

'IGNORANCE BREEDS INDIFFERENCE, BUT KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT VALUES IS BLIND'

Dr Celia Deane—Drummond



THE ULTIMATE ORIGIN OF THE EARTH AND GOD'S CREATURES IS GOD'S LOVE

Catholic theologians and religious leaders have been caught off guard. While the message that anthropogenic climate change is putting the future of humanity in peril is finally sinking in, we have been slower to recognise the dire threat posed by humanity's destructive impact on biological diversity.

Ignorance breeds indifference, but knowledge without values is blind. As Pope Francis and his two predecessors have recognised, we are living through a crisis that is social as well as ecological.

Communities, especially the poorest and those on the margins, are already suffering the bitter consequences of an eroding biodiversity: millions of people are losing their livelihoods, food and water are becoming increasingly scarce, climate change is accelerating, and weather patterns are far less predictable. And it will not be long before the impact is felt by everyone. For decades, eco-theologians

care for creation. Destroying the earth destroys a gift that has been entrusted to humanity.

A fundamental aspect of Christian theology is that "creation" signals the ultimate origin of the earth and its creatures in God's love. The rich diversity of life reflects God's goodness and creative exuberance. Deep incarnation implies Christ's solidarity with the suffering earth and its potential restoration. If humanity is called to become co-creators in the image of God, indifference to creation is simply not an option. As Pope Francis says in *Laudato Si'*, ecological virtues are an essential aspect of Christian discipleship.

Excerpt from The Tablet 9 October 2021 by Celia Deane-Drummond, Director of the Laudato Si' Research Institute University of Oxford

SOME ECOLOGICAL VIRTUES FROM LAUDATO SI

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|------------------|----------------|
| GRATITUDE | PRAISE |
| CARE | JUSTICE |
| HUMILITY | WORK |

POPE FRANCIS' MESSAGE TO COP26 CLIMATE GATHERING ON THOUGHT FOR THE DAY BBC4

Dear BBC listeners, good morning!

Climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic have exposed our deep vulnerability and raised numerous doubts and concerns about our economic systems and the way we organize our societies.

We have lost our sense of security, and are experiencing a sense of powerlessness and loss of control over our lives.

We find ourselves increasingly frail and even fearful, caught up in a succession of "crises" in the areas of health care, the environment, food supplies and the economy, to say nothing of social, humanitarian and ethical crises. All these crises are profoundly interconnected. They also forecast a "perfect storm" that could rupture the bonds holding our society together within the greater gift of God's creation.

Every crisis calls for vision, the ability to formulate plans and put them rapidly into action, to rethink the future of the world, our common home, and to reassess our common purpose.

These crises present us with the need to take decisions, radical decisions that are not always easy. At the same time, moments of difficulty like these also present opportunities, opportunities that we must not waste.

We can confront these crises by retreating into isolationism, protectionism and exploitation. Or we can see in them a real chance for change, a genuine moment of conversion, and not simply in a spiritual sense.

This last approach alone can guide us towards a brighter horizon. Yet it can only be pursued through a renewed sense of shared responsibility for our world, and an effective solidarity based on justice,

a sense of our common destiny and a recognition of the unity of our human family in God's plan for the world.

All this represents an immense cultural challenge. It means giving priority to the common good, and it emerge from a crisis alone, without others.

Some days ago, on October 4, I met with religious leaders and scientists to sign a Joint Appeal in which we called upon ourselves and our political leaders to act in a more responsible and consistent manner.



I was impressed by something said by one of the scientists present at that meeting. He told us: "If things continue as they are, in fifty years' time my baby granddaughter will have to live in an unliveable world."

We cannot allow this to happen!

It is essential that each of us be

committed to this urgent change of direction, sustained by our own faith and spirituality. In the Joint Appeal, we spoke of the need to work responsibly towards a "culture of care" for our common home, but also for ourselves, and the need to work tirelessly to eliminate "the seeds of conflicts: greed, indifference, ignorance, fear, injustice, insecurity and violence."

Humanity has never before had at its disposal so many means for achieving this goal. The political decision makers who will meet at COP26 in Glasgow are urgently summoned to provide effective responses to the present ecological crisis and in this way to offer concrete hope to future generations.

And it is worth repeating that each of us – whoever and wherever we may be – can play our own part in changing our collective response to the unprecedented threat of climate change and the degradation of our common home.