

31. December 2020

Seventh Christmas Meditation
“The unredeemed creation”

For a long time it has been a tradition that in the nativity scene the grotto of Bethlehem is not only illuminated by the splendour of the Child Jesus, together with Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, the wise men from the Orient bring their gifts and adore them: no, even the unreasonable creation is included! They are silent witnesses of the events in Bethlehem! In that way, the presence of the animals gets a deep meaning!

“For the whole creation is waiting with eagerness for the children of God to be revealed. It was not for its own purposes that creation had frustration imposed on it, but for the purposes of him who imposed it with the intention that the whole creation itself might be freed from its slavery to corruption and brought into the same glorious freedom as the children of God. We are well aware that the whole creation, until this time, has been groaning in labour pains.” (Rom 8:19-22)

Now, at the birth of the Lord, the animals also may be with Him, and when the children of God are revealed, then their suffering also comes to an end! Now, at Christmas, when the Saviour of the world comes to make us children of God through the grace of redemption, then even the unreasonable creation will be able to take its rightful place in the future without being enslaved; it too, through its existence, sings the praise of the Lord and becomes a bridge of knowledge of God!

“God said, 'Let the waters be alive with a swarm of living creatures, and let birds wing their way above the earth across the vault of heaven.' And so it was. God created great sea-monsters and all the creatures that glide and teem in the waters in their own species, and winged birds in their own species. God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas; and let the birds multiply on land.' Evening came and morning came: the fifth day. God said, 'Let the earth produce every kind of living creature in its own species: cattle, creeping things and wild animals of all kinds.' And so it was. God made wild animals in their own species, and cattle in theirs, and every creature that crawls along the earth in its own species. God saw that it was good.” (Gen 1:20-25).

The original goodness of creation, which was affected by the fall, is waiting for us as redeemed people to deal with it in the wisdom of God. The deeper meaning of a Christian-influenced ecology opens up here. It is not only about the fact that man in his irrationality does not destroy his living space, but that the original goodness of God's creation becomes visible and recognizable. The brotherhood with creation, which St. Francis left us in the Canticle of the Sun, gives us an inkling of this process!

“So for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation: the old order is gone and a new being is there to see.” (2 Cor 5:17).

In this new creation is included everything that the Lord has placed under the dominion of man:

“God said, 'Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild animals and all the creatures that creep along the ground.'” (Gen 1:26).

In this way the presence of the animals also becomes a message. The Redeemer has come, and all things shall become new through Him. All things shall be touched by Him and through Him, and shall join in the praise of God.