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Christian Attention to Creatures and Modern Environmentalism

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Abstract

In 2015 Catholic Church published an encyclical called “Laudato si” which concerns ecological themes: environmentalism is not a religious theme, but there is a certain connection to spiritual matters. In these cases, there is a risk of confusing these two planes, the secular and the religious. The ambiguity starts from the relationship between man and nature: both secular environmentalism and Christianity believe that this relationship must be balanced, being based now on the exploitation of nature. The solution proposed by the catholic encyclical however is a vision of respect between man and nature: the encyclical, to exclude one extreme, goes to the other extreme that is from anthropocentrism to animal rights. But this brings to a form of pantheism that is incompatible with Christianity. On the contrary the solution proposed by the Orthodox Church has an eucharistic approach on nature, that respects the Creation and doesn’t enter a conflict with the spirit of Christianity.

Keywords

nature, man, creatures, exploitation, creation

I. Introduction

In recent times, environmentalism has become an increasingly important topic for the political and economic agendas of states, which is completely understandable. It is not immediately clear on the contrary why the

ecological crisis has also become important for religions, as they should be dealing with completely different topics. In particular, the Roman Catholic Church attaches great importance to this subject, so much so that in 2015 Pope Francis published an encyclical called “Laudato si” about caring for the common good, which specifically concerns ecological themes. But obviously it is the entire Christian religion, even in the Orthodox denomination, that is affected by this profane theme, so it is necessary to deal with it, to individualize some confusions that may be created.

One can discuss the reasons that pushed the Roman Catholic Church to deal with a profane subject so diligently. Someone might cite among these reasons the fact that the Roman Catholic Church, being a temporal system of power, cannot neglect issues of social relevance. The problem is that the Orthodox Church has also begun to deal with environmental issues, especially through the current ecumenical patriarch of the Orthodox Church, Bartholomew I, called the “green patriarch” precisely for this concern for the environment.

As can be seen at first glance, environmentalism is a secular and not a religious theme. But the fact that many Christian denominations deal with it means that there is a certain connection to spiritual themes. In these cases, there is a risk of confusing these two planes, the secular and the religious, due to the fact that we live in a very secularized time, usually the religious is absorbed by the secular and not vice versa. And indeed, in the case of the ecological theme, we see that churches tend to express themselves in profane terms, using profane expressions with their concerns.

However, despite the similarities in terms of the subject and its approach, we will see that the differences in perspective are very large between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. We will discuss how the Orthodox Church, even in a modernist and profane context that risks leading it astray, manages to preserve that authentic Christian spirit, which the Roman Catholic Church has largely lost, at least in official documents.

The ambiguity that a discussion about environmentalism can fall into, starts from the relationship between man and nature. Both environmentalism and Christianity believe that this relationship must be balanced, but the

underlying reasons are very different. Environmentalism sees the ecological crisis from a functional point of view, because humanity, transformed into a consumerist civilization, risks compromising the survival of the planet. The solution proposed by ecologists generally consists of a more harmonious relationship between man and nature, within which nature's place is no longer one of exploitation, but of respect.

The misunderstanding that can arise is an appearance of spirituality with which this approach can be confused. Such a vision of mutual respect between man and nature can easily become a form of pantheism. Nature is good, and man who respects it, is respected in return. The result is a utopian condition where everything ends well. If man is happy, we have built a closed system in which nothing is needed, much less God.

This view is incompatible with Christianity, for which nature is proof of God's presence. Creation must be loved, not respected, in the sense that nature must be educated, because in its present condition it is corrupted by original sin, that is, it is wild. Therefore, man must look at Creation as a gift from Above and act towards it as a good earthly administrator. But to better understand Christianity's correct approach to nature, we need to take a closer look at Catholicism's mistakes in this area, through Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato si" on environmentalism.

II. Enciclica "Laudato si"

"Laudato si" is an expression taken from a mystical poem by Francis of Assisi, in which the great Catholic saint expresses all his admiration for the creatures of the world: the sun, the moon, water, fire, wind, earth, each of them being accompanied by the appellation "brother" or "sister".

"Laudato si" means in ancient Italian, literally "be praised" addressed to God in glory for His creatures. It is in fact, a great affirmation of the goodness of material creatures against the Gnostic heresies that were haunting Western Europe at that time. But in this song, called "Cantico delle creature", this statement is made in God, that is, referring to Him, and the creatures themselves do not present great importance. Creation is, so to speak, only instrumental in singing the praises of God.

We will see, however, that in this encyclical, the Roman Catholic Church is the bearer of a different vision. The Church starts from today's ecological problems and imbalances, to affirm the need for a change in man's relationship with nature, in which creatures have more importance and are not seen in the optics as a means for man's selfishness.

In the encyclical, Roman Catholics clarify an important ambiguity related to the biblical text: "It has been said that starting from the Genesis narrative, which urges dominion over the earth (Gen 1, 28), the unlimited exploitation of nature would be favoured, presenting an image of man as a tyrant and destroyer"¹. Indeed, from the secular and atheistic environment, a hypothesis has been advanced several times in the image of a transcendent God and separated from reality. This would have favoured the birth of a relationship of domination over nature by man, while pagan religions, which had gods within nature, had a more harmonious relationship with it.

However, if this were the case, it does not explain why in the Middle Ages, when the influence of the Christian religion in Europe was very great, ecological problems did not yet exist and only emerged in the modern era, when man gradually stopped believing in a transcendent God and began to live within the material and natural world.

Moreover, the Bible not only says that man must subdue the earth, but also work it, protect it:

"Today we must firmly refuse that because we are created in the image of God and out of the duty to subdue the earth, absolute dominion over other creatures can be concluded. It is important to read the biblical texts in their context, with a correct hermeneutic, and to remember that they urge us to work and to keep the garden of the earth (Gen 2, 15). While «to work» means to cultivate a plot of land, «to keep» means to protect, to take care of, to preserve, to supervise, implying a relationship of mutual responsibility between man and nature. Any community can take

¹ Papa FRANCESCO, *Enciclica "Laudato si"*: "è stato detto che, a partire dal racconto della Genesi che invita a soggiogare la terra (cfr Gen 1,28), verrebbe favorito lo sfruttamento selvaggio della natura presentando un'immagine dell'essere umano come dominatore e distruttore" (2, II, 67).

from the goodness of the earth what it needs for its own survival, but it also has the duty to guard it and guarantee the continuity of its fruitfulness for future generations. In conclusion, «the earth is the Lord's» (Ps 24, 1)².

From the biblical text, therefore, it emerges that man must rule the earth, not as a tyrant, but as a wise administrator, because the “property” and ultimate power remains with the Lord. Man can use the earth in an instrumental sense for his own purposes, but up to a certain limit and with measure, because he must give an account to Him for everything he does with the creation. It is clear that any accusation brought against Christianity of being the cause of today's arrogant behaviour towards nature, falls.

And this same statement, in my opinion, would have been enough for the Roman Catholic Church to restore the balance between man and nature. Man only has to recognize the abandonment of the role of good and wise administrator, out of the desire to become the “owner” of nature, that is, God himself: man has become arrogant towards nature, precisely because he feels omnipotent due to the power of his technique, with which he has deluded himself into satisfying every desire. Once man leaves God's place, nature can still be used in an instrumental sense, because the limits imposed by his natural role - good steward - prevent him from destroying it.

However, the vision of the Roman Catholic Church seems to go in a different direction. Indeed, we read in the quoted passage: “This implies a responsible reciprocal relationship between man and nature”. This perspective implies, claims to give more voice to nature, seen as an

² Papa FRANCESCO, *Enciclica “Laudato si”*: “oggi dobbiamo rifiutare con forza che dal fatto di essere creati a immagine di Dio e dal mandato di soggiogare la terra si possa dedurre un dominio assoluto sulle altre creature. È importante leggere i testi biblici nel loro contesto, con una giusta ermeneutica, e ricordare che essi ci invitano a «coltivare e custodire» il giardino del mondo (cfr Gen 2,15). Mentre «coltivare» significa arare o lavorare un terreno, «custodire» vuol dire proteggere, curare, preservare, conservare, vigilare. Ciò implica una relazione di reciprocità responsabile tra essere umano e natura. Ogni comunità può prendere dalla bontà della terra ciò di cui ha bisogno per la propria sopravvivenza, ma ha anche il dovere di tutelarla e garantire la continuità della sua fertilità per le generazioni future. In definitiva, «del Signore è la terra» (Sal 24,1)” (2, II, 67).

important subject in itself, worthy of being in dialogue almost on the same level as man.

This perspective, however, is not exactly biblical, in the sense that we do not find in Scripture an attitude of such great respect towards nature, but on the contrary, towards God man enters into dialogue: only with Him is there a relationship of reciprocity. Rather, it seems to me that this vision comes from the modern mentality and reflects the desire to align with the logic of rights, which permeates it. After all, today in many progressive environmental circles there is talk about animal rights, even plant rights... I wouldn't be surprised if the Catholic hierarchies, in their anxiety to keep up with the temporal world, wanted to make an exception in biblical exegetical orthodoxy!

So in many of its passages, this encyclical shows a tendency towards sympathy for creatures, as if they had a role in Scripture, which a misinterpretation would have determined a secondary plan, making it easier to submit to them or even forget them. According to this hermeneutics, creatures would have an importance in themselves: "The rest of the seventh day is not proposed only to man, but also «so that your ox and your donkey may enjoy peace» (Ex 23, 12). Thus we realize that the Bible does not pursue a despotic anthropocentrism that is not interested in other creatures"³.

The problem is that the Bible, in this passage, does not at all exclude the instrumental view of creatures: the ox and the donkey can be used instrumentally for the good of man, without being an offense to the creatures themselves and to God. But above all, man can use them without becoming an exploitative tyrant who destroys the environment, what the encyclical calls a "despotic anthropocentrism", which is exactly what is happening today. If man uses creatures wisely, restraining himself from greed and lust, we are dealing with an anthropocentrism that is not at all despotic. And this, in my opinion, is the more correct interpretation of Scripture regarding environmentalism.

³ Papa FRANCESCO, *Enciclica "Laudato si"*: "Il riposo del settimo giorno non è proposto solo per l'essere umano, ma anche «perché possano godere quiete il tuo bue e il tuo asino» (Es 23,12). Così ci rendiamo conto che la Bibbia non dà adito ad un antropocentrismo dispotico che non si interessi delle altre creature" (2, II, 68).

Instead, the encyclical, to exclude one pathological extreme, goes to the other extreme: to avoid an arrogant and destructive anthropocentrism, it discovers animal rights. But Scripture never states anything of the sort: animal management must be wise, because it is foolish to kill an animal out of sheer effort. A manager who gives too heavy a burden to his animals is not acting well, because those animals will no longer work well, being too tired. It is obvious that respect for animals does not at all exclude anthropocentrism or a wise use of creatures. It is not to satisfy their rights that the ox and the donkey have the right to rest. However, they will also enjoy this rest.

The Roman Catholic encyclical goes further: “While we can make responsible use of things, we are called to recognize that other living beings have their own value before God”⁴. In my opinion, here we are right outside the Christian tradition: animals do not have a rational soul, so they themselves have no value. Their existence is transient, they can in no way attain an immortal condition, being condemned to disappear after death. Does this mean that we can dispose of them at our whim? No, we cannot. God has given us the task of administering creatures with measure and wisdom, and this is enough so that animals do not suffer beyond necessity. But not for something they have in themselves, on the contrary because they are creatures from God. In a sense, God is the guarantor of their short existence.

In contrast, the Roman Catholic Church today finds itself in this condition of alternatives between extremes. If creatures are subordinated to the good of man, it means that we can do with them whatever we want, otherwise they must become like us humans or at least come closer to us:

“Today, the Church does not say simplistically that other creatures are entirely subordinate to the good of man, as if they had no value in themselves and we could use them as we please.

Thus, the bishops of Germany explained that for other creatures

⁴ Papa FRANCESCO, *Enciclica “Laudato si”*: “Mentre possiamo fare un uso responsabile delle cose, siamo chiamati a riconoscere che gli altri esseri viventi hanno un valore proprio di fronte a Dio” (2, II, 69).

“one could speak of the priority of «being», rather than of «being useful»”⁵.

Ideological extremes that the West is gripped by, and not just now: it's enough to think about how Protestantism “solved” the problems of Catholicism, that is, by “cutting” it radically.

It must be understood that giving value to creatures, not only belongs to a spirit that is not biblical, but is also dangerous to the ecosystem. The paradox is that if creation has value in itself, the human greed that destroys the Earth is fed and justified. A greater attachment to the world is nothing more than the expression of the materialism in which we live. It is not the solution, but the problem. Animal rights are the other side of the coin of human rights: they arise in the same context. And human rights implicitly include the right to material well-being, because no one wants to live in poverty.

This misorientation towards nature leads to a change in terms of means and ends. Once nature is no longer a mere means, correctly interpreted, it paves the way for it to become an end. And indeed this is also the path to pantheism: speaking of this renewed interest of man in creatures, the encyclical speaks of a “universal communion” as a fraternity from which no one and nothing is excluded⁶ a true call to pantheism. It is not by chance that the term “communion” is used, which designates a participation of Christians in the divine mystery. Here we seem to have all creatures placed on the same plane, participating in the same way with the divine dimension.

In this way, we deceive ourselves into putting a limit on the exploitation of nature. If nature acquires a value in itself and comes closer to man - a true “fraternity” has been defined - then it would mean that the destruction of the ecosystem would diminish accordingly, because we would be doing harm to a living reality, similar to us: “If we recognize the value and

⁵ Papa FRANCESCO, *Enciclica “Laudato si”*: “Oggi la Chiesa non dice in maniera semplicistica che le altre creature sono completamente subordinate al bene dell’essere umano, come se non avessero un valore in sé stesse e noi potessimo disporne a piacimento. Così i Vescovi della Germania hanno spiegato che per le altre creature «si potrebbe parlare della priorità dell’essere rispetto all’essere utili»” (2, II, 69).

⁶ Papa FRANCESCO, *Enciclica “Laudato si”*: “Quando il cuore è veramente aperto a una comunione universale, niente e nessuno è escluso da tale fraternità” (2, V, 92).

fragility of nature (...) this allows us today to put an end to the modern myth of unlimited material progress”⁷.

The problem is that seeing the exploitation of nature only from the external point of view of nature, and not from the internal point of view of man, can lead to a paradoxical condition: if nature has more value in itself, it means that the effort to exploit is worth it, so exploitation should be increased, not decreased! And, not coincidentally, even today when ecological attention to nature has increased so much in the nation’s politics and mass media, exploitation is greater than in the past, not less! There is obviously no direct causal connection between ecological attention and the exploitation of nature, but both are creatures of modern materialism and the logic of rights, and in recent times both have grown in parallel.

It is true that the Roman Catholic encyclical does not emphasize the logic of rights, with an assumed right of nature. She talks about the value of nature and to justify this, she points out, as we have read, that the earth is fragile and needs the care of man; concept repeated in other passages as well: “A fragile world, together with a man to whom God entrusts the care”. It is obvious, according to Catholics, if the earth is fragile, man must take care of it like a child, and in this case he cannot damage and exploit it, as is done today⁸.

However, acting more on the exterior is not at all necessary, because for example in the Middle Ages the natural ecosystem was not exploited at all; although man did not treat him as a child, but as a mean of human survival. So it had only an instrumental value, but it did not lead to destruction. But acting on the outside is not enough either, because we see that an increased sensitivity to the natural environment and to environmentalism in today’s man, has not prevented the destruction of the natural ecosystem. On the contrary, it is growing at an ever greater speed. So what is to be done?

⁷ Papa FRANCESCO, *Enciclica “Laudato si”*: “Se riconosciamo il valore e la fragilità della natura (...) questo ci permette oggi di porre fine al mito moderno del progresso materiale illimitato” (2, III, 78).

⁸ Papa FRANCESCO, *Enciclica “Laudato si”*: “Un mondo fragile, con un essere umano al quale Dio ne affida la cura” (2, III, 78).

III. The vision of Father Stăniloae

So far we have examined briefly and in summary, the Catholic vision of the natural environment vis-à-vis the problems that arise today as a consequence of the exploitation of the environment. The Roman Catholic Church proposes a solution that concerns the psychological attitude of modern man, according to which the current relationship with nature should be changed in favour of one in which nature has more value. It is an approach, which is born as a solution for a problem, so a technical, specific approach that looks at an external reality, namely our relationship with nature.

We will see that things in the Orthodox Church are a little different. Although the Orthodox Church also does not deny the weight of the ecological problem, it does not try to face this theme as a problem that calls for a solution, but rather to move it into a human perspective that it considers wrong, in which the ecological problem is only one aspect.

To understand the Orthodox vision, it is good to start from one of the most famous Orthodox theologians of the 20th century, Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae, who lived throughout the last century so long, that he had the opportunity to witness the most important contemporary political and social problems. For Fr. Stăniloae, the natural environment is part of God's creation: so if we want to face the ecological problem, we must understand what creation is and especially how we must relate to it.

The natural environment cannot be understood as something autonomous. In our scientific vision, we see nature as an active subject, not being determined by anything and at the same time passive, because it is available to man, who can make of it what he wants. But from the Christian point of view it is not so. Nature is a divine creation, therefore a reality dependent on God and subject to His will. So nature is not a subject, but neither is an object, because it comes from Him too.

But above all, nature is a gift. God, who is its master, gave it to us out of love: "All that exists is God's gift to us, and therefore the whole creation is a holy mystery in the broadest sense, that is, a vehicle of God's love and power"⁹. Fr. Stăniloae sees creation as a vehicle of God's power, but also

⁹ Pr. Prof. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, "Creația ca dar și tainele Bisericii", in: *Ortodoxia*, XXVIII (1976) 1, p. 10.

of His love: obviously nature also shows divine power, so it is not about a neutral and manipulable element, but about a precious reality that comes from Above. Nature always leads us to Him, so that Fr. Stăniloae ends up defining creation as “a mystery”, that is, something that goes beyond our understanding. Not being a simple object, we cannot treat it according to our whim. We conclude that nature and creatures have more value, as according to the Catholic perception, but in a completely different way.

But Stăniloae’s quote also tells us something else. It tells us that creation - therefore also nature - is also a gift that comes from God and that shows us His love for us. Man must behave appropriately towards this gift, as he would behave towards a gift given by a friend or by some person who appreciates us.

To exploit nature means to refuse that divine gift, to despise it, which of course we would not do with a gift received from a friend of ours: “Who values the gift, values infinitely more the Giver as a loving person and his love. He values the gift only as a sign of the Giver’s love. He always surpasses the gift by aiming directly at the Giver and remaining in the bond of love with Him”¹⁰.

It is obvious that this reflection involves a greater value of nature, but not as something that has it in itself, or as a kind of “right” by which nature is endowed, as the Roman Catholics claim, but always bearing in mind the Creator of nature, that is, God. Here a very different perspective emerges, although the consequence would still be to protect nature.

But Stăniloae’s vision goes even further, because God’s gift of nature assumes the Eucharistic value, being linked to Christ’s gift to man: “In Christ we are shown God’s intention to give himself to us through every one of us and through all creation. For all those who believe in Christ are strengthened in the power to make God transparent and the nature that is connected to them achieves communication with God”¹¹.

The vision of Father Stăniloae is a vision in which creation is not separated from the centre of the Christian message, being included in it. Therefore, neither the environment nor the ecological problem is excluded from the Christian message. The Christian is called to look at everything

¹⁰ Pr. Prof. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, “Creația ca dar...”, p.11.

¹¹ Pr. Prof. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, “Creația ca dar...”, p.12.

around him, as the bearer of God's presence and His providence, seeing the divine reasons present in creation and contemplating them. Creation comes from Christ and must be seen as a gift to man who was created last. In the restoration of man through the Eucharist, however, is not separated either creation, which was also corrupted by the fall into sin. So, in the vision of Fr. Stăniloae, there is a connection in the Christian mystery between man and creation.

IV. The message of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I

The perspective described above of Father Stăniloae, fits well into the view of the Orthodox Church in its entirety about environmentalism. This view is important to understand the confusion that can be created between an authentically Christian position, which sees the ecological crisis as a consequence of a spiritual imbalance, and an approach borrowed from the secular world, which nevertheless tries, especially in the West, to smuggle it as something Christian. I think it is necessary to insist on this topic, in order to avoid that in the future, these confusions become the means of penetration of some profane ideas inside the Church.

To better deepen the authentic Christian approach to environmentalism, we can examine the message sent in September 2018 by the Ecumenical Patriarch of the Orthodox Church Bartholomew I, on the occasion of Environmental Protection Day. In this text, the Patriarch emphasizes the ecological problems of our age, described as “a consequence of a specific choice of economic, technological and social development that respects neither the value of the human person nor the sanctity of nature”¹².

This presentation would not be too far from the Catholic perspective, because through it, the importance of the human person and nature, which is defined as “holy”, is highlighted. The importance of the human person is noted in several passages: “It is impossible to care truly

¹² Patriarhul BARTOLOMEU I, *Mesajul Sanctității Sale Patriarhul Ecumenic Bartolomeu I cu ocazia Zilei Protecției Mediului Înconjurător 2018*, electronic document: <https://basilica.ro/patriarhul-ecumenic-in-mesajul-de-ziua-protectiei-mediului-inconjurator-viata-bisericii-ortodoxe-este-o-ecologie-aplicata/>

about the human person, while destroying in the same time the natural environment as the very foundation of life, essentially undermining the future of mankind”¹³.

The epistle goes on to denounce the role that contemporary man has carved out in this society, that is, a role that makes him feel legitimized, to do everything with the surrounding environment: “Destruction of the natural environment in our age is associated with human arrogance against nature and with our domineering relationship with the environment, as well as with the model of eudemonism or inclination towards greed as a general attitude in life”¹⁴.

It is true that this kind of critical reflection about the omnipotence of modern man is also present in the Roman Catholic encyclical, such as the generic invitations towards a better future in a secularizing perspective: “The future belongs to justice and love, to a culture of solidarity and respect for the integrity of creation”¹⁵.

However, remains an emphasis that brings us back to Fr. Stăniloae’s vision, that of a creation that is united with the Christian mystery: “The Eucharistic experience sensitizes and mobilizes the believer towards an ecological action in the world”¹⁶.

Here we see the big difference with the Roman Catholics: they understand the ecological matter as an isolated thing, a problem that calls for a solution, as a kind of technical solution. The problem is isolated, which is individualized in nature and in its relationship with modern man, and the solution of valuing nature is proposed.

Doing in this way, one acts only in the outer dimension and loses sight of the unity that only a religion like Christianity can guarantee. In this sense, the position of the Catholics is not too distant from the secular one, which is expressed however through the logic of rights: the rights of animals, the rights of plants, the rights of nature, etc.

In the Orthodox position, instead, we see the effort to insert the ecological problem into the Christian tradition, in which creation is a gift

¹³ Patriarhul BARTOLOMEU I, *Mesajul Sanctității Sale Patriarhul Ecumenic Bartolomeu I...*

¹⁴ Patriarhul BARTOLOMEU I, *Mesajul Sanctității Sale Patriarhul Ecumenic Bartolomeu I ...*

¹⁵ Patriarhul BARTOLOMEU I, *Mesajul Sanctității Sale Patriarhul Ecumenic Bartolomeu I ...*

¹⁶ Patriarhul BARTOLOMEU I, *Mesajul Sanctității Sale Patriarhul Ecumenic Bartolomeu I ...*

like the Eucharist: only that the gift of creation has been corrupted since the fall of man into sin, while the Eucharistic gift is what heals the corruption. It heals the divine image of man, it does not heal creation, at least not in human historical time.

However, the logic is the same, because only a state of human sacrifice makes man worthy of the Eucharistic gift, and at the same time only a state of human sacrifice and repentance can prevent the destruction of nature. In this way, man would lose the feeling of being a kind of god on earth, directed to exploit everything around him, having in his heart “self-righteousness and egocentrism - all of which constitute the very cause of the destruction of the environment”¹⁷. Which, in my opinion, would be a greater guarantee for the environment than supplying nature with human rights.

What I said about the Eucharist can be extended to the Sacraments of the Church in general, because they show the way in which the Holy Spirit acts through matter (water, oil, wood, bread and wine...) over man: “The Holy and Great Synod of the Orthodox Church emphasized that “in the Sacraments of the Church, creation is affirmed, and man is strengthened to act as administrator (steward), protector and «priest» of creation”¹⁸.

V. Conclusion

It is therefore obvious that the Orthodox Church is far from dividing the ecological environment of creation and the ecological problem from the Christian mystery in general: “The ecological initiatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate were not simply developed as an answer or as a reaction to the unprecedented modern ecological crisis, but as an expression of the life of the Church, an extension of the Eucharistic ethos”¹⁹.

It happens because Orthodoxy has a different conception of ecology than the Catholic one and for which “the life of the Orthodox Church is an

¹⁷ Patriarhul BARTOLOMEU I, *Mesajul Sanctității Sale Patriarhul Ecumenic Bartolomeu I ...*

¹⁸ Patriarhul BARTOLOMEU I, *Mesajul Sanctității Sale Patriarhul Ecumenic Bartolomeu I ...*

¹⁹ Patriarhul BARTOLOMEU I, *Mesajul Sanctității Sale Patriarhul Ecumenic Bartolomeu I ...*

applied ecology”²⁰. “The ecological culture of Orthodoxy is the fulfilment of its eucharistic vision about creation”²¹, an organic and unitary culture, in which the ecological problem also becomes an anthropological problem and related to salvation.

²⁰ Patriarhul BARTOLOMEU I, *Mesajul Sanctității Sale Patriarhul Ecumenic Bartolomeu I ...*

²¹ Patriarhul BARTOLOMEU I, *Mesajul Sanctității Sale Patriarhul Ecumenic Bartolomeu I ...*