of the other since each has its specificity and singularity in the search for truth and the fullness of knowledge. Both are complemented by an incredible dialogue of understanding, in which the human spirit can rise to the absolute, for God desires that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2: 4).

Faith is born of a profound encounter with God, who reveals himself coming to meet us, and this encounter is guided by the dynamics of love, for love seeks union with the beloved. Faith transforms the whole person, precisely insofar as people open themselves to love; it is in this intertwining of faith with love that we understand the form of knowledge of faith, its strength of conviction, its ability to illuminate our steps¹⁹.

"this light is that light which is God; in fact, this is the creature, that is the Creator; this is done; that the one who has done it; It is mutable because it wants what it did not want, and it knows what it did not know, and it remembers what it had forgotten. However, that one persists unchanging in will, truth and eternity, and then for us it is the beginning of existence, the reason of knowing, the law of love; then, for all animate and irrational beings, it is the nature by which they live, it is the vigor by which they feel, it is the movement by which they seek. So also for all bodies it is the measure for which they subsist, the number for which they are embellished, the weight for which they are

ordained. Therefore, that light is the inseparable Trinity, the One God "²⁰.

The encounter with God enlightens human existence and gives it sense and meaning, for it enlarges the horizons of history by revealing the human face of God and the divine face of man. This encounter called the paschal mystery of Christ indicates the revelation of God in human categories through Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, incarnated in the history of man.

Jesus is the second Person of the Most Holy Trinity. Therefore, He is God even with the Spirit and the Father. Every divine action is a Trinitarian action performed in the communion-participation of the sacred Three. It is imperative to remember that these actions are appropriate: executed by one Person in communion with the other two.

Therefore, the revelation of the God-Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - is at the base of every Christian theology. Indeed, the Trinitarian Revelation in Christ "is theology itself, the meaning that Greek Fathers would give to theology"²¹. Thus, when seeking God, one is seeking the Trinity, since the Trinity is the foundation of all created reality, existing by itself. In the Trinity all things have existence because the Holy Trinity imposes itself upon our religious conscience²².

At present, the teaching of the Church through Pope Francis, in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, as of November 2013, presents in numbers 242 and 243 a positive and dialogical vision between faith and reason. Pope Francis affirms that the dialogue between science and religion is also part of the evangelizing action that favors peace²³.

[...] Evangelization is attentive to scientific progress to enlighten it with the light of faith and natural law, to ensure that it always respects the centrality and supreme value of the human person in all phases of his life [...] ²⁴.

Finally, faith is not only a piece of knowledge about God but an ethos, a behavior of life and love, therefore it must be proposed and never imposed. It is a path that must be followed inspired by the Spirit, and this implies spirituality, that is, a conscious, coherent and demanding way of acting.

As we destroy irresponsibly, we must now regenerate urgently. The salvation of the Earth does not fall from Heaven. It will be the fruit of the new co-responsibility and the renewed care of the whole human family. Ethics and spirituality belong here²⁵.

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¹⁶ BOFF, Clodovis. *Teoria do Método Teológico*. 5. ed. Petrópolis – RJ: Vozes, 2004. p. 24.

¹⁷ Ibid., P. 27.

¹⁸ Idem.

¹⁹ FRANCISCO. *Lumen Fidei: sobre a fé*. Carta Encíclica. São Paulo: Paulus/Loyola, 2013. n° 26.

²⁰ AYOUB, Cristiane Negreiros Abbud. *Iluminação Trinitária em Santo Agostinho*. São Paulo: Paulus, 2011. p. 9.

²¹ ZAK, Lubomir. *Trindade e imagem: aspectos da teologia mística de Vladimir Losskij*. São Paulo: Editora Ave-Maria, 2012. p. 66.

²² Ibid.

²³ FRANCISCO. *Evagelli Gaudium*. Exortação Apostólica. 1. ed. São Paulo: Paulinas, 2013.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ BOFF, Leonardo. *Cuidar da Terra, proteger a vida: como evitar o fim do mundo*. Rio de Janeiro: Record, 2010. p. 72.

²⁵ "Jesuit, geologist, and paleontologist, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-

IV. TEILHARD DE CHARDIN AND THE NATURAL THEOLOGY

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin²⁶ (1881-1955) conceives salvation as an evolutionary process of cosmic scope, for as a scientist he thinks of faith and its implications from the prism of science, relating scientific data with God's Revelation in a new and innovative perspective.

(...) The living Church: the seed of super-vitalization established in the bosom of the Noosphere by the actual appearance of Christ ... gradually sustaining the whole growing mass of the world, and converging concentrically towards the same apex (...) to conclude (...) a last and supreme definition of the Omega point: focus at the same single and complex time, where, consolidated by the Christic person, three fitted centers (we could say) discover themselves, ever deeper: immanent ("natural") of the human-cosmic cone; more deeply, in the middle, the immanent ("supernatural") summit of the "ecclesiastical" or Christic cone; and, finally, entirely in the heart, the transcendent Trinitarian and divine center. The complete Pleroma takes place under the mediating action of Christ-Omega (TEILHARD, apud FASANO, 2009, page 43)²⁷.

Teilhard's scientific vision opens a fascinating perspective on this dialogical relationship between science and faith since it seeks to give a new meaning to Christian teachings by supporting them with evolution²⁸. A very daring and demanding task that cost him many misunderstandings and even exile. However, his contribution expresses a true contemporary dialogue between science and theology²⁹.

Even though not being a systematic theologian professional, Teilhard's reflections on the meaning of the universe from a Christian perspective offer new insights that the formal theology of nature cannot disregard³⁰.

Teilhard began to elaborate a new vision on Christianity and the cosmos³¹ because he was no longer satisfied with the answers of the theology of his time, precisely during the period of preparation of the Vatican I, a time for the affirmation of dogmas and condemnations of the modern world. Teilhard was frowned upon for a long time, both by

the official Church and by his superiors, but he did not abandon his revolutionary attempt to give the reasons for his faith.

"The most important [of Teilhard] lies in the fact that he opened the dimension of hope for our time again. The religious aspect of the theory of evolution came at a time when the world - or at least the European and American world - had grown tired of existentialism and dialectical theology. This return to the analysis of one's existence, that scorpoid contortion of poison stinging against oneself, this flirtation with evil, that excavation in the vast depths of one's being had led to the petrification of the thought"³².

His elaborate knowledge of natural history led him to a radical interpretation of Christian teachings about God, Christ, creation, incarnation, redemption, eschatology in the light of a continual evolution of the world and life³³. Thus, Teilhard performs a powerful cosmic synthesis that reconciles science and faith. The purpose of his thought is the future of humanity, for which Teilhard calls all men to work for the salvation of all³⁴.

Teilhard wondered about the future of the Earth and affirmed that the society underwent a crisis of progress³⁵. His clarity was blunt, for he knew that from the actions and attitudes of everyday life the blossoming and the successfulness of all evolution of the earth depend on³⁶. The success of the world is the fruit of its material progress, capable of creating the necessary and favorable conditions to the growth and unfolding of its mental and spiritual possibilities³⁷.

By our collaboration, which he stimulates, the Christ is consumed, reaches his fullness, from every creature. It is St Paul who tells us: We imagine perhaps that the creation, after so long, is finished. It is a mistake; it seeks to be more beautiful even in the highest areas of the world. " Omnis creatura ad huc ingemiscit et parturit " ("All creation to the present moment groans in labor pains"). And it is in perfecting that we serve, even on the humblest work of our hands. These are the meaning and price of our deeds. Under the Matter-Soul-Christ interconnection, whatever we do, we will bring back to God a portion of the being He desires. Through each of our works, we work, atomically, but, to

1955) had chosen academic teaching and began his teaching as assistant professor of geology at the Institut Catholique de Paris. But some confidentially written notes of original sin, in which he sought a bonding between dogmatic-theological data and the modern evolutionary view, are at the root of his definitive departure from academic teaching. He lived in China, with periodic stays in Paris and trips to other parts of the world, for about twenty years, from 1926 to 1946, engaged in the scientific work of research and cataloging of paleontological material and missions of study. He returned to Paris at the end of World War II, but shortly afterwards, in 1950, shortly after the publication of the encyclical *Humani Generis*, he had to return to the exile, moving to New York, where continued working as a researcher and where death kisses him on Easter in 1955". GIBELLINI, R. *A teologia do Século XX*. Trad. João Paixão Neto. São Paulo: Loyola, 1998. p. 175

²⁷ FASANO, Anderson. *O pensamento escatológico de Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*. 2009. 120 f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Teologia). Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo. São Paulo. 2009.

²⁸ HAUGHT, John F. *Cristianismo y ciencia: Hacia una teología de la naturaleza*. Trad. José Manuel Lozano Gotor. Maliaño (Cantabria): Editorial Sal Terrae, 2009. p. 109-110. The Teilhardian notion of

evolution is therefore equivalent to a law of phenomena: a typical temporal convergence of reality in a state of continuous genesis. A convergence that goes from cosmic dust to matter, the formation of atoms; from atoms to molecules and from them to viruses, following cells, plants, animals and, finally, man. Not only material growth but also psychic. The Teilhardian universe is, therefore, a system in the process of organization: complexity and interiorization. PIN, Alex Gonçalves. *PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN: Uma perspectiva teológica para a juventude*. In: *REB*. Petrópolis: Vozes, n.293, 2014. p. 126.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

³¹ *Idem*.

³² HAUGHT, John F. Op. Cit. P. 111.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

³⁴ CUYPERS, Hubert. *Pró ou Contra Teilhard*. Trad. Frei Eliseu Lopes, O.P. Cadernos Teilhard 1. 2.ed. Petrópolis - RJ: Vozes, 1969. p. 7.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

build the Pleroma, that is, to bring the Christ a little finishing³⁸.

Teilhardian thought fulfilled a genuine reconciliation between faith and reason, matter and spirit, man and nature, with the ultimate goal of the God-Omega, unconditional Love. His friendly and reconciling vision of cosmic reality presents a horizon of hope through the commitment to the active and voluntary collaboration of man in the great evolutionary movement, which drags the universe, with humanity, always forward³⁹.

As Teilhard sees it, human beings possess a supernatural vocation which goes beyond their material and contingent condition, and for that reason, we discover all our dignity, "final of evolution,". The future of humanity lies on its responsibility and freedom⁴⁰. However, this implies that the creature must work if it wants to be better created⁴¹, it must actively participate in the creation and its evolutionary process, as it has been called for it from its beginnings (cf. Gen 1: 27-31).

There is a fundamental terrestrial vocation of the man that he has to accomplish for the simple fact of being a man. It belongs to its structural and ontological status, whether it is the primitive man or the homo sapiens-sapiens of the post-industrialized era. We must realize what we are and what God wanted when he placed us within the so-called *on the way to the celestial nation history*. This vocation is before any other earthly vocation. The first vocation of the terrestrial man consists of him being a man. Man will realize his humanity if he continually keeps in relation with the totality of the reality that is in him and with what surrounds him. Man arises as a knot of relationships facing all directions⁴².

Teilhard's works reveal the synthesis of the two truths, the outside and the inside, which is, the Church and Science⁴³. Teilhard has always been a man of faith and a faithful, as well as of science and research, and has never overvalued one against the other. Both walked together, in

harmony and balance, leading him to go beyond the boundaries and far ahead of his time. His transit through the two strands of life and knowledge has received much criticism from both the Church and scientists⁴⁴.

However, his thinking represented a watershed in the reading and understanding of "materialistic science," for he proposes a spiritualistic reading of scientific data, without giving up its status⁴⁵. "Matter is the matrix of spirit"⁴⁶. The spirit progresses towards a progressive liberation of this matter and finally continues its transcendent existence, free from the laws of physics, space and time⁴⁷.

Concerning faith and the Church, his contribution broadened the horizons of theological science in the reflection on nature. Teilhard stated that the phenomenon of thought (noosphere)⁴⁸ and the subject world are considered part of nature, and are not strangers to it, as modern materialist science conceived.

The more comprehensive empiricism of Teilhard, which returns the domain of thought to its real home in nature, questions the materialist metaphysics of scientific naturalism that underlies the modern assumption that the universe has no purpose. At the same time, Teilhard's refusal to separate the subjectivity - or thought - from nature as a whole offers theology a way to give meaning to the Christian belief that God acts in life most intimately and effectively, while always mysterious⁴⁹.

"My Father works until now, and I also work" (Jn 5:17). This gospel phrase may indicate the dynamism of the work of creation, for God did not create and abandoned his work, but He is continually working in this dynamic process. In this way, the idea of evolution is not an absurdity opposed to the concept of God's creation but allows us a greater understanding of creation itself as a divine process of human collaboration such as Teilhard.

As far as creation is concerned, the theory of evolution is no longer disputed today, but the purpose of the attempts is to explain how it occurred. Several theologians and also

³⁸ CHARDIN, Pierre Teilhard de. *O Meio Divino: Ensaio de vida interior*. Trad. Celso Márcio Teixeira. 2.ed. Petrópolis - RJ: Vozes, 2014. p. 29.

³⁹ Ibid., P. 11.

⁴⁰ Ibid., P. 8.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² BOFF, Leonardo. *O destino do homem e do mundo: ensaio sobre a vocação humana*. 12.ed. Petrópolis - RJ: Vozes, 2012. p. 44.

⁴³ FREIRE-MAIA, Newton. *Criação e evolução: Deus, o acaso e a necessidade*. Petrópolis - RJ: Vozes, 1986. p. 166.

⁴⁴ Ibid., P. 168.

⁴⁵ Ibid., P.174.

⁴⁶ Evolution is a law that governs all phenomena; is a convergence marked by material complexity and psychic interiority. In the words of Teilhard Chardin, complexity-consciousness. Cosmic dust coming out from the Big Bang becomes more complex changing into the matter. After that, the matter becomes more complex, and we have life. And here is the great question and the great conclusion projected by Teilhard Chardin: what would be the result if we considered the complexification of life, the complexification elevated to infinity? The answer is immediate: The Spirit. PIN, Alex Goncalves. PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN ..., p. 127.

⁴⁷ CUYPERS, Hubert. Op. Cit. P. 12.

⁴⁸ The noosphere, the Greek *noûs*, "spirit", "psyche" and *sphaîra* at Latin *Sphaera*, "sphere", Teilhardian neologism, is the thinking layer (human) from Earth, constituting a new realm, a specific whole and organic, on a path of unanimity (material unification, spiritual union), and distinct from the Biosphere (living unreflected layer), though nourished and sustained by it. The Noosphere as we shall see is an already given reality, but also

a value to be realized freely, from the Hominization. The Noosphere, hyperphysical reality, has in Humanity its concrete base, and therefore, planetary dimensions.

"Well, what we propose here, despite what this perspective may have at first approximation, of disproportionate and fantastic, is to look at the thinking envelope of the Biosphere as being the same order of zoological grandeur (or, if one wishes, telluric) of the Biosphere itself. The more we consider it, the more this ultimate solution seems to be the only authentic one. If we do not give up making Man enter into the general history of terrestrial unity without mutilating it, to him - and without disorganizing it- it is necessary to place it above it, without, however, uprooting it from it. And all this amounts, in one way or another, to suppose, above the animal Biosphere, a human sphere, the sphere of reflection, of conscious invention, of the felt union of souls (the Noosphere, if you will), and conceive in origin of this new entity, a phenomenon of transformation: The Hominization. Humanity cannot be less than this without losing what constitutes its most assured physical characteristics, or (which would also be lamentable) without becoming among the other terrestrial objects a Reality impossible to be located scientifically. Either it is an unprecedented and unmeasured fact - and then it does not enter our natural frameworks, to say: our Science is vain-, or it represents a new turn in the upward spiral of things - and in that case we see no other turn that corresponds to it, but the primordial organization of matter " (Cf. *L'homínisation. Introduction a une étude scientifique du phénomène humain*, 1925.). CHARDIN, Theilhar de. *O fenômeno humano*. Trad. José Luiz Archanjo. São Paulo: Cultrix, 1986. p. 210.

⁴⁹ HAUGHT, John F. Op. Cit. P. 117.

important scientists of nature believe that the appearance of the universe and the progressive development of life on Earth would go back to an intentional process that has in God its origin⁵⁰.

V. EDGAR MORIN AND THE COMPLEX THINKING

Edgar Morin states that, at first glance, complexity is a fabric (complexus: what is woven together) of associated heterogeneous constituents: it places the paradox of one and multiple⁵¹. In a second moment, complexity is effectively the fabric of events, actions, interactions, retroactions, determinations, accidents, which constitute our phenomenal world⁵².

This idea of complexity does not eliminate the imprecisions, the ambiguities, the uncertainties, the disorder, on the contrary, considers them an essential element for a holistic knowledge of the surrounding reality⁵³. It is unlike, however, the modern scientific paradigm created by Descartes, which separates the thinking subject (ego cogitans) and the understood thing (res extensa), that is, philosophy and science, and places as a principle of validity the "clear and distinct" which is understood as the disjunctive thinking itself⁵⁴.

This thought had its importance and contribution to the Western world, especially in the development of science and philosophy. However, the consequences of this fragmentary conception began to be felt more strongly in the twentieth century⁵⁵. To cite some of these consequences, I highlight the two great wars, the Holocaust and the Cold War.

This disjunction favors a one-dimensional view, which does not allow for scientific self-criticism, and for that reason, one must be aware of the nature and consequences of paradigms that mutilate knowledge and disfigure the real⁵⁶. We must take into account that our standards delimit the organization of our thinking, and have hidden principles that govern our view of things implicitly in our minds⁵⁷.

Unfortunately, by the mutilating and unidimensional vision, a high price has been paid for the human phenomena: mutilation cuts the flesh, bloodshed expands suffering. The inability to conceive the complexity of anthropo-social reality in its micro dimension (the individual being) and its macro dimension (the whole of planetary humanity) leads to endless tragedies and leads us to supreme disaster. We are told that politics "must" be simplistic and Manichean using its manipulative design that uses blind drives. But political strategy requires complex knowledge because it builds itself into action for and

against the uncertain, the chance, and the multiple sets of interactions and feedbacks⁵⁸.

Morin states that complex thinking came to us by the path of science, the one that had once rejected the idea of complexity⁵⁹. The fact is that the very development of physical science, obeying a single and determined law, revealing a perfect order of the world, finally led to the complexity of the real⁶⁰.

A hemorrhagic principle of degradation and disorder (according to the law of thermodynamics) was found in the physical universe, which contradicted the logic of a simple original form (atom), giving rise to extreme physical complexity⁶¹. Hence it was found that the cosmos is not a perfect machine, but a process in the process of disintegration and organization at the same time⁶².

We are still blind to the problem of complexity. The epistemological disputes between Popper, Kuhn, Lakatos, Feyerabend, etc., do no mention it. Now, this blindness is part of our barbarism. We need to understand that we are still in the barbarian era of ideas⁶³.

This paradigm shift must reach all areas of knowledge, especially technology, communications, cybernetics and new technologies that emerge overnight. The complex requires a thought that captures relations, interrelationships, mutual implications, multidimensional phenomena, which are realities that are simultaneously supportive and conflicting⁶⁴.

Theology as a science must follow this path; otherwise, it will be a kind of knowledge without incidence and consequence in an increasingly complex and relational society. The Christian proclamation must take into account these new agoras of culture and the multifaceted understanding of humankind. Transdisciplinarity has become a necessity not only of universities but all knowledge, for life is a complex fabric.

Today interdisciplinarity is no longer enough to solve the contemporary problems. We need to prepare citizens capable of facing the issues of their time⁶⁵.

Paradoxically, our ability to apprehend reality through the various means of technology and science allowed us to access a more complex, relational and dialogical knowledge. However, we are not yet ready to deal with complexity and its implications.

Nevertheless, the Teilhardian worldview seems to portray this new paradigm of complexity finely, because its trans disciplinary approach combines science, philosophy, and theology⁶⁶, considering the cosmos in its material and spiritual totality, as well as all its teo-anthropological potentiality.

⁵⁰ KRAUSS, Heinrich; KÜCHLER, Max. P. 62.

⁵¹ MORIN, Edgar. *Introdução ao Pensamento Complexo*. Trad. Eliane Lisboa. 4. ed. Porto Alegre - RS: Sulina, 2011. p. 13.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., P. 14.

⁵⁴ Ibid., P. 11.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Idem.

⁵⁷ Ibid., P. 10.

⁵⁸ Ibid., P. 14.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Idem.

⁶³ Ibid., P. 15-16

⁶⁴ MORIN, Edgar. *Educação e complexidade: os sete saberes e outros ensaios*. Edgar Morin; Maria da Conceição de Almeida, Edgard de Assis Carvalho, (orgs); Trad. Edgard de Assis Carvalho. 6. ed. São Paulo: Cortez, 2013. p. 22.

⁶⁵ Ibid., P. 27.

⁶⁶ VASCONCELOS, Aparecida Maria de. Op. Cit. P. 29.

⁶⁷ MORIN, Edgar. Op. Cit. P. 36.

In this way, inspired by the geopaleontologist and French Jesuit, theology can project itself into new horizons of human knowledge, even physical and "exact," to discover new unfoldings of its knowledge in the human fabric.

Christian theology is based on the Trinitarian model, in which unity and diversity are implicated and interrelated through the divine persons. Consequently, they are ones in their substance and multiples in their uniqueness. This fundamental fact of our Christian faith is indicative of the idea of complexity, which connects the one with the multiple, the whole with the parts, and finally considers reality in its totality, or preferably in its complexity.

Therefore, theology as science has an unimaginable future in this new paradigmatic era. Perhaps it may discover itself in a new way as the queen of sciences and the mystagogue of the most supreme knowledge, simpler and more relational and therefore complex. The challenge and task of the new evangelization are to present the content of the Christian message by relating it to the latest developments brought about by the paradigm of complexity.

One of the preliminary achievements in the study of the human brain is the comprehension that one of its superiorities over the computer is to be able to work with the insufficient and the vague; it is necessary, from that standing point, to accept a certain ambiguity and a precise ambiguity (in the relation subject/object, order/disorder, self-hetero-organization). It is essential to recognize phenomena, such as freedom or creativity, inexplicable outside the complex frame that is the only one to allow its presence⁶⁷.

VI. IS A NEW PLANETARY CIVILIZATION POSSIBLE?

Leonardo Boff in his work "Nova Era: Civilização Planetária"⁶⁸ makes a theoretical and multifactorial reflection of our current reality, which imposes itself as a new model of civilization. He points out that matter conceived as mass and energy led the way of the progress of cultures, especially from the nineteenth century onwards. Today we have the information, which has been widely developed by science and worked by the technique, thus generating a new paradigm and reorienting the directions of the current civilization.

We live in a new era: the era of the image, of scenarios and virtual reality, which increasingly gains space and meaning in the lives of the new generations. Hence, truth acquires a new meaning and veracity corresponds to the truth lived in a dynamic, open and complex way⁶⁹. The content is no longer restricted to the text itself but becomes

an image transporting us to the virtual and symbolic, where its reach expands and sometimes is completely lost.

The information society works with images and scenarios, each time trying to capture the movement of reality and its configurations from the set of relationships and contexts. The human being participates in these scenarios and captures the truth as it adapts to changing situations. Truth means capturing the meaning of the scenario, open to the totality of reality characterized by complexity, contradiction, complementarity, and evolution. Order-disorder-organization, as Ilya Prigogine has shown, constitute the underlying dynamics of reality. To be stuck in the text and the truth dictated and revealed in the text is to take a moment in the setting of history, to lose its evolutionary and open meaning⁷⁰.

Another very prominent and predominant feature of this new civilizing process is globalization, which is marked by economic data, in which all nations and states connect in a continuous network of interdependencies and dependencies⁷¹. However, the economic factor is together with other underlying factors such as ideologies, the search for spirituality⁷², values and even wars⁷³.

The Teilhardian thought defines that the spirit is the perfection of matter, for that reason, the matter is not enough for itself, as the evolution of matter is the spirit. Among them are deep connections due to the powerful incarnation of the Word, which Teilhard calls mysticism. Thus, all the sensitive and spirit-bearer⁷⁴.

Boff states that this new cosmological understanding has made us understand the universe as an immense, complex, contradictory, and vast complementary process that unites all living and inert beings by a web of relationships in such a way that nothing exists outside the relation⁷⁵.

In this sense, the paradigm of complexity has been launched and has launched its challenges to contemporary civilizations and culture. Complexity is not data to be considered, but a fact to be experienced by us and future generations. The complexity is not related exclusively to science, but above all to everyday life, where it seems generally absent⁷⁶.

Still, as regards the process of globalization, the war factor is revealing, since, around the two great wars (1914-1918 / 1939-1945) and the Gulf War (1991), the nations united in strange solidarity, aimed at the genocide and the deaths of thousands⁷⁷. Then the countries were united in search of elements which were common to all humankind, and the League of Nations (UN) was created, in other words, new forms of cooperation and relationship in favor of life in its totality.

Nevertheless, no cause, however noble and fundamental, was able to unite humanity in the process of relationship

⁶⁷ MORIN, Edgar. Op. Cit. P. 36.

⁶⁸ BOFF, Leonardo. *Nova Era: A civilização planetária*. São Paulo: Ática, 1994.

⁶⁹ Ibid., P. 11-25.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., P. 31-33.

⁷² Another factor in globalization is hunger and thirst for spirituality, reflection on the meaning of life and the ultimate meaning of the technological adventure that the human being has begun in the last four hundred years. There is a growing certainty that it is not enough to

accumulate and have more, to know more about the universe and to broaden our cosmic vision. Therefore, it is important to be more and develop our capacity to experience, dialogue and learn in contact with the different and with the absolute Otherness, conventionally called God. Ibid., P. 36.

⁷³ Ibid., P. 34.

⁷⁴ CHARDIN, Pierre Teilhard de. *O Meio Divino...*, p. 24-25.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ MORIN, Edgar. *Introdução ao Pensamento Complexo...*, p. 57.

⁷⁷ BOFF, Leonardo. *Nova Era: A civilização planetária...* p. 38.

and cooperation. Today more than two-thirds of the world's population is excluded from the basic conditions of life, living between the threshold of life or death, urging the awakening of a new global consciousness of humanity, where each perceives the need for relationships and connections in which we are all imbricated.

The process of evolution depends on the process of hominization⁷⁸. No society, as advanced and technological as it may be, will be capable of real progress if it does not consider humanity in all its complexity. We only evolve as humanity if we promote it and raise it above our interest matters, if we project ourselves beyond ourselves so that we can perceive the whole that is in part and the part that is in the whole⁷⁹.

So, the question is: Is a new planetary civilization possible? That is, the awakening of a new human consciousness, which unites us in a broad web of relationships and connections? Perhaps the answer is a cosmological spirituality, capable of making us realize the human phenomenon in its totality, as presented by the great scientist and man of faith Teilhard Chardin.

Would mysticism, as a connection between material and spiritual, be the only means of understanding and relating to reality? If so, Karl Rahner was quite right: "the Christian of the future will be mystical, or he will not be a Christian."

The fact is that change appears in a dynamic and integrated way, and Christianity still has much to tell us. Although many things have already been said over these more than two thousand years, there are still many ways of saying what has already been said and perceiving relationships still unknown and obscure to faith. We are at the beginning of a new chapter in the history of humanity that has just begun.

A cause that profoundly affects us as a human species and as a community of life (biosphere), reaching its cosmic unfolding is the environmental issue. Perhaps no other question raises such a concern for existence on earth as this. The causes of the ecological crisis are anthropic, that is, they are directly related to human activity.

The role of spirituality in this process is mediation between peoples, cultures, and nations, to create a common horizon in which the whole human community can be identified. The environmental issue is a matter of life or death and is not the exclusive concern of NGOs, nor of governments, but of the entire human family since it compromises all biodiversity⁸⁰ of the Earth

As we destroy irresponsibly, we must now regenerate urgently. The salvation of the Earth does not fall from Heaven. It will be the fruit of the new co-responsibility and the renewed care of the whole human family. It is here that ethics and spirituality⁸¹.

This spirituality is urgent today. Perhaps only spirituality can impose limits on our voracity to dominate nature, and even more, to seek an ecological paradigm based on care and respect. Allowing, therefore, a new look at life on the planet, that considers nature as something alive that has value in itself, regardless of human use. We are not outside environment, nor above it as the one who dominates it, we are part, and we are united to the whole community of life⁸².

Spirituality is related to the qualities of the human spirit, such as love and compassion, patience, tolerance, and forgiveness interrelated to a notion of harmony and responsibility. Jesus is seen as a spiritual model, and his experience is associated with the mystical dimension with the political aspect. That is, it articulates the pure originality of Jesus, his divine sonship and his missionary practice. The conversion requested by Jesus is here interpreted as spiritual transformation, as the essence of spirituality. Spirituality aims at connecting and reconnecting with the sacred, with God. God the Creator is distinct from the world that is his creature, but both are interpenetrated. Undoubtedly, this idea intends to affirm that "the Universe is not indifferent to God, for it is in His heart and belongs to the kingdom of the Trinity"⁸³.

VII. CONCLUSION

"This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live "(Deuteronomy 30:19). This verse today gains a profound sense and meaning and presents itself as a final proposal for human existence on Earth.

The ecological question must be seen in this way, as a matter of survival of life on Earth, not only of humanity but of the whole community of living beings, in which we are inserted. It is a call made to our first fathers symbolized by the figures of Adam and Eve: And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every

⁷⁸ Here the disproportion that distorts every classification of the living world explodes (and, indirectly, the whole construction of the physical world) in which the man is not logically figuring but as a new genus and a new family. A perspective error that disfigures and discolors the Universal Phenomenon! In order to give the man a true place in Nature, it is not enough to open a supplementary section in the pictures of Systematics, - even an Order, even an Extra Branch ... By the hominization, in spite of the insignificance of the anatomical leap, it is a New Age that starts. The Earth "changes skin." Better yet, finds its soul. CHARDIN, Teilhard de. *O fenômeno humano...*, p. 197.

⁷⁹ MORIN, Edgar. Op. Cit, p. 75.

⁸⁰ Biodiversity is a recent term that seeks to encompass and define biological diversity in all its forms: ecosystems, species, and genes. The biodiversity that we know of has been built for more than three billion years and is estimated to reach about 10 million species on Earth, of which only one-tenth is known. Biodiversity is of paramount importance

because it "safeguards a series of vital processes for the planet and humanity, the so-called environmental services. These services are diverse, and without them life, as we know it, is seriously threatened. As an example, some environmental services that have biodiversity as their foundation are: a) climate balance; b) quality and quantity of water; c) food production. " Therefore, the loss of diversity implies climate change, and deforestation is considered the second most crucial factor in reflecting on the possible causes of changes affecting the climate. National Conference of Bishops of Brazil. Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil. *Campanha da Fraternidade 2011: Texto-Base*. Brasília: Edições CNBB, 2010. p. 40-41.

⁸¹ BOFF, Leonardo. *O destino do homem e do mundo...*, p. 72.

⁸² Ibid., P. 73.

⁸³ SILVA, Maria Freire da. *Trindade, criação e ecologia*. São Paulo: Paulus, 2009. p. 235-236.

thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so." (Gen 1: 29-30).

Creation has been entrusted to us by the Creator, but history shows us that we have not been worthy of this trust, since we subject creation to the progress of the nations, favoring the excessive greed of few and the exclusion of thousands of poor, who die every day without the minimum. Creation groans in labor pains (Rom 8:22), because it is subject to vanity, and therefore eagerly awaits the manifestation of the children of God (verses 20-21).

It is imperative to consciously manifest our Christian faith on this issue, for faith and theology as science have much to tell us about this ecological crisis in which we are deeply embedded.

Religions offer us designs of the world from millenary emblems and their continuous reissues: primordial waters, the organization of chaos, celestial spheres, etc. Such representations demonstrate the search for the understanding of the cosmos as well as the nature on the part of homo religiosus, in different times and cultures⁸⁴.

We cannot forget that creation as the work of the Creator carries its goodness, beauty, and greatness, and therefore is full of the knowledge of God (cf. Is 6: 3). In this way, it also has many valuable answers and contributions to the problems that humanity faces. It presents clues that tell us about this great mystery of God and life.

In New Zealand, for example, there is a population called "Maori," with very peculiar characteristics, living in harmony with nature, in a sustainable, integral and spiritual way. They are people who relate to nature through a deep spirituality, marked by ethics and respect for life, against a background of the relationship of the Divine. These people have long been preserved from Western colonial contact, which caused them to maintain their values and pass on their beliefs and behavior to future generations.

It is not difficult to perceive in the signs of creation the Spirit of God, who is free and liberating in His work. It is a matter of understanding the *semina verbi*, that is, the seeds of the Word that the Spirit of God which hovers over creation, spread in every corner of the Earth. And therefore the whole Earth is full of His knowledge (cf. Sb 6, 22).

Religions, and above all Christianity, cannot be exclusively focused on their confessional questions, but expose the new and renewing breath of the Spirit that leads us to discoveries and the opening of our horizons. Young men, new mentality! This exclamation is the proposal of the apostle of the Gentiles to Christians.

Given that there are so many intricate articles on this topic and field; this work aims to be a nod among them. It is indeed an invitation, an appeal to open horizons and the search for a cosmic, integral and integrating spirituality, for our life is threatened, and the survival of future generations depends on our sensitivity to life.

The future is in our hands, but we do not know for how long. We know that time will be our judge and the extinction our verdict if we do not engage affectively and effectively in this matter.

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