

**The Ecological Meaning of St. Bonaventure's Theology  
of the Created World**

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## **Declaration of Authorship and Sources**

This thesis contains no material that has been extracted in whole or in part from a thesis that I have submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

Signed:

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the author's signature.

Date: 20/12/2020



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## **Abstract**

This thesis aims to determine how Bonaventure's theology of the created world can be an illuminating eco-theological resource to promote ecological conversion by helping Christians reflect on the meaning and worth of the natural world. In exploring this project, there are two things to be noted: inherent anthropocentric limitations of his theology and today's ecological context represented by both contemporary scientific views of the evolutionary natural world and recognition of the current ecological crisis. Accordingly, this thesis specifically seeks to retrieve and re-interpret the elements of Bonaventure's theology that can influence human understanding and action regarding the natural world, employing Francis Schüssler Fiorenza's theory of a reconstructive hermeneutics.

In response to inherent limitations of his thought, Chapter 2 explores whether Bonaventure's theology of the created world is capable of upholding the value of creatures and awakening a human concern for them while having weak anthropocentric senses. This exploration is based on his Trinitarian theology because it is the underlying principle of his whole theological thought. Bonaventure's Trinitarian doctrine of creation affirms that the whole of creation is the sacramental expression of the Trinity, is directly related to the Trinity by reason of being patterned on the Word and imprinted with Trinitarian footprints, and is a gift and a receiver of God's love. These views underpin the value of all creatures.

Chapter 3 examines whether such a positive understanding of creation can still be valid in Bonaventure despite his limited view of the fate of non-human creatures. Bonaventure's Christocentric theology indicates that the whole of creation's consummation through Christ incarnate involves materiality which non-human creatures hold in common with Christ and humanity. In addition, Bonaventure's concept of redemptive-completion suggests that humanity should turn to right relationship with other-than-human creatures because the broken relationship with them, caused by human sin, is an impediment to God-intended completion for all creation. These implications can be said to support the significance of other creatures' existence and a human concern for them.

Chapter 4 addresses how Bonaventure's theology of the created world can be re-interpreted in light of evolutionary scientific views of the natural world. Bonaventure's theological vision of

creation provides theological meaning for the diverse and relational reality of the natural world by seeing that such realities reveal the divine fecundity and spring from the divine relationality. Regarding inherent suffering in the evolutionary natural world, Bonaventure does not fully espouse the view of God's redemptive co-suffering with creatures, as do contemporary theologians of deep incarnation. However, his theology contains meaningful elements which can be developed for such a view: the concepts of exemplarism, microcosm, *medium mathematicum*, and Christ as unifying centre.

Chapter 5 discusses what theological insights into the natural world the encyclical *Laudato Si'* presents, faced with contemporary ecological degradation, and how Bonaventure's theology of the created world can contribute to the encyclical's theologies. *Laudato Si'* emphasises the intrinsic value of all creatures, their significance as God's revelation and the call for a sublime communion with them. Elements of Bonaventure's Trinitarian doctrine of creation and his view of human sin and the restoration of human relationships with creatures have relevance to the encyclical's insights. In addition, Bonaventure's theology can supplement the lack of a systematic theology of the incarnation and of theological consideration of evolutionary suffering in *Laudato Si'*, by means of the concept of Christ as the divine Word and the incarnate One.

Chapter 6 summarises how the key arguments of Bonaventure's theology can bring transformation to human thinking and action with regard to creatures. Humans are called to appreciate the aesthetic and spiritual values of creatures, to be sensitive towards suffering creatures and to be humble before the natural world with a sense of belonging to one creation community. With these attitudes, humans must take action to preserve living species and to uphold this creation community through a sustainable relationship with all species. Through these conclusions, this thesis argues that Bonaventure's theology of the created world can still be used to guide praxis that leads to ecological conversion and commitment in this time of ecological crisis.

## Abbreviations

<i>1 Sent.</i>	<i>Commentary on the First Book of Sentences</i>
<i>2 Sent.</i>	<i>Commentary on the Second Book of Sentences</i>
<i>3 Sent.</i>	<i>Commentary on the Third Book of Sentences</i>
<i>Brev.</i>	<i>Breviloquium</i>
<i>Comm. Io.</i>	<i>Commentary on the Gospel of John</i>
<i>Hex.</i>	<i>Collations on the Hexaemeron</i>
<i>Itin.</i>	<i>Itinerarium Mentis in Deum</i>
<i>Myst. Trin.</i>	<i>Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity</i>
<i>Scien. Chr.</i>	<i>Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ</i>
<i>Solil.</i>	<i>Soliloquium</i>
WB	Works of Bonaventure
WSB	Works of St. Bonaventure



# Chapter 1

## Introduction

In this introductory chapter, I will set out the main question for this thesis on the ecological meaning of St. Bonaventure's theology of the created world. Because my eco-theological study of Bonaventure seeks to determine how his theology can be useful in our contemporary context, I will note some of its limitations and then sketch the contemporary scientific understanding of nature and the ecological crisis of today. Then I will present the methodology I will use in this thesis, and outline its structure.

### 1.1 Background and Research Question

Ecological theology is concerned with the natural world in relationship to God. Various factors have led theologians to embrace the natural world again as an integral component of their theological work. In the case of the Catholic Church, on a foundational level, the Second Vatican Council opened the horizons for theology to face contemporary issues confronted by humanity. Specifically, *Gaudium et Spes*, one of four Constitutions of the Council, exhorts the Church to exercise "the duty of scrutinising the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel."<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, the second half of the document deals with contemporary social issues from a pastoral viewpoint, such as marriage, the family, economic and social life as well as the political community. Although *Gaudium et Spes* does not specifically address environmental themes, only briefly mentioning created things' value, human love for them and proper human attitude in using them, it can be claimed that this document provides the basic motivation for Catholic theology to engage critically with contemporary issues.<sup>2</sup>

The natural world is a theme to which theology has paid little attention from the Reformation to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although it had been addressed in patristic and

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<sup>1</sup> Second Vatican Council, "*Gaudium et Spes: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*," in *Documents of Vatican Council II*, ed. James H. Kroeger (Pasay City: Paulines Publishing House, 2011), p.230, 4. Hereafter, referred to as *GS*.

<sup>2</sup> For example, see *GS*, 36-37.

medieval theology. To express it another way, in the words of Elizabeth Johnson, the theme of the natural world has been absent in post-Reformation theological discourse despite the fact that God, humanity and the world are fundamentally interrelated areas in the Scriptures and in early and medieval theology.<sup>3</sup> A key reason for this absence in Catholic theology stems from the reaction of church leaders and theologians to scientific advances of the modern era. When confronted with a new understanding of the universe that challenged their pre-modern conceptions, ecclesiastical authorities failed to adapt, and adhered instead to a literal understanding of the Bible. Many Catholic theologians ignored the challenges propounded by new scientific developments instead of responding constructively and keeping pace with them.<sup>4</sup> The same trend was true of Protestant theology, in spite of some exceptions.<sup>5</sup> It had a strong focus on humanity's sinfulness and justification as a result of the influence of the Reformation's great *solas* – Christ alone, faith alone, grace alone, Scripture alone. It was not generally interested in the question of the natural world and held a laissez-faire attitude towards science, whilst the Catholic Church disregarded or rejected new scientific developments. Thus, the natural world became an exclusive area of science and technology, as it was far from the interests of Christian churches. In this way, it was gradually neglected in theological discourse, with only God and humanity remaining as vital themes.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth A. Johnson, "Turn to the Heavens and the Earth: Retrieval of the Cosmos in Theology," in *Turning to the Heavens and the Earth: Theological Reflections on a Cosmological Conversion: Essays in Honor of Elizabeth A. Johnson*, ed. Julia Brumbaugh and Natalia Imperatori-Lee (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2016), xxix-xxxii.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., xxxii-xxxiii.

<sup>5</sup> Christopher Hamlin cites three Protestant natural theologians – William Paley, Christoph Christian Sturm and John MacCulloch – as authors whose works already contained environmental scientific themes, such as biodiversity, overpopulation, cyclicity and anthropogenic destabilisation. Their interpretation is based on merging science with other forms of study, including theology. They use this method as they believe that, since everything comes from and is understood in relation to one God, all things are interrelated to one another. The three authors apply this premise to the environmental scientific realm. However, whereas natural theologians seek to place God as central to natural phenomena, scientists focus on measurable explanations. See Christopher Hamlin, "Ecotheology before Ecology and Environmentalism: Reclaiming the Missing Heritage of Natural Theology," in *Theology and Ecology across the Disciplines: On Care for Our Common Home*, ed. Celia Deane-Drummond and Rebecca Artinian-Kaiser, Religion and the University Series 5 (London: T&T Clark, 2018), 30-37.

<sup>6</sup> Johnson, "Turn to the Heavens and the Earth," xxxii-xxxiii; Harold H. Oliver, "The Neglect and Recovery of Nature in Twentieth-Century Protestant Thought," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 60, no. 3 (1992): 379; Anna Case-Winters, *Reconstructing a Christian Theology of Nature: Down to Earth* (Abingdon:



Johnson points out that such ignorance may lead theology to focus only on spiritual matters, to disregard the earthly world and to therefore provide interpretations for the world that do not reflect reality. In order to avoid this risk, she argues, theology has to enter into dialogue with contemporary science and make the natural world, again, a key pillar of theological exploration.<sup>7</sup> New discoveries and insights unknown to earlier scientists, such as Big Bang cosmology, biological evolution and dynamic ecosystems on Earth, are important areas of dialogue for theology. Theology needs to engage the natural world, attempt to offer new interpretations of traditional theological subjects, and respond to typical theological questions within a framework provided by science.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the recognition that little attention has been paid to nature as a theological theme, environmental deterioration, triggered by human exploitation, has also been a driver for theology to adopt the natural world as a subject of study. An awareness of environmental issues, such as climate change and the loss of biodiversity, has grown with global movements trying to resolve these and similar issues. I see religious faith as called to make a contribution to such movements, providing a theological meaning and grounding for ecological commitment. Christianity can offer such a foundation in ecological theology, the core of which is to explore how faith in Jesus of Nazareth is related to a commitment to the natural world.<sup>9</sup>

It is important to note that the Christian tradition has been criticised as an ideological cause of today's ecological crisis, as is demonstrated, for example, by Lynn White Jr.'s well-known essay, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis."<sup>10</sup> He argues in this essay that, because Christianity has justified humanity's superiority over nature, it has contributed to the rise of modern sciences and technologies that have bestowed on humans a supremacy that allows them to exploit nature. He sees Christianity as the most anthropocentric religion and as bearing "a huge burden of guilt" for our ecological crisis.<sup>11</sup> In an anthropocentric view, the

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Taylor & Francis Group, 2008), 31, accessed January 8, 2018, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>7</sup> Johnson, "Turn to the Heavens and the Earth," xxxiv.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., xxxiv-xxxviii; Case-Winters, *Reconstructing a Christian Theology of Nature*, 35-36.

<sup>9</sup> Denis Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2014), 1-2.

<sup>10</sup> Lynn White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155, no. 3767 (1967): 1203-07.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 1205-06; Celia Deane-Drummond, *A Primer in Ecotheology: Theology for a Fragile Earth*, Cascade Companions 37 (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017), 22-23. Celia Deane-Drummond points out that White's theory resonated in a society that perceived Christianity's emphasis on human superiority even though his logic of criticising Christianity is overly simplistic.

human is seen as the centre of all things and possessing the highest value while other things are to serve for human need and interest.<sup>12</sup> According to Anne Primavesi, the anthropocentrism of the major Christian creeds has five dimensions: that the earth came into being only for humanity; that creatures and resources on the earth are present exclusively for humanity's use and benefit; that God's revelation is transmitted through human words and so is addressed solely to humans; that human sin results in death as its punishment; and that the life and death of Jesus aims to save human beings from sin and death.<sup>13</sup> Anthropocentric thinking, in conjunction with dualism and hierarchical Christian imagery, has brought about the devaluation of nature. By dichotomising the spiritual and the material, humanity and nature, and putting the material world and its creatures beneath human beings in the hierarchical order, it has diminished the value of the material world, justifying human dominance over non-human creatures. The physical world has been regarded only as a temporary realm for humanity's service to God, the conduit to eternal reward, and as something to be eventually transcended through spiritual advancement in search of otherworldly salvation.<sup>14</sup> A Christian eco-theological study has to respond appropriately to such criticisms so that it can contribute to Christianity's ecological commitment.

It is clear, then, that various factors have led to the emergence of ecological theology: a recognition of the absence of nature in theological discourses; a new scientific understanding of the natural world; recognition of the ecological crisis; and a critical awareness of the way Christianity has contributed to this crisis. Accordingly, ecological theology explores how Christianity can retrieve resources from the Christian tradition that can offer ecological wisdom in dialogue with contemporary science and with the reality of environmental deterioration, and then considers how Christianity can respond to ecological concerns and be renewed through ecological conversion.<sup>15</sup>

In her recent introductory book about ecological theology, Celia Deane-Drummond

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<sup>12</sup> A. C. Grayling, *Ideas That Matter: The Concepts That Shape the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (New York, NY: Basic, 2010), 27.

<sup>13</sup> Anne Primavesi, "Ecological Theology," in *Religion Past and Present*, accessed July 19, 2016, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1877-5888\\_rpp\\_SIM\\_124170](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1877-5888_rpp_SIM_124170).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.; James A. Nash, "Christianity (1) – Introduction," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* vol. 1, ed. Bron R. Taylor et al. (New York, NY: Continuum, 2008), 316.

<sup>15</sup> Ernst M. Conradie, ed., "Towards an Agenda for Ecological Theology: An Intercontinental Dialogue," *Ecotheology* 10, no. 3 (2005): 282.

outlines various trends and key figures in eco-theological studies.<sup>16</sup> Since pioneering writers like Jürgen Moltmann began to deal with the natural world as an important theme for theological exploration, theologians have taken different approaches in developing ecological theology. One of these approaches has been to undertake the re-interpretation of biblical or systematic theological subjects from an ecological viewpoint. Deane-Drummond emphasises that these subjects include not just creation theology but also diverse areas, such as Trinitarian theology, Christology, pneumatology, eschatology and the problem of evolutionary suffering. Jürgen Moltmann and Denis Edwards are examples of theologians using this approach. On the other hand, there is another approach which focuses on human environmental ethics, as exemplified by anthropocentrism, biocentrism and theocentrism; some scholars, more specifically, address the ethical issue of animals. Deane-Drummond states that a more radical approach has been adopted by eco-feminist theologians who have explored alternative and inclusive ways of perceiving the natural world, criticising male-centric ways of viewing God, humanity and the world. These theologians include Rosemary Radford Ruether, Mary Grey, Elizabeth Johnson, Sallie McFague and Anne Primavesi. Thomas Berry and some authors influenced by him have explored the new creation story in association with cosmic evolution informed by contemporary science. Other writers, like Sean McDonagh and Leonardo Boff, have related ecological concerns to political and social matters, such as the issue of penury and economic injustice.<sup>17</sup>

With the gradual development of ecological theology, environmental issues and concerns have come to occupy an important position in the teachings of the Catholic Church and the statements of Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis. Pope John Paul II points out that the responsibility and duty to preserve creation is essential to the Christian faith in his *Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace* in 1990, which was the first official document of the Church to deal intensively with environmental issues.<sup>18</sup> In his General Audience, 17<sup>th</sup> January 2001, he urges human beings' ecological conversion, inviting them to act as stewards of the Creator by reflecting God's tenderness for creatures, rather than having

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<sup>16</sup> Deane-Drummond, *A Primer in Ecotheology*, 9-17.

<sup>17</sup> Among these writers who have related ecological concerns to social issues, according to Deane-Drummond, McDonagh is notable in that his thought influenced Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'*. Cf. Deane-Drummond, *A Primer in Ecotheology*, 11, note 14.

<sup>18</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace: Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation*, 1990, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_19891208\\_xxiii-world-day-for-peace.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19891208_xxiii-world-day-for-peace.html).

an absolute and despotic lordship over them.<sup>19</sup> Pope Benedict XVI affirms in his encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* that the appropriate attitude towards nature is neither to view it as superior to the human person nor to regard it just as the raw material for human use. He emphasises that, in the Christian vision, nature is the fruit of God's creation and "expresses a design of love and truth."<sup>20</sup> His *Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace* in 2010 indicates that the establishment of peace is deeply connected to the conservation of creation and reminds the Church of her responsibility for creatures.<sup>21</sup> Finally, building on his predecessors, Pope Francis brings ecological concerns to the centre of Christian discourse in the encyclical *Laudato Si'* released in 2015.<sup>22</sup>

It is noteworthy that St. Francis of Assisi (1181/1182–1226) is given special attention in the 1990 *Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace* by Pope John Paul II, the first papal document primarily addressing ecological concerns, and *Laudato Si'* of Pope Francis, a very recent and the fullest papal treatment of the same issue. St. Francis recognised God's beauty and work in creation, and was drawn to the love of creatures and, above all, God who is their source; he experienced God's goodness and love in creation; and, observing creation in suffering, he was moved by compassion and lived the gospel values.<sup>23</sup> Because of his view and spirituality of God's creation, St. Francis is appreciated as a prominent example for Christian ecological conversion by Pope John Paul II:

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<sup>19</sup> Pope John Paul II, General Audience, 17<sup>th</sup> January 2001, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/2001/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_aud\\_20010117.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/2001/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_20010117.html). Besides the two documents that I cite above, Kevin W. Irwin outlines Pope John Paul II's brief teachings about the environment mentioned in his encyclicals, such as *Redemptor Hominis*, *Laborem Exercens*, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, *Centesimus Annus* and *Evangelium Vitae*. In these encyclicals, the pope generally urges humans to preserve nature and use it in a responsible way in accordance with the Creator's will, emphasising a fair distribution of natural resources. See Kevin W. Irwin, "Background to and Contributions of *Laudato Si'*: *On Care for Our Common Home*," in *All Creation Is Connected: Voices in Response to Pope Francis's Encyclical on Ecology*, ed. Daniel R. DiLeo (Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2018), 18-22.

<sup>20</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, Australian ed. (Strathfield, NSW: St. Pauls Publications, 2009), 48.

<sup>21</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace: If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation*, 2010, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20091208\\_xliiii-world-day-peace.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20091208_xliiii-world-day-peace.html).

<sup>22</sup> Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, Australian ed. (Strathfield, NSW: St. Pauls Publications, 2015); Daniel Schwindt, *Catholic Social Teaching: A New Synthesis: Rerum Novarum to Laudato Si'* (McPherson, KS: Daniel Schwindt, 2015), 164. Hereafter, *Laudato Si'* is referred to as *LS*.

<sup>23</sup> Ilia Delio, Keith Douglass Warner, and Pamela Wood, *Care for Creation: A Franciscan Spirituality of the Earth*, foreword by Denis Edwards (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2008), 8-9.

In 1979, I proclaimed Saint Francis of Assisi as the heavenly Patron of those who promote ecology (cf. Apostolic Letter *Inter Sanctos*: AAS 71 [1979], 1509f.). He offers Christians an example of genuine and deep respect for the integrity of creation. As a friend of the poor who was loved by God's creatures, Saint Francis invited all of creation - animals, plants, natural forces, even Brother Sun and Sister Moon - to give honour and praise to the Lord. The poor man of Assisi gives us striking witness that when we are at peace with God we are better able to devote ourselves to building up that peace with all creation which is inseparable from peace among all peoples.<sup>24</sup>

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis also points to St. Francis as the model of living an integrated ecology embracing care for nature, the poor and the vulnerable:

I believe that Saint Francis is the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically. He is the patron saint of all who study and work in the area of ecology, and he is also much loved by non-Christians. He was particularly concerned for God's creation and for the poor and outcast. He loved, and was deeply loved for his joy, his generous self-giving, his openheartedness. He was a mystic and a pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself. He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace.<sup>25</sup>

Acknowledging the significance of St. Francis's view and spirituality for today's Christians, we can also note the Franciscan theologians who followed him. They grounded, interpreted and developed theologically the spirituality of St. Francis, their master, who was not a systematic theologian although he was a great exemplar of Christian life. Among them, of considerable note, is St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (c.1217 –1274).

Bonaventure is identified, not only as a follower of St. Francis and the 7<sup>th</sup> Minister General of the Franciscan Order, but also as a key figure in the Franciscan intellectual tradition.<sup>26</sup> He was not the first Franciscan theologian, but studied at the University of Paris

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<sup>24</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace*, 16.

<sup>25</sup> *LS*, 10.

<sup>26</sup> The secondary literature on Bonaventure is extensive. Some of the important introductory material includes: J.

under the illustrious Franciscan teachers of his time, such as Alexander of Hales, John of La Rochelle, Eudes Rigaud and William of Middleton. In particular, Bonaventure was introduced by Alexander of Hales to the thinking of Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius and the Victorine School on the basis of which he developed his academic synthesis.<sup>27</sup> In this synthesis, he explored and interpreted St. Francis's spirituality in a metaphysical and theological way. Thus, Bonaventure's understanding of creation could be said to be a theologisation of St. Francis's vision of creation. With this background in mind, therefore, I will explore how Bonaventure's understanding of the created world can help Christians reflect theologically on the meaning and worth of nature so that it can promote the ecological conversion that is needed during this time of ecological crisis. In doing so, I will show that Bonaventure's theology of the created world can be an illuminating resource for today's ecological theology, as is St. Francis's spirituality.

Before discussing this question, I will note two things. The first is that, as I will address below, there are voices that point out certain limitations of Bonaventure's theology in

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Guy Bougerol, *Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure*, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1964); Leonard J. Bowman, "The Cosmic Exemplarism of Bonaventure," *The Journal of Religion* 55, no. 2 (1975): 181-98; Ewert H. Cousins, "The Two Poles of Bonaventure's Theology," *The Cord* 24, no. 5 (1974): 130-49; *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites* (Chicago, IL: Franciscan Herald Press, 1978); Christopher M. Cullen, *Bonaventure* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006); Ilia Delio, *Crucified Love: Bonaventure's Mysticism of the Crucified Christ*, Studies in Franciscanism (Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 1998); *Simply Bonaventure: An Introduction to His Life, Thought, and Writings* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2001); "From Metaphysics to Kataphysics: Bonaventure's 'Good' Creation," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 64, no. 2 (2011): 161-79; Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, trans. Dom Illtyd Trethowan and Frank J. Sheed (Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1965); Jay M. Hammond, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff, eds., *A Companion to Bonaventure*, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 48 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014); Zachary Hayes, "Incarnation and Creation in the Theology of St. Bonaventure," in *Studies Honoring Ignatius Charles Brady, Friar Minor*, ed. Romano Stephen Almagno and Conrad L. Harkins (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1976), 309-29; *The Hidden Center: Spirituality and Speculative Christology in St. Bonaventure* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1981); "Bonaventure: Mystery of the Triune God," in *The History of Franciscan Theology*, ed. Kenan B. Osborne (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1994), 39-125; *Bonaventure: Mystical Writings* (New York, NY: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999); J. A. Wayne Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, trans. Jay M. Hammond, Theology Series 15 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2001); Kenan B. Osborne, "The Trinity in Bonaventure," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Trinity*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 108-27, accessed August 29, 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521877398.007>.

<sup>27</sup> Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 21-22.

reference to the way his theology promotes anthropocentrism. While acknowledging these limitations, my eco-theological study of Bonaventure will demonstrate that his theology can still provide ecologically-meaningful elements that support the value and significance of creatures. The second is that, in the current time, we have different experiences and scientific knowledge of the natural world, compared to those of Bonaventure. In other words, Bonaventure developed his theology without foreseeing the findings of contemporary science as well as anticipating the current ecological crisis. Thus, my eco-theological study of Bonaventure will examine his theology in the light of this new context, and show that his thought can yield a richer interpretation that is applicable to the present day.

## **1.2 Inherent Limitations of Bonaventure's Theology of Creation in Today's World**

There are at least two major limitations of Bonaventure's theology that are based on how his theology is associated with anthropocentric thinking. The first relates to his idea of the human spiritual journey towards God. Denis Edwards remarks that, under the effect of Christian Neo-Platonic tradition, Bonaventure often employs the language of ascent and the image of the ladder when he talks about this journey. What can be problematic in Bonaventure's position is that it may produce an otherworldly spirituality which promotes human elevation beyond the earthly world in order to attain perfect union with God, rather than a spirituality that embraces the earth.<sup>28</sup> Following Dionysius, he states in his *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*:

Being strengthened for your journey, leave behind the world of the senses and of intellectual operations, all visible and all invisible things, and everything that exists or does not exist, and being unaware even of yourself, allow yourself to be drawn back into unity with that One who is above all essence and knowledge in as far as that is possible. Thus, leaving all things and freed from all things, in a total and absolute ecstasy of a pure mind, transcending yourself and all things, you shall rise up to the super-essential radiance of the divine darkness.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Denis Edwards, *Christian Understandings of Creation: The Historical Trajectory*, Christian Understandings (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2017), 110.

<sup>29</sup> Bonaventure, *Itin.*, c.7, n.5 (WSB II, 137; 139). For the English translation of Bonaventure's works, I refer to the series, Works of St. Bonaventure by the Franciscan Institute, unless otherwise noted. In the case of citing these materials, I place the series number and relevant page number(s) in brackets at the end of the footnote.

As Paul Santmire observes, Bonaventure does not pay immediate attention to nor have direct concern for earthly creatures in this work. He does not show a sense of fellowship with them, unlike St. Francis, for his genuine concern in this text is clearly the spiritual ascent of the human person to God above.<sup>30</sup>

This first limitation is closely linked with the second: the exclusion of non-human creatures in Bonaventure's idea of eschatological consummation.<sup>31</sup> Santmire explains this limitation by means of Bonaventure's concept of humanity as a microcosm.<sup>32</sup> As I will explore in Chapter 3, the human creature, a being that is both spiritual and material, shares its corporal dimension with all purely material creatures. Based on this point, Santmire explains, "So – this is the logic – insofar as humanity will be consummated at the end, and insofar as the human creature contains all the levels of the biophysical world, to that extent the whole creation will be consummated at the very end in eternity."<sup>33</sup> This theme of microcosm further indicates that the whole of nature is taken up as a ladder for the ascent of the human soul to God and therefore, in a sense, is absorbed by human beings, losing its own proper being. From Santmire's viewpoint, this form of nature's consummation – so called, a microcosmic consummation of nature – is seen as nothing other than the actual annihilation of material creatures.<sup>34</sup> He draws upon Leonard Bowman's description:

The consummation of material creatures or their return to God is accomplished primarily through man's recognizing the vestiges of God in them and ascending through them, as upon a ladder, to the contemplation of God. It is accomplished secondarily because man embodies and brings with him all levels of creation, so that the material world participates in his ascent to God.<sup>35</sup>

In this way, the consummation of material creatures is accomplished indirectly in human beings' spiritual ascent to God. This understanding, Santmire insists, affirms only humanity's

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<sup>30</sup> H. Paul Santmire, *The Travail of Nature: The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1985), 103.

<sup>31</sup> Although the phrases "non-human creature" or "other-than-human creature" may include inanimate objects as well, I will only use these phrases to refer to non-human biological creatures.

<sup>32</sup> Santmire, *The Travail of Nature*, 100-02.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Bowman, "The Cosmic Exemplarism of Bonaventure," 195.



completion and does not reserve room for non-human creatures in eternity.<sup>36</sup>

Bonaventure's *Breviloquium* is an important example demonstrating this problematic aspect of his thought on the eschatological fate of the material world and its creatures. On the surface, Bonaventure seems to think that particular creatures, such as animals and plants, are excluded from consummation:

Finally, this world ought to be consummated once humanity is consummated. ... The motion of the heavenly bodies must cease and come to rest; likewise, the transmutations of elements will come to an end, and consequently the process of generation in animals and plants. For since all these creatures were ordained toward the more noble form, the rational soul, once souls have achieved their final state of rest, all other things must also come to completion and repose.

That is why when the heavenly bodies do finally attain repose and the fullness of luminosity, they are said to have received their reward. Now, the elements as such, which have lost the power of multiplication through interchange, are said to perish: not in their substance, but in their mutual relationship, and most of all in their active powers. Vegetative and sensitive beings do not possess the power of perpetual life and eternal duration that is reserved to the higher state, and so their whole substance will be consumed [in the fire]. However, they will be preserved as ideas; and in a certain manner they will survive also in their likeness, humankind, who is kin to creatures of every species. And so one can say that *all things* will be *made new* and, in a certain sense, rewarded in the renovation and glorification of humanity.<sup>37</sup>

As this quotation makes clear, all material creatures are ordered to the rational soul, the more noble form. To put it another way, other-than-human creatures are to be consummated by reaching a more noble form; they do not retain their own existence. From Bonaventure's own viewpoint, it may be regarded as better and more reasonable that creatures are subsumed as ideas in humanity's rational soul, because the soul is the greater form of creation. However, the controversial problem is that, from today's viewpoint, his perspective appears to devalue the existence of material creatures in some way and negate their real fulfilment with God,

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<sup>36</sup> Santmire, *The Travail of Nature*, 102.

<sup>37</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.7, c.4, n.7 (WSB IX, 280-81). Throughout this thesis, all instances of italics in direct quotations are original to the source, unless otherwise noted.

since their own particular material existence is regarded as being eliminated.

As a result, Bonaventure's thought is criticised as anthropocentric in terms of his idea of human ascent and creation's eschatological fate. While he focuses on how the human spiritual journey towards God occurs and develops, he regards creatures as steps on a ladder serving human elevation to God and stresses that they be abandoned at last. Whereas humanity is fulfilled with its own substance, non-human creatures are subsumed as ideas in humanity and meant to be consummated indirectly through the fulfilment of humanity. These anthropocentric ideas highlight that Bonaventure's thought of the created world is limited in that it seems to consider other-than-human creatures to just be a disposable means for human spiritual ascent to God and seems to have no real place for them in the final fulfilment of all beings.

Bryan L. Moore demonstrates that anthropocentric assumptions have generally permeated the Western intellectual tradition. In Christianity, anthropocentric views are rooted in the biblical passages, like the first chapter of Genesis and Psalm 8, although there are exceptions such as Psalm 148 and the Book of Job. The works of prestigious theologians, such as Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, are heavily anthropocentric. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which has been promulgated in 20<sup>th</sup> century, affirms that creatures are meant to be used for the common good of humans.<sup>38</sup> In philosophy, Protagoras's axiom "Man is the measure of all things" already shows the assumption that human beings are the centre of the universe.<sup>39</sup> Prominent anthropocentric sources, such as Francis Bacon and Descartes, portray human beings as being divorced from the rest of the natural world. Immanuel Kant believes that nature is a congenial means for humans, with their inquisitive minds, to attain the goals of morality, although he does not perceive nature to be created for humanity.<sup>40</sup> These examples show that anthropocentrism is not limited to a specific period, but echoes through the whole Western tradition. In a sense, Bonaventure's thought is a part of this dominant thread.

However, it should be noted that anthropocentric thinking varies in terms of the degree of its tone. According to Andrew Brennan and Yeuk-Sze Lo, many traditional anthropocentric perspectives are generally characterised either as strong or weak.<sup>41</sup> Strong

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<sup>38</sup> Bryan L. Moore, *Ecological Literature and the Critique of Anthropocentrism* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 7-9, <https://doi-org.ezproxy2.acu.edu.au/10.1007/978-3-319-60738-2>.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 11-12.

<sup>41</sup> Andrew Brennan and Yeuk-Sze Lo, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Winter 2016 ed., s.v.

"Environmental Ethics," accessed October 30, 2019, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/ethics->

anthropocentrism indicates that only human beings are of importance and they enjoy an intrinsic value whereas other creatures are meant to be exploited for them. Weak anthropocentrism means that, although humans are intrinsically more significant than other creatures, such creatures also have value as long as they contribute to human needs and well-being.<sup>42</sup> Since weak anthropocentrism recognises, somewhat, the value of non-human creatures, I believe that, albeit in a limited way, this concept can assist in discussing the meaning of the natural world and in promoting ecological conversion.

Bryan G. Norton's definitions of a "felt preference" and a "considered preference" are useful to clarify how weak anthropocentrism can support human responsibility for and commitment to other creatures. These two concepts fundamentally acknowledge the justification of meeting human needs and wants. However, as will be shown below, a considered preference sets up a certain standard of doing so, which opposes the approval of indiscretions. Norton describes both concepts as follows:

*A felt preference* is any desire or need of a human individual that can at least temporarily be sated by some specifiable experience of that individual. A *considered preference* is any desire or need that a human individual would express after careful deliberation, including a judgment that the desire or need is consistent with a rationally adopted world view – a world view which includes fully supported scientific theories and a metaphysical framework interpreting those theories, as well as a set of rationally supported aesthetic and moral ideals.<sup>43</sup>

Simply put, a felt preference is a human need without discernment as to whether it is desirable and acceptable in light of a rationally adopted world view. A strong anthropocentric position emphasises that only the achievement of this felt preference is valuable. In this pursuit, what humans take into account is their interests which are desirable but free from any value judgment about their rightness. Hence, even if this pursuit may bring harmful effects to the natural world, strong anthropocentrism does not leave room for criticising and correcting human behaviours.<sup>44</sup>

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environmental/.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.; Moore, *Ecological Literature and the Critique of Anthropocentrism*, 5-6.

<sup>43</sup> Bryan G. Norton, "Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism," *Environmental Ethics* 6, no. 2 (Summer 1984): 134.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 134-35.

On the contrary, a considered preference is one which is acknowledged, not just as being worthy to attain, but also as being an ideal which is judged as consistent with a rationally adopted world view. Some felt preferences can be corrected to considered preferences – that is, desirable ideals – if they are judged as being in line with such a world view. A weak anthropocentric position advocates the pursuit of these desirable ideals. If a certain human need does not accord with the ideals, a weak anthropocentric position does not ethically justify the achievement of the need. Hence, weak anthropocentrism has room for criticising the pursuit of human interests which are judged as inappropriate in light of the desirable ideals. This principle is applied to the case of exploiting nature. Insofar as such exploitation is discerned as being confronted with views and ideals in favour of nature, it is criticised as an unacceptable behaviour from a weak anthropocentric viewpoint.<sup>45</sup>

The notable characteristic of weak anthropocentrism is to be able to appeal to a human responsibility for nature, albeit without ascribing intrinsic value to non-human creatures. In weak anthropocentric thinking, the reason as to why humans should have concern for other creatures is because a harmonious relationship with them is a human ideal worth pursuing, and according to which other human needs relating to them are assessed. Even the reasons as to why such a relationship is an ideal, are not dependent on the intrinsic value of other creatures. One reason concerns religious grounds. Norton gives the example of the Hindus and Jains because, from their religious viewpoint, a harmonious relationship with other creatures is helpful for human spiritual development, and is thus considered a human ideal.<sup>46</sup> Other creatures may be seen as being valuable just because they are instrumental to that development. Nevertheless, weak anthropocentrism still supports environmental preservation based on the ideal of harmony with other living species so that it can restrict human beings' behaviour and attitude to the natural world in meeting their needs and preferences.

Given these implications of weak anthropocentrism, Bonaventure's theology would also be able to make a similar contribution if the anthropocentric limitations of his thought are seen as a weak type. Accordingly, I will examine whether and how Bonaventure's theology of the created world can be understood as having weak anthropocentric senses, and thus still capable of upholding, in some way, the value of creatures and awakening a human concern for the natural world.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 136-38.

### 1.3 Today's Ecological Context

An eco-theological study of Bonaventure has to take today's ecological context into account. Ecological theology is explored with reference to current ecological paradigms because, as has already been indicated, contemporary scientific discoveries and the present-day recognition of the ecological crisis have influenced its emergence. This context, to borrow the words of Elizabeth Johnson, can be understood as "a paradoxical context." While contemporary scientific discoveries of the universe and the natural world evoke a sense of wonder and awe, the serious realities of ongoing environmental destruction by humans signal a catastrophic future for the Earth.<sup>47</sup> I propose that Bonaventure's theology of the created world has importance and effectiveness when re-interpreted from a current perspective. For this reason, I will offer a brief sketch of the contemporary scientific view of the universe and nature and the current situation of the ecological crisis.

#### 1.3.1 An Overview of Evolutionary Science: the Universe and Life on Earth

Contemporary science delivers new and different ways of understanding the natural world compared to previous centuries. It surpasses the scope of this thesis to explore all of them in detail. For this study, I will outline one key development which has interested many recent authors when discussing the relationship between science and theology: namely, the evolution of the universe and life on Earth.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Ask the Beasts: Darwin and the God of Love* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 5.

<sup>48</sup> For example, see Arthur Peacocke, *Theology for a Scientific Age: Being and Becoming - Natural, Divine and Human*, Theology and the Sciences (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993); Robert John Russell, William R. Stoeger, and Francisco J. Ayala, eds., *Evolutionary and Molecular Biology: Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action* (Vatican City State: Vatican Observatory; Berkeley, CA: Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, 1998); Denis Edwards, *How God Acts: Creation, Redemption, and Special Divine Action*, Theology and the Sciences (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010); *The God of Evolution: A Trinitarian Theology* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1999); Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Ask the Beasts: Darwin and the God of Love* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014); John F. Haught, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2008); *Making Sense of Evolution: Darwin, God, and the Drama of Life* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010); Ernan McMullin, "Darwin and the Other Christian Tradition," *Zygon* 46, no. 2 (2011): 291-316; Rudolf B. Brun, "Integrating Evolution: A Contribution to the Christian Doctrine of Creation," *Zygon* 29, no. 3 (1994): 275-96; Robert John Russell, "Recent Theological Interpretations of Evolution," *Theology and Science* 11, no. 3 (2013): 169-84; Gayle E. Woloschak, "God of Life: Contemplating

In general, evolution is defined as a “concept that embodies the belief that existing animals and plants developed by a process of gradual, continuous change from previously existing forms.”<sup>49</sup> Alfred Russel Wallace and, especially Charles Darwin, played an important role in formulating biological evolution as a scientifically credible theory. The basic concept of their theory is called natural selection which suggests that “inheritable variations among the individuals of given types of organisms continually arise in nature and that some variations prove advantageous under prevailing conditions in that they enable the organism to leave relatively more surviving offspring.”<sup>50</sup> The variation which is more favourable for survival is determined by relationships such as competition, cooperation and mutual dependence between organisms as well as between them and their living environment. Darwin metaphorically expresses this context in the term “Struggle for Existence.”<sup>51</sup> In this struggle, an organism which inherits more profitable variations for survival and reproduction in an environment wins over an organism that does not, and thus, these variations are preserved in, transmitted to and spread through its future generations. As a result, organisms which adapt better to environments by virtue of these variations flourish and, based on this process, a new species which possesses different traits from those of their antecedents originates and diverges over time. Organisms that do not gradually die out in the struggle and eventually are replaced by the better-adapted organisms. In this way, the process of natural selection brings about both the divergence and extinction of species.<sup>52</sup>

Genetics and molecular biology have played a central role in correcting and complementing Darwin’s theory of evolution, especially by elucidating the mechanisms for heritable variations. Briefly, according to the studies of genetics, pioneered by Gregor Mendel, offspring receive half of their genetic material from their father and half from their mother. The units of this genetic material are called genes. When genes recombine in different

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Evolution, Ecology, Extinction,” *The Ecumenical Review* 65, no. 1 (2013): 145-59; Thomas F. Tracy, “Evolutionary Theologies and Divine Action,” *Theology and Science* 6, no. 1 (2008): 107-16.

<sup>49</sup> *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed., s.v. “Evolution,” accessed March 1, 2019, <http://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/columency/evolution/0>.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publishing Group, 2009), 43-54, accessed November 1, 2019, ProQuest Ebook Central; Johnson, *Ask the Beasts*, 51-52. Johnson examines evolutionary theory and its recent development in several chapters of her *Ask the Beasts*, centring round Darwin’s monumental work, *On the Origin of Species*. See Johnson, *Ask the Beasts*, 19-121.

<sup>52</sup> Johnson, *Ask the Beasts*, 55-58.

ways in offspring or when mutations occur in their genes, variations occur and produce a new variant with new hereditary characteristics. Molecular biological analyses have further proved that mutations are due to alterations in the DNA sequence. It is the process of natural selection in an environment that determines the usefulness of the new variation, whether advantageous, unfavourable or neutral to survival. In this way, the theory of evolution has been enhanced by and synthesised with genetic theory and molecular biology.<sup>53</sup>

The concept of evolution has also been enriched, at a cosmic level, by contemporary discoveries in cosmology, physics and astronomy. The process of evolutionary emergence applies not only to life forms on Earth but also to the universe. The widely accepted theory concerning the universe's beginning is that it originated from the explosion of an incredibly small, dense and hot point about 13.7 billion years ago – the so-called Big Bang. As the universe expanded and cooled after this explosion, hydrogen, the simplest element, and the first helium were formed. Gravity and uneven density led large clouds of hydrogen and helium to accumulate and, in the accumulation, stars were formed by nuclear fusion reactions arising from continual friction, compression and heating of gas clouds. Stars spawned elements such as carbon, oxygen and nitrogen through nuclear reactions within themselves and, by clustering, formed galaxies, including the Milky Way. The birth of our Solar System occurred in such a way 4.5 or 5 billion years ago. A supernova exploded, creating a thick interstellar cloud of dust and gas. Through gravity, a large mass of this dust and gas coalesced and reignited, and so our sun was formed. The remnants formed into the asteroids and planets, including Earth. On Earth, the history of life began about 3.5 billion years ago from single-celled organisms such as archaea and bacteria, and has continued over a long period of time, leading to the emergence and evolution of multicellular organisms such as amphibians, reptiles and mammals, including humans.<sup>54</sup>

The evolutionary understanding of the universe and Earth's life forms can be thought of as having at least three noteworthy dimensions. The first dimension is a range of interrelationships found in evolution. The biological evolutionary process occurs within different ecosystems in which various mutual relationships take place. These relationships include not just competition between individuals to win survival, but also the interactions

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 105-06; Peter Schuster, "Evolution and Design: A Review of the State of the Art in the Theory of Evolution," in *Creation and Evolution: A Conference with Pope Benedict XVI in Castel Gandolfo*, ed. Stephan Otto Horn and Siegfried Wiedenhofer, trans. Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008), 28-35.

<sup>54</sup> Johnson, *Ask the Beasts*, 111-13; Edwards, *How God Acts*, 2-4; *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 8-14.

between organisms and the physical environment which forms their habitat, as well as the interconnection between organisms which form an energy cycle through the food web. All things in specific ecosystems are interconnected. The process of the struggle for existence and natural selection proffered by Darwin comes about in this context of relational beings.<sup>55</sup> In addition, the studies of molecular biology show that all organisms are interconnected to one another even at the molecular level. Theoretical chemist, Peter Schuster, remarks, “Our DNA and likewise the DNA molecules of all other living things are the result of a large number of individual mutations which altered a ‘primordial DNA sequence.’”<sup>56</sup> From this viewpoint, biological evolution is said to be the continual process of mutations in DNA, which leads to the emergence of diverse life forms. Human beings are also part of this history of mutations. Based on DNA research, palaeontologist and professor of anatomy, Neil Shubin, demonstrates that genes which build the human body and its parts have been modified from genes which have existed in other animals and were responsible for building their body and its parts.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, an organism is also said to be interrelated to the universe and its history. According to George V. Coyne and Alessandro Omizzolo at the Vatican Observatory, the basic elements that constitute life forms, including humans, originated from thermonuclear reactions in stars, whereby hydrogen was converted to helium and then to vital elements such as carbon, nitrogen and oxygen. As stars exploded, these elements were strewn throughout space and were incorporated into all organisms on Earth. If this process, caused by the birth and death of stars, had not happened, life would not have appeared. In this sense, Coyne and Omizzolo claim that we are “made of stardust” and further dare to say, “No stars, no life!”<sup>58</sup>

The second dimension is the enormous diversity of living organisms. When life began to appear on Earth about 3.5 billion years ago, it took the form of bacteria-like organisms. Over the long history of biological evolution, this simplest form of life has

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<sup>55</sup> Johnson, *Ask the Beasts*, 117-20.

<sup>56</sup> Schuster, “Evolution and Design,” 42.

<sup>57</sup> Neil Shubin, *Your Inner Fish: A Journey into the 3.5-Billion-Year History of the Human Body*, 1st Vintage Books ed. (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2009). By examining the fossils of ancient species and the skeletal construction of other existing animals, Shubin has also found out that the skeleton and pattern of the human body and its parts have originated and been modified from those not only of human-like apes but also of other kinds of animals such as amphibians, reptiles and even fish. His finding highlights that humans are interconnected to very seemingly different animals, including extinct species, at the anatomical level as well.

<sup>58</sup> George V. Coyne and Alessandro Omizzolo, *Wayfarers in the Cosmos: The Human Quest for Meaning* (New York, NY: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2002), 117-20.



evolved into many different types of organisms.<sup>59</sup> Darwin had already expressed this insight at the end of his *On the Origin of Species*: “There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one; and that, ... from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved.”<sup>60</sup> Evolutionary biologist, Ernst Mayr, explains that a number of mechanisms lead to the multiplication of new species from the parental species. This multiplication often occurs due to genetic variations in a geographically isolated population and to the process of natural selection of these variations under the different environmental conditions – this theory is called geographical or allopatric speciation.<sup>61</sup> Following the process of multiplication, it is estimated by taxonomists that about 3 to 100 million species currently exist. Some researchers more narrowly estimate about 8.7 million species of eukaryotes – that is, animals, plants, fungi, protozoa and chromists – although the exact number is not known. Of these, only about 1.2 million species have been classified.<sup>62</sup> Human knowledge of the diversity of species is like the tip of the iceberg, compared to its vastness. This current biodiversity is considered to be a magnificent outcome of the evolutionary process, leading humans to the same type of incomprehension Job experienced before God, as Belden C. Lane says that “we are like Job when God questions him about species after species and he is left speechless, confessing he knows nothing about a world that utterly amazes him.”<sup>63</sup>

The third dimension is the occurrence of harsh realities in the evolutionary history of life, such as competition for limited resources, predation, death, pain and extinction. These realities are not the result of human sin per se, but are intrinsic to the evolutionary process as the costs paid for the emergence of organisms possessing more developed and beneficial characteristics for their survival and reproduction.<sup>64</sup> For example, Anglican theologian and biochemist, Arthur Peacocke, notes that, without an increase in the ability to experience pain,

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<sup>59</sup> Terrence P. Ehrman, “Ecology: The Science of Interconnections,” in *The Theological and Ecological Vision of Laudato Si’: Everything Is Connected*, ed. Vincent J. Miller (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2017), 51-52.

<sup>60</sup> Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, 303.

<sup>61</sup> For further explication on the mechanisms of speciation besides geographical speciation, see Ernst Mayr, *What Evolution Is* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2002), 174-87.

<sup>62</sup> Camilo Mora et al., “How Many Species Are There on Earth and in the Ocean?,” *PLoS Biology* 9, no. 8 (2011): 1-8.

<sup>63</sup> Belden C. Lane, “Biodiversity and the Holy Trinity,” *America* 185, no. 20 (2001): 8.

<sup>64</sup> Edwards, *How God Acts*, 11-13.

evolution to the organisms with more advanced sentience and eventually higher consciousness would have been impossible. An increase in this ability was advantageous in recognising dangerous factors in their environment and thus gaining beneficial information for continuous survival.<sup>65</sup> The death of antecedent generations on this finite Earth was necessary to leave food resources for new generations and make room for them to evolve and flourish.<sup>66</sup> This death includes not only that of individuals in a species but also the extinction of species at a collective level by failure to adapt to sudden environmental changes or to cope with their competitors or predators. In this regard, also, there have been several mass extinctions which led numerous previously existing species to annihilation in a very short geological time span.<sup>67</sup>

Acknowledging these scientific views of the universe and life on Earth, I will investigate how Bonaventure's theology of the created world can be re-interpreted in light of our understanding of the natural world informed by evolutionary science. When Bonaventure's thought is examined in such a way, our theological reflection on the meaning of the natural world, grounded in his thought, will reflect reality.

### 1.3.2 An Overview of the Contemporary Ecological Crisis

To sketch the current state of the global ecological crisis, I will focus on some crucial issues which Pope Francis raises in *Laudato Si'*.

To begin with, pollution, caused by various sources such as transport, factory fumes and waste, harms the quality of human life.<sup>68</sup> In particular, Pope Francis points out the seriousness of the discharge of rubbish and waste, saying that "the earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth."<sup>69</sup> This situation is related to a throwaway culture in which exhaustible resources are continually used and then thrown away instead of being preserved, reused and recycled in a sustainable way for generations

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<sup>65</sup> Arthur Peacocke, "Biological Evolution - a Positive Theological Appraisal," in *Evolutionary and Molecular Biology: Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action*, ed. Robert John Russell, William R. Stoeger, and Francisco J. Ayala (Vatican City State: Vatican Observatory; Berkeley, CA: Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, 1998), 366.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 369.

<sup>67</sup> Edwards, *How God Acts*, 13.

<sup>68</sup> *LS*, 20-21.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

ahead.<sup>70</sup> Such a culture creates the illusion of unlimited economic growth by arousing misbelief that “an infinitely increasing rate of productivity and the concomitant waste production are compatible with a finite global supply of natural resources.”<sup>71</sup>

Climate change is an example of pressing environmental problems, although there is still scepticism about its reality among some political and economic leaders as well as a few scientists. A substantial scientific consensus about the cause and effect of climate change is that human activities contribute to the rapid increase of greenhouse gas emissions, resulting in the overall warming of the planet, more frequent droughts and floods, glacier melting, rising sea levels and so on.<sup>72</sup> In order to prevent global disasters brought about by climate change, the international community released the Paris Agreement in 2015, which aims to prevent the global average temperature from exceeding 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels as far as possible, while, at least, holding the increase in the temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels.<sup>73</sup> However, according to the International Panel on Climate Change’s *Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C*, the globe has already become approximately 1°C warmer on average, compared to the pre-industrial period.<sup>74</sup> If the current trend continues, it is expected to become 1.5°C warmer between 2030 and 2052.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, it is unlikely that the globe will avoid reaching about 3°C of warming by 2100 even if every nation follows their goal made in the Paris Agreement.<sup>76</sup> The report strongly recommends that the international community should try to limit the increase in the global average temperature to below 1.5°C, more rapidly and extensively, because 2°C of warming will bring more severe effects than 1.5°C of warming: droughts, floods, ocean acidity, the loss of biodiversity, the disruption of food security etc.<sup>77</sup>

With regard to the depletion of natural resources, Pope Francis raises the issue of the supply and quality of water. He describes access to fresh drinking water as a human right:

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>71</sup> Russell A. Butkus and Steven A. Kolmes, *Environmental Science and Theology in Dialogue* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 72.

<sup>72</sup> *LS*, 23; Deane-Drummond, *A Primer in Ecotheology*, 4; Butkus and Kolmes, *Environmental Science and Theology in Dialogue*, 76; Dawn M. Nothwehr, *Ecological Footprints: An Essential Franciscan Guide for Faith and Sustainable Living* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), 156.

<sup>73</sup> United Nations, *Paris Agreement* (Paris: United Nations, 2015), Article 2.1(a).

<sup>74</sup> The International Panel on Climate Change is referred to hereafter as the IPCC.

<sup>75</sup> IPCC, *Global Warming of 1.5°C: Summary for Policymakers* (Switzerland: IPCC, 2018), 6.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 9-13.

“Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights.”<sup>78</sup> However, in some regions or nations – especially, in poor countries – clean, usable and drinkable water is lacking due to the absence of available technologies to supply it to people in need, as well as the absence of institutional and political means to make those technologies widely available. Moreover, water is being contaminated by pollutants from various sources, such as farms, ranches and industrial sites. These pollutants, slowly but surely, are affecting aspects of the ecosystem such as the food chain and natural habitats, thus creating further problems, beyond just water quality.<sup>79</sup> The crisis of potable water threatens the rights of humans – in particular, the poor – to “a life consistent with their inalienable dignity.”<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, despite the significance of water, as Pope Francis indicates, “In some places there is a growing tendency ... to privatize this resource, turning it into a commodity subject to the laws of the market.”<sup>81</sup> Additionally, he warns that “the control of water by large multinational businesses may become a major source of conflict in this century.”<sup>82</sup>

The loss of biodiversity is also a critical issue demanding human concern. In a direct or indirect way, human activities have increasingly become the trigger for the reduction or extinction of species. Terrence Ehrman gives six examples of how humans damage the diversity of species: habitat destruction for human need, as exemplified by the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest; invasive species which, introduced by humans, are harmful to native species and their ecosystems; the pollution of trophic dynamics, such as the continual accumulation of mercury poisoning in an aquatic food web due to excessive emissions by humans; overexploitation of keystone species which, though few, have a crucial role in sustaining ecosystems; global climate change; and human population growth which may even magnify the effects of the preceding five examples.<sup>83</sup> As I have mentioned already, there have

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<sup>78</sup> *LS*, 30.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 28-29; Nothwehr, *Ecological Footprints*, 190-92.

<sup>80</sup> *LS*, 30.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>83</sup> Ehrman, “Ecology,” 65-69. With regard to human population growth, following Pope Francis, Ehrman insists that “population alone cannot be blamed without considering other factors such as ‘extreme and selective consumerism’ (*LS*, 50).” He adds that the means of birth control can even impact ecosystems in a harmful way, referring to the case of the synthetic estrogen 17 $\alpha$ -ethinylestradiol which, as an ingredient of contraceptive pills, can flow into marine ecosystems via women’s bodies and can damage some fish populations by causing adverse effects to their development and behaviour.

been several mass extinctions in the Earth's history which have led to the significant loss of biological life forms. However, the problem is that the current loss, due to human activities, is happening faster, compared to the losses in the past extinctions. Scientists warn that, even though the present loss of biodiversity on Earth does not yet mark the arrival of the sixth mass extinction, if the current drift of the extinction of endangered species continues, we would cross that threshold of mass extinction in about two or three hundred years.<sup>84</sup> In this context, criticising human indifference to the conservation of ecosystems for immediate economic gain, Pope Francis urges humans to pay special attention to the key ecosystems which possess the abundance of species, such as tropical rainforests, swamplands and coral reefs.<sup>85</sup>

Lastly, it should be noted that environmental deterioration affects poor people in a serious way: "Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest."<sup>86</sup> These people do not have appropriate means to counteract the harmful effects caused by a global ecological crisis, nor do they find alternative ways of life free from these effects. Pope Francis adds some examples: "The depletion of fishing reserves especially hurts small fishing communities without the means to replace those resources; water pollution particularly affects the poor who cannot buy bottled water; and rises in the sea level mainly affect impoverished coastal populations who have nowhere else to go."<sup>87</sup> Similarly, while poor countries and their resources contribute to the economic growth of rich countries, they severely suffer from global warming, pollution and destruction caused by the exploitation and industrialisation of those wealthy countries. This situation demands that richer and more answerable people and nations should take initiative to solve current environmental problems.<sup>88</sup>

These aspects of the ecological crisis, which I have outlined so far, are concerns which today's ecological theology must note and respond to. Confronting these realities, the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, which is one of the recent answers from the Catholic Church, supports the value and importance of the natural world and urges us to seek ecological conversion. In particular, it is noteworthy that the encyclical directly quotes Bonaventure's works. Motivated

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<sup>84</sup> Deane-Drummond, *A Primer in Ecotheology*, 6; Anthony D. Barnosk et al., "Has the Earth's Sixth Mass Extinction Already Arrived?," *Nature* 471, (March 2011): 51-57.

<sup>85</sup> *LS*, 36-41.

<sup>86</sup> Bolivian Bishops' Conference, Pastoral Letter on the Environment and Human Development in Bolivia *El universo, don de Dios para la vida* (23 March 2012), 17, quoted in *LS*, 48.

<sup>87</sup> *LS*, 48.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 51-52.

by the timely significance of *Laudato Si'* and its references to Bonaventure, I will investigate how Bonaventure's theology of the created world can engage with the insights of the encyclical in terms of responding to contemporary ecological degradation.

#### **1.4 Methodology**

Earlier in this chapter, I posed the central research question for this thesis: how Bonaventure's understanding of the created world can help Christians reflect theologically on the meaning and worth of nature so that it can promote the ecological conversion that is needed during this time of ecological crisis. To answer this question, following on from the critical view of Bonaventure's theology and the contemporary ecological context, I will consider three further sub-questions: (1) whether and how Bonaventure's theology of the created world can be understood as having weak anthropocentric senses, and thus still capable of upholding, in some way, the value of creatures and awakening a human concern for the natural world; (2) how Bonaventure's theology of the created world can be re-interpreted in light of our understanding of the natural world informed by evolutionary science, so that our theological reflection, grounded in his thought, will reflect reality despite his unawareness of the contemporary scientific views of nature; (3) in terms of responding to contemporary ecological degradation, how Bonaventure's theology of the created world can engage with the theological insights of Pope Francis's *Laudato Si'* which supports the value and importance of the natural world and urges us to seek ecological conversion.

What I will argue, is that, although Bonaventure lived and developed his theology in a very different time from ours, his thought, hermeneutically reconstructed, can provide an eco-theological resource for today. I will develop my argument with a particular systematic theological approach in mind, one which strives to re-interpret traditional theological subjects in an ecological context. With regard to how to proceed methodologically, I see Francis Schüssler Fiorenza's theory of a reconstructive hermeneutics as a helpful approach for elaborating my argument. His theological method illuminates how the re-interpretation of tradition occurs and how it can bring transformative effect to different contexts. Accordingly, it will be employed as a methodology for addressing the question of how we can re-understand Bonaventure's theology, and how the reconceived theology can influence today's Christian actions on behalf of the environment.

Schüssler Fiorenza has written extensively on theological methodology.<sup>89</sup> He shares with Hans-Georg Gadamer the basic idea that hermeneutics should not simply follow the understanding of a text which its original author had in his or her mind. This idea further implies that the current interpretation of a text may not correspond with that which its author meant and may even go beyond its original meaning.<sup>90</sup> Gadamer clarifies this perception with

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<sup>89</sup> For example, Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, *Foundational Theology: Jesus and the Church* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1984); "Theory and Practice: Theological Education as a Reconstructive, Hermeneutical, and Practical Task," *Theological Education* 23 (1987): 113-41; "The Influence of Feminist Theory on My Theological Work," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 7, no. 1 (1991): 95-105; "Systematic Theology: Task and Methods," in *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza and John P. Galvin (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011), 1-78; "The Crisis of Hermeneutics and Christian Theology," in *Theology at the End of Modernity: Essays in Honor of Gordon D. Kaufman*, ed. Sheila Greeve Davaney (Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press International, 1991), 117-40; "The Church as a Community of Interpretation: Political Theology between Discourse Ethics and Hermeneutical Reconstruction," in *Habermas, Modernity and Public Theology*, ed. Don S. Browning and Francis Schüssler Fiorenza (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1992), 66-91; "Theological Method: Not Correlation But Political Broad Reflective Equilibrium," (Unpublished Paper, Harvard Divinity School Staff Colloquium); "Foundations of Theology: A Community's Tradition of Discourse and Practice," *Catholic Theological Society of America Proceedings* 41 (1986): 107-34; "The Crisis of Scriptural Authority: Interpretation and Reception," *Interpretation* 44, no. 4 (1990): 353-68; "Fundamental Theology and its Principal Concerns Today: Towards a Non-Foundational Foundational Theology," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 62, no. 2-3 (1996/97): 118-39; "The Relation Between Fundamental and Systematic Theology," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 62, no. 2-3 (1996/97): 140-60; "Schleiermacher and the Construction of a Contemporary Roman Catholic Foundational Theology," *Harvard Theological Review* 89, no. 2 (1996): 175-94; "Theology: Transcendental or Hermeneutical?," *Horizons* 16, no. 2 (1989): 329-41; "Systematic Theology and Hermeneutics," in *Between the Human and the Divine: Philosophical and Theological Hermeneutics*, ed. Andrzej Wiercinski (Toronto: The Hermeneutic Press, 2002), 510-30; "The Shaping of Rationality: Toward Interdisciplinarity in Theology and Science," *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 21, no. 3 (2000): 353-55; "The Experience of Transcendence or the Transcendence of Experience: Negotiating the Difference," in *Religious Experience and Contemporary Theological Epistemology*, ed. L. Boeve, Y. De Maeseneer, and S. Van Den Bossche (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 183-218; "The Challenge of Pluralism and Globalization to Ethical Reflection," in *In Search of Universal Values*, ed. Karl-Josef Kuschel and Dietmar Mieth (London: SCM Press, 2001), 71-85; "Church, Social Mission of," in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, ed. Judith A. Dwyer and Elizabeth L. Montgomery (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), 151-71; "The Church's Religious Identity and Its Social and Political Mission," *Theological Studies* 43, no. 2 (1982): 197-225. For a helpful exposition of Schüssler Fiorenza's methodology, see Terence Bateman, *Reconstructing Theology: The Contribution of Francis Schüssler Fiorenza* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014).

<sup>90</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, 2nd revised ed.

his idea of a “fusion of horizons.”<sup>91</sup> To borrow the words of Schüssler Fiorenza, this means that “understanding takes place not insofar as one abstracts from one’s horizon and places oneself in the shoes of the author, but rather insofar as one merges one’s own horizon with that of the text and its author.”<sup>92</sup> That is to say, the interpretation of tradition involves a dialogue between a particular tradition’s horizon and an interpreter’s horizon which is shaped in a different context to that of that tradition. This dialogue does not force an interpreter to make his or her horizon agree with that of the past. Instead, it constitutes the continual process of forming and modifying the horizon of a present interpreter by combining his or her horizon with that of tradition. This fusion makes it possible to understand tradition in a new way and to apply its meaning and claims to an interpreter’s present context.<sup>93</sup>

For Gadamer, a “classic” is a text or tradition capable of giving applicable and effective meaning to human beings throughout historical-cultural contexts because, as such, it is a “paradigmatic and outstanding representation of human experience and existence.”<sup>94</sup> Based on this normative significance of the classic, some scholars, such as David Tracy, propose that Christian theology should, above all, retrieve the meaning and truth of the Christian classic for current contexts by means of a hermeneutical task.<sup>95</sup> Interpretation of tradition is not to repeat the original intention of the original author; rather it seeks to understand it from the perspective of contexts that the interpreter faces. While upholding this idea, however, Schüssler Fiorenza does not align himself with Gadamer’s perception of the “classic” nor with the understanding of the nature of theology based on this perception. The question that Schüssler Fiorenza raises is whether classics deserve uncontested authority and validity. Along with Jürgen Habermas, he asserts:

One cannot simply assume the authority of the classics because they have endured through the centuries as meaningful texts. Instead, one has to question whether their endurance is due to structures of domination, and, therefore, one must engage in the critique of ideology. Such a critique should uncover the structures of domination that permeate the classic and are in part responsible for its endurance in society and

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(London: Sheed & Ward, 1993), 372-73; Bateman, *Reconstructing Theology*, 37.

<sup>91</sup> See Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 300-07.

<sup>92</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, “Systematic Theology,” 33.

<sup>93</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 304-07; Schüssler Fiorenza, “Theory and Practice,” 114.

<sup>94</sup> Bateman, *Reconstructing Theology*, 38.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*; Schüssler Fiorenza, “Systematic Theology,” 34.



history.<sup>96</sup>

In other words, the meanings of classics can be distorted in such a way that they rationally underpin and sustain the dominant ideology or practice of a specific context. Thus, theology ought not to take the validity of the classic for granted nor be restricted to the interpretative retrieval of its meanings. While accepting this hermeneutical nature of theology, Schüssler Fiorenza goes further, insisting that systematic theology should follow a reconstructive hermeneutics by which theology constantly reconstructs what is paradigmatic to its tradition and highlights essential elements that have been ignored or hidden.<sup>97</sup> In doing so, it is determined how the reconstructed tradition brings transformative effects to an interpreter's context, and how the tradition has been distorted by the influences of the prevailing ideology in the current historical-cultural context.<sup>98</sup> In this way, a reconstructive hermeneutics aims at constantly re-interpreting and reformulating the essential elements of the tradition, thereby bringing normative praxis to the context.

In order to achieve this goal of a reconstructive hermeneutics, Schüssler Fiorenza employs the methods used in moral philosophy, namely: narrow reflective equilibrium and wide reflective equilibrium. A narrow reflective equilibrium is limited to the mutually critical interaction between particular judgments and general principles. The judgments formulate the general principles and then, in turn, the principles evaluate the judgments. In a continuous feed-back loop, the newly evaluated judgments reformulate or "reconstruct" the principles and then the revised principles re-evaluate these judgments. In this way, "through a back and forth movement the method of reflective equilibrium seeks to bring into equilibrium the principles reconstructed from practice with the practice itself."<sup>99</sup> A wide reflective equilibrium brings into this process the relevant background theories that impact on the principles and practice. The advantage of wide reflective equilibrium in moral philosophy is that it represents more fittingly the sophisticated process of practical reasoning. The diverse elements, like principles, experience and background theories, operate together in this process in such a way to strengthen or to correct each other. All these elements are jointly foundational for moral philosophical analysis.<sup>100</sup> Adopting this method to theology, Schüssler

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<sup>96</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Influence of Feminist Theory on My Theological Work," 97.

<sup>97</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, "Systematic Theology," 56; Bateman, *Reconstructing Theology*, 40-44; 80-82.

<sup>98</sup> Bateman, *Reconstructing Theology*, 82.

<sup>99</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Foundational Theology*, 301-02.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 302.

Fiorenza insists that “reflective equilibrium makes possible a theological method that takes into account diverse elements as foundational without reducing the one to the other.”<sup>101</sup> Thus, in order to reconstruct what is essential to the Christian tradition, theology should bring diverse elements together into reflective equilibrium, not considering tradition or practice as the sole foundation for its reconstructive task.

Schüssler Fiorenza suggests that four elements be brought into reflective equilibrium: hermeneutical reconstruction of a tradition, praxis as a retroductive warrant, relevant background theories, and the community of discourse within which and for which the reconstruction is being proposed. Hermeneutical reconstruction is the task which systematic theology seeks to achieve. In this reconstructive reflection, one examines what is constitutive of the Christian vision, and determines what is either paradigmatic or non-paradigmatic, significant or insignificant, valid or invalid. In other words, “the reconstruction takes as its basis the considered judgments of Christians, both present and past, as to what constitutes the Christian vision in its beliefs and practices and seeks to uncover an identity in the midst of diversity.”<sup>102</sup> Various traditions and judgments throughout Christian history are used to reconstruct Christian identity and vision. Such reconstructed identity and vision are then used to evaluate whether the pattern of Christian practice accords with Christian ideals and praxis. Next, the evaluated practice again plays a role in the reformulation of identity and vision.<sup>103</sup> Thus, the reconstruction of the Christian tradition constantly proceeds in this circular movement.

The term “retroductive warrants” means that the proposed reconstruction of a particular tradition is validated insofar as it is acknowledged as useful and fruitful for the continual development of argument and contemporary practice. Schüssler Fiorenza explains, “A theory is confirmed to the degree that it is more successful than others in explaining more data, more problems, and more conundrums. It has a present ability to illumine and it has a potential for further developments. Moreover, a theory is more warranted to the degree that it can guide praxis.”<sup>104</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza claims that hermeneutical reconstruction should not only reformulate the ideals and visions of tradition but also justify the reformulated tradition by showing that it can illumine and challenge experience through bringing transformative

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 303.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 304.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 304-06.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 307.

praxis to life practice. This capacity of the reconstructed tradition functions as a retroductive warrant to ensure the truth, usefulness and effectiveness of the tradition in different contexts.<sup>105</sup> In addition, experience also functions as a retroductive warrant in the sense that it brings new ideas and perspectives to a reconstruction of tradition. Noting John Henry Newman's concept of an illative sense, Schüssler Fiorenza describes that, as rational judgments are not derived just from abstract logic, but fundamentally influenced by the practical experience of individuals, the same is true with religious judgments. One of Schüssler Fiorenza's examples is the reconstruction of God-language beyond male language motivated by the experience of oppressed women. Thus, experience provides a retroductive warrant for tradition in that it galvanises an interpreter to read tradition in different ways and thereby, to determine the continual applicability of tradition to his or her context.<sup>106</sup>

Schüssler Fiorenza speaks of "background theories" that are employed in theology. They are not the immediate focus of hermeneutical reconstruction. However, often assumed implicitly, they have an impact on one's interpretation of the Christian tradition and vision. These theories include those in various areas such as scientific theories on the origin of the universe and the evolution of life on Earth, philosophical theories on human nature and ethical theories on social justice. What is notable is that they are open to correction in accordance with changes in history, culture and society because they are conditioned in a specific historical, cultural and social context. As theories are modified and developed in such a way, the judgments about the Christian tradition and vision also have to be reconceived and re-evaluated in relation to the revised theories.<sup>107</sup>

A community of discourse and diversity means that Christian communities are the context where hermeneutical reconstruction takes place. Christian communities need to attend to "diverse traditions, practices, methods, and experiences, especially those previously neglected or repressed in the community," and to bring all these into discourse to reconstruct their religious identity.<sup>108</sup> In discourse, they examine tradition with new outlooks and customs. By doing so, Christian communities continually reformulate and live their identity, vision and praxis in the contemporary context.<sup>109</sup> An example is the change of the Catholic Church's position on evolution. In the process of this change, the Church's traditional belief in

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 306-10.

<sup>106</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, "Systematic Theology," 59-60.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 56-58; Bateman, *Reconstructing Theology*, 88-89.

<sup>108</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, "Theory and Practice," 135.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

divine creation has been brought to discourse with the new literary and historical-critical understanding of Genesis and with the theories of evolution. This movement has made it possible for the Church to be open to evolutionary views as well as to update her understanding of Genesis and creation.<sup>110</sup> The constant reconstruction of tradition is ongoing, insofar as discourse occurs in the communities.

My eco-theological study of Bonaventure will be grounded methodologically in Schüssler Fiorenza's theory of a reconstructive hermeneutics because these four elements will be taken into account and will operate in my project. The task that I will undertake in this thesis is, as it were, the hermeneutical reconstruction of Bonaventure's theology of the created world, for I will determine what is to be re-interpreted and reconstructed in his thought to champion the positive meaning of the natural world and to promote ecological conversion. This reconstruction will function as a retroductive warrant for justifying the usefulness of Bonaventure's theology for today, insofar as the retrieved ideas have impact on and guide transformative praxis in Christian ecological commitment. In this reconstructive project, the two types of anthropocentrism – strong or weak – and the science of evolution will be assumed as major background theories. Unlike the strong one, the concept of weak anthropocentrism will play a role as a criterion based on which certain ideas of Bonaventure can be considered still worthy to be retrieved to awaken a human concern for the natural world. Evolutionary science will add a new perspective to Bonaventure's theology and will raise questions that he and interpreters of his theology in former times did not consider. In addition, in my project, the encyclical *Laudato Si'* will be taken up as a recent discourse where the Catholic Church, which is a community of discourse, defines her ecological vision by examining diverse scientific, theological and ethical ideas, as well as contemporary experiences of the natural world. My reconstruction of Bonaventure will be related to the encyclical's discourse and will attempt to enrich it.

## **1.5 The Plan of the Thesis**

Following this introductory chapter, I will unfold my eco-theological study of Bonaventure through five chapters.

Chapter 2 explores Bonaventure's Trinitarian doctrine of creation. This exploration will show how his understanding of the created world is structured by his Trinitarian theology,

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<sup>110</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, "Systematic Theology," 62.

and what elements of his Trinitarian doctrine of creation can be interpreted as grounding the value of creatures and awakening a human concern for them. This will help us see how his thought does not reflect a strong anthropocentrism, but a weak one. The reason why I bring Trinitarian theology into my project is that it is the underlying principle of Bonaventure's whole theological thought. As Zachary Hayes affirms, "Every major theological theme is structured by Bonaventure with reference to the mystery of the trinity."<sup>111</sup> It can be said that Bonaventure's theology of the created world is not divorced from his Trinitarian doctrine but intimately related to and built upon this doctrine. For this reason, I will, first of all, undertake my project on the basis of this foundation.

Chapter 3 examines Bonaventure's thought on the fate of non-human creatures from the viewpoint of his Christocentric theology while taking into account the problematic nature of his anthropocentric eschatology. In spite of this problem, I will propose that Bonaventure's Christocentric theology has a positive underlying logic that can help us think about the consummation of other-than-human creatures as well as their significance in a weak anthropocentric sense. In addition, it is noteworthy that Bonaventure's doctrine of the centrality of Christ, along with his theology of the Trinity, is fundamental for grasping his whole theological thought.<sup>112</sup> The entire picture of Bonaventure's thinking concerning the created world is more completely understood when it is explored, not only in the context of his Trinitarian doctrine, but also in that of his Christocentricity.

Chapter 4 brings Bonaventure's theology of the created world into dialogue with the contemporary scientific view of evolution. I will explore how Bonaventure's Trinitarian concept of creation can be re-interpreted in relation to science's understanding of the evolutionary, diverse and relational nature of the universe and life on Earth. Subsequently, I will focus on the issue of evolutionary suffering, including such harsh aspects as physical pain, severe competition for survival and the loss of species. With regard to this issue, I will discuss the theology of "deep incarnation" which attempts to respond theologically to such costs built into an evolutionary world, and then bring Bonaventure's theology into dialogue with the idea of deep incarnation.

Chapter 5 seeks to relate Bonaventure's theology of the created world to the insights gleaned from *Laudato Si'*. As a recent official document exemplifying contemporary discourse within the Catholic Church regarding her ecological concerns, *Laudato Si'* has

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<sup>111</sup> Hayes, "Bonaventure: Mystery of the Triune God," 56.

<sup>112</sup> Cousins, "The Two Poles of Saint Bonaventure's Theology," 130.

major implications for today's ecological theology and is urging human beings to accept and practise an ecological vocation. I will briefly outline the key theological ideas of *Laudato Si'*. Then I will examine the references to Bonaventure in the encyclical, and will explore what further insights a retrieval of Bonaventure might bring to the discussion of *Laudato Si'*.

Finally, Chapter 6 will present answers to the central research question for this thesis concerning the ecological meaning of Bonaventure's theology of the created world: how Bonaventure's understanding of the created world can help Christians reflect theologically on the meaning and worth of nature so that it can promote the ecological conversion that is needed during this time of ecological crisis. I will first summarise key arguments from previous chapters and briefly describe the theme of Christian ecological conversion. Then I will determine how the reconstructed elements in Bonaventure's theology of the created world can bring transformative effect to an understanding of the natural world and humanity's action in relation to it, so that they can guide praxis leading to ecological conversion.

## Chapter 2

### Bonaventure's Trinitarian Doctrine of Creation

#### 2.1 Introduction

The Trinity is a key and foundational theme throughout Bonaventure's entire career. Ewert Cousins divides Bonaventure's writings into three periods: from 1248 to 1257 when he was able to concentrate on teaching and academic work at the University of Paris; from 1259 to 1267 during which he compiled his mystical works; and from 1267 to 1273 when, through his three *Collations*, he was occupied with a series of controversies.<sup>1</sup> Bonaventure's major works on the Trinity include the *Commentary on the First Book of Sentences*,<sup>2</sup> *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, *Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ*, *Breviloquium*, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* and *Collations on the Hexaemeron*.<sup>3</sup> Although the first four works, composed in the first period, already contain the principal content of his Trinitarian theology, the theme of the Trinity also pervades the last two works that were written in the second and third period, respectively.<sup>4</sup> Given the inseparability of the Trinitarian doctrine and the theme of creation for Bonaventure, these works are important resources for his Trinitarian

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<sup>1</sup> Cousins, "The Two Poles of Bonaventure's Theology," 132.

<sup>2</sup> The selected passages from the *Commentary on the First Book of Sentences* were translated and compiled in a volume for the series Works of St. Bonaventure by R. E. Houser and Timothy B. Noone. When citing or quoting these selected passages, I follow this translation. See Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Sentences: Philosophy of God*, trans. R. E. Houser and Timothy B. Noone, Works of St. Bonaventure XVI (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2013). For the other passages, I refer to the translation of Alex Bugnolo. See Bonaventure, *Commentaries on the First Book of Sentences*, trans. Alexis Bugnolo, Opera Omnia, Tome. I (Mansfield, MA: The Franciscan Archive, 2014). However, when quoting directly these passages, I use my own translation. Throughout this thesis, where I use my own translation of Bonaventure's works, I put the corresponding original Latin text in the footnote. For the original in Latin, I refer to the Quaracchi edition. See *Doctoris Seraphici S. Bonaventurae Opera Omnia*, 10 vols. (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1882-1902).

<sup>3</sup> For the English translation of *Collations on the Hexaemeron*, I refer to José de Vinck's edition in the series, Works of Bonaventure by St. Anthony Guild Press. In the case of citing or quoting this material, I place the series number and relevant page number(s) in brackets at the end of the footnote.

<sup>4</sup> Cousins, "The Two Poles of Bonaventure's Theology," 132; Osborne, "The Trinity in Bonaventure," 108-10.

theology of creation.

I will begin this chapter about Bonaventure's Trinitarian doctrine of creation by sketching the background sources for his concept of the Trinity and creation. After that, I will address how Bonaventure develops his idea of the unified nature of God and of the concomitant three divine persons. Then I will investigate the divine persons' identity and role with relation to the theme of God's creative act. In the ensuing section, I will explore Bonaventure's concept of creation based on his Trinitarian doctrine; the main theme of this chapter is not Bonaventure's theology of the Trinity in and of itself, but his theology of the created world in relation to his Trinitarian doctrine.

## **2.2 The Background to Bonaventure's Concept of the Trinity and Creation**

In this section, I will first address the salient points in St. Francis of Assisi's experience of God and creation as the spiritual source for Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology of creation. Then I will present the key elements of some intellectual sources that Bonaventure adopted as relevant background theories for his thought of the Trinity and creation. These sources will include Plato and Aristotle, the Cappadocian Fathers, St. Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius and Richard of St. Victor.

### **2.2.1 St. Francis of Assisi**

Technically speaking, St. Francis did not leave behind academic works. However, his religious experience and vision, represented in his own writings such as the Rule, his prayers and admonitions, as well as in biographies about him, became the underpinning and inspiration for the development of the Franciscan intellectual tradition, including Bonaventure's theology. It is beyond the range of this study to explore St. Francis's life and spirituality in detail. But, in regard to the theme of the Trinity and creation, the way he experienced God and creation needs to be sketched since it is closely related to Bonaventure's theological insight into this theme.

St. Francis recognises God as the Trinity of goodness and love. In *The Praises of God*, he addresses God as follows:

You are three and one, the Lord *God of gods*;

You are the good, all good, the highest good, ...



You are love, charity.<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, the concluding prayer of *The Praises To Be Said at All the Hours* states, “All-powerful, most holy, most high, supreme God: all good, supreme good, totally good, You Who *alone are good*, may we give You all praise, all *glory*, all thanks, all *honor*, all *blessing*, and all good.”<sup>6</sup> Through the infinite goodness of God, St. Francis was led to look for and contemplate God’s presence at all times and in every place. For him, this divine goodness is the origin of creation and of salvation history.<sup>7</sup>

Among the three divine persons, the Father is the source of all good and of all divine action. St. Francis praises God the Father as follows in *A Prayer Inspired by the Our Father*:

O *Our Father* most holy:  
Our Creator, Redeemer, Consoler, and Savior: ...  
You, Lord, are Supreme Good, the Eternal Good,  
from Whom all good comes  
without Whom there is no good.<sup>8</sup>

It is noteworthy that St. Francis calls the Father not only the Creator but also the Redeemer and Saviour as well as the Consoler because these titles are usually applied to the Son and the Spirit, respectively.<sup>9</sup> St. Francis finds the Father working with the other persons in creation and redemption:

All-powerful, most holy,  
Almighty and supreme God,  
*Holy* and just *Father*,

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<sup>5</sup> Francis, “The Praises of God,” in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents Vol. 1 The Saint*, ed. Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1999), 109.

<sup>6</sup> Francis, “The Praises to Be Said at All the Hours,” in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents Vol. 1 The Saint*, ed. Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1999), 162.

<sup>7</sup> Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, Franciscan Heritage Series 5 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2008), 68-69.

<sup>8</sup> Francis, “A Prayer Inspired by the Our Father,” in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents Vol. 1 The Saint*, ed. Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1999), 158.

<sup>9</sup> Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, 72.

*Lord King of heaven and earth*  
 we thank You for Yourself  
 for through Your holy will  
 and through Your only Son  
 with the Holy Spirit  
 You have created everything spiritual and corporal ...  
 We thank You  
 for as through Your Son You created us,  
 so through Your holy love  
*with which You loved us*  
 You brought about His birth  
 as true God and true man ...  
 and You willed to redeem us captives  
 through His cross and blood and death.<sup>10</sup>

In light of the quotation above, the Father can be called the Redeemer because his redemptive work is conducted through the Son, to whom the title Redeemer is generally applied.

Similarly, when the Father is called the Consoler, it means that he consoles through the Holy Spirit, to whom the title Consoler is normally relevant. In this way, the Son and the Holy Spirit are the Father's "hands" which he uses to interact compassionately with his people.<sup>11</sup>

St. Francis affirms that the Son – that is, Jesus Christ – is the perfect revelation of God the Father and the only way through whom humans can reach the Father. He quotes St. John's Gospel in his admonition: "The Lord Jesus says to his disciples: *I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me. If you knew me, you would also know my Father; and from now on, you do know him and have seen him. ... [W]hoever sees me sees my Father as well.*"<sup>12</sup> As the Word of God, Christ shows through his life the true identity of God the Father and also of human beings as his sons and daughters. Moreover, it is through Christ that all creatures, including human beings, are created, and through whom humans enter into friendly relations with a loving God. Thus, in St. Francis's vision, Christ

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<sup>10</sup> Francis, "The Earlier Rule," in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents Vol. 1 The Saint*, ed. Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1999), 81-82.

<sup>11</sup> Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, 72.

<sup>12</sup> Francis, "The Admonitions," in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents Vol. 1 The Saint*, ed. Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1999), 128.

holds a central position between God and all created realities.<sup>13</sup>

The Holy Spirit is regarded by St. Francis as the one who convinces humans that Jesus Christ is truly God the Son. It is the Spirit who softens their hardened hearts that they may come to believe in Christ and to accept God's love.<sup>14</sup> In his *Admonition*, St. Francis states, "The Father dwells in *inaccessible light*. ... Therefore He cannot be seen except in the Spirit because *it is the Spirit that gives life*."<sup>15</sup> He quotes the letter of St. Paul: "*No one can say: Jesus is Lord, except in the Holy Spirit*."<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, for St. Francis, the Holy Spirit is one who arouses humanity to pursue the footprints of the Son on the way to the Father. That is to say, human beings are purified, converted to devoted faith in God and urged to practise Christian virtues by the guidance and grace of the Holy Spirit.<sup>17</sup> St. Francis says:

... [I]nflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit,  
may we be able to follow  
in the footprints of Your beloved Son,  
our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and, by Your grace alone,  
may we make our way to You,  
Most High.<sup>18</sup>

As for St. Francis's experience of creation, he is often depicted romantically, surrounded by many creatures such as animals, birds and plants. His vision of the created world, however, is not to be understood as an attitude, such as a worship of, or emotional pleasure of nature. For St. Francis, all creatures are regarded as bearing religious meanings.<sup>19</sup> Bonaventure's *Legenda Major* describes his attitude to creatures as follows:

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<sup>13</sup> Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*, 75-76.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 80-81.

<sup>15</sup> Francis, "The Admonitions," 128.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>17</sup> Ilia Delio, "Creation and Salvation: Franciscan Perspectives," in *Creation and Salvation Volume 1: A Mosaic of Selected Classic Christian Theologies*, ed. Ernst M. Conradie, Studies in Religion and the Environment 5 (Berlin: LIT Verlag 2012), 130.

<sup>18</sup> Francis, "A Letter to the Entire Order (1225-1226)," in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents Vol. 1 The Saint*, ed. Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1999), 120-21.

<sup>19</sup> Philotheus Boehner, Introduction to *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, ed. Philotheus Boehner and Zachary Hayes,

From a reflection on the primary source of all things,  
filled with even more abundant piety,  
he would call creatures,  
no matter how small,  
by the name of “brother” or “sister,”  
because he knew they shared with him the same beginning.<sup>20</sup>

This passage implies that the bottom line of St. Francis’s experience of creation is his perception of God as the single source of all creatures, and his sense of all creation belonging to the same family. Although he is often imagined simply as a nature lover, his vision of the created world includes God the Creator as its fundamental basis. In other words, the reason why St. Francis loves and reveres creatures is not only because they are beautiful and good in themselves but because, with all humanity, they are created by God and have God as their heavenly Father. By means of this vision, St. Francis holds an awareness of a universal community of all creatures, including inorganic elements, receiving its members with a “family feeling.”<sup>21</sup>

In connection with the aforementioned point, another key point concerning St. Francis’s experience of creation is that he could contemplate and praise the heavenly Father by means of all creatures because they functioned as signposts pointing towards God.<sup>22</sup> Bonaventure records this outlook of St. Francis in his *Legenda Major* as follows:

In beautiful things he contuited Beauty itself  
and through the footprints imprinted in things  
he followed his Beloved everywhere,

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Works of St. Bonaventure II (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2002), 11-12.

<sup>20</sup> Bonaventure, “The Major Legend of St. Francis,” in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents Vol. 2 The Founder*, ed. Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2000), 590.

<sup>21</sup> Boehner, Introduction to *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 12; Ewert H. Cousins, “Francis of Assisi and Bonaventure: Mysticism and Theological Interpretation,” in *The Other Side of God: A Polarity in World Religions*, ed. Peter L. Berger (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1981), 80.

<sup>22</sup> Boehner, Introduction to *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 12-13. As Boehner points out, St. Francis clearly perceives that creatures are the tokens or mementos of God whom creatures reveal through their own existence, beauty and goodness. For this reason, he consistently finds himself longing for going beyond the physical world which he positively embraces.

out of them all making for himself *a ladder*  
 through which he could climb up to lay hold of him  
*who is utterly desirable.*  
 With an intensity of unheard devotion  
 he savored in each and every creature  
 – as in so many rivulets –  
 that fontal Goodness,  
 and discerned  
 an almost celestial choir  
 in the chords of power and activity  
 given to them by God,  
 and, like the prophet David,  
 he sweetly encouraged them to praise the Lord.<sup>23</sup>

The whole magnificent creation is recognised by St. Francis as a sacrament reflecting God's own beauty, goodness and love, and leading him to meet and experience God.<sup>24</sup> To put it another way, this physical world, created by God, is the place where God dwells; every creature within it is a conduit to mediate God's goodness as well as a path to reach God; and the whole of creation is a family praising God.<sup>25</sup> This outlook of St. Francis comes particularly to the fore in *The Cantic of the Creatures* where he praises God through all creatures, greeting the elements of nature, such as sun, wind, water and earth, as brother, sister or mother.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Bonaventure, "The Major Legend of St. Francis," 596-97.

<sup>24</sup> John V. Kruse, *Discovering the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition: A Life-Giving Vision* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2017), 47.

<sup>25</sup> Kenan B. Osborne, *The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition: Tracing Its Origins and Identifying Its Central Components*, Franciscan Heritage Series 1 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2003), 64.

<sup>26</sup> Francis, "The Cantic of the Creatures," in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents Vol. 1 The Saint*, ed. Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1999), 113-14. This point is related to the matter of translating the preposition *per* in the original text. This preposition, which tends to be translated as *through* in English, could possess various meanings concurrently and indissolubly: of a cause ("for", "because of"), of an occasion ("in", "in connection with"), of an agent ("by") or of an instrument ("through", "by means of"). These examples of polysemy in *per* make it possible for Francis's vision of creation in the Cantic to be interpreted in different senses. In the event of *per* meaning a cause, the Cantic expresses Francis's praising of God, not only for the goodness of creation, but also for the blessings that humanity receives

### 2.2.2 Intellectual Sources as Bonaventure's Relevant Background Theories

In addition to accepting St. Francis's spiritual vision, Bonaventure used many antecedent philosophical and theological views as relevant background theories in the construction of his concept of the Trinity and creation. As Cousins observes, Bonaventure's thought was basically in line with the Platonic and Neo-Platonic traditions. On the basis of such a foundation, he developed his own theology by absorbing other significant intellectual traditions and integrating them, together with Franciscan spiritual sources, into his thought.<sup>27</sup>

While Platonism and Neo-Platonism were involved in the naissance and elaboration of theological thought from the early centuries of Christianity, Aristotelianism spread through Western Europe during the medieval period with the translation and reception of various works about Aristotelian thought written in Greek and Arabic.<sup>28</sup> Although Aristotle's books – specifically those on natural philosophy – were prohibited from 1210 to 1255 in Paris where Bonaventure studied theology, the prohibition itself demonstrates paradoxically that scholars had already been able to access Aristotelian thought at that time.<sup>29</sup> After the ban had been lifted at Paris in 1255, many of his writings could be accessed publicly at the University of Paris. However, during the 1260s and 1270s, some elements of Aristotle's philosophy were challenged again and condemned as a peril to Christian theology.<sup>30</sup> In this context, Bonaventure was exposed to Aristotelian thought as well as the Platonic and Neo-Platonic

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from it. When meaning an occasion, the *Canticum* presents creatures as the occasion of praising God. In the event of meaning an agent, the *Canticum* shows Francis calling on creatures to praise God on behalf of unworthy humanity. In the case of meaning an instrument, the *Canticum* presents Francis's view that, owing to its sinfulness, humanity praises God indirectly through creatures. A second interpretation of his view in this case could be that creatures have the ability to praise God just by their existence and activity as God designed. Cf. Jacques Dalarun, *The Canticum of Brother Sun: Francis of Assisi Reconciled*, trans. Philippe Yates (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2016), 56-58; Brian Moloney, *Francis of Assisi and His "Canticum of Brother Sun" Reassessed*, New Middle Ages (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 46-51.

<sup>27</sup> Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, 3-4.

<sup>28</sup> Edward Grant, *The Foundations of Modern Science in the Middle Ages: Their Religious, Institutional, and Intellectual Contexts*, Cambridge History of Science (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 26-32. These works include Aristotle's own writings, Pseudo-Aristotelian works, commentaries on Aristotle's works by Greek and Islamic scholars and the writings of Latin scholars influenced by these sources.

<sup>29</sup> Edward Grant, *Science and Religion, 400 B.C. To A.D. 1550: From Aristotle to Copernicus*, Greenwood Guides to Science and Religion (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), 169-70.

<sup>30</sup> Grant, *The Foundations of Modern Science in the Middle Ages*, 70-71.

traditions during his academic career associated with the University of Paris.

Fundamentally, Platonism sees an existing reality as a limited refraction of the true pattern or model that transcends this world. True patterns or models are located in the world of “Forms” or “Ideas” that are intelligible. For Plato, these true Forms flow from the ultimate idea of the Good. Under the influence of such a perspective, Neo-Platonism develops the concept of the transcendent One as the structural principle of the world of intelligible forms, which, having emanated from the One, then gives form to the world of human experience.<sup>31</sup> What needs to be noted in this view is that beings emanate from the One according to the order of the rank of realities. The hierarchy is created downwards, that is, each grade, produced by that superior to it, then mirrors that production through its own creation of a new grade of being immediately below it. In this way, the original creative power of the One is mediated through a descending hierarchy of being in which each level is less real than that which preceded it. Material things are in the lowest grade of the hierarchy, and those without an animating force or soul are in the lowest grade of all. They are often seen as a product of logical necessity, as each grade of the hierarchy automatically creates that which is below it, albeit with the cooperation of the One, and thereby, limits the free and direct creating action that Christians attribute to God. As a result, transcendence is re-envisioned as remoteness, and the abyss between that which is created and that which creates cannot be bridged by any intermediaries.<sup>32</sup>

It is noteworthy that, in spite of being in the lowest grade of the hierarchy, the material world and realities within it are regarded, in a certain way, as having positive meaning in the Platonic and Neo-Platonic worldview. The sensible world has some degree of value in that it becomes a path through which humans can seek true and spiritual reality, although being a limited image of such reality due to its materiality, changeability and imperfection.<sup>33</sup> Concerning the goodness of this physical world, Plotinus states as follows in his *Enneads*:

This All that has emerged into life is no amorphous structure – like those lesser forms within it which are born night and day out of the lavishness of its vitality – the

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<sup>31</sup> Delio, “From Metaphysics to Kataphysics,” 162; *A Franciscan View of Creation: Learning to Live in a Sacramental World*, Franciscan Heritage Series 2 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2003), 27.

<sup>32</sup> Neil Ormerod, *Creation, Grace, and Redemption*, Theology in Global Perspective Series (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 7-8.

<sup>33</sup> Delio, *Crucified Love*, 176-77.

Universe is a life organized, effective, complex, all-comprehensive, displaying an unfathomable wisdom. How, then, can anyone deny that it is a clear image, beautifully formed, of the Intellectual Divinities? ...

This earth is full of varied life-forms and of immortal beings; to the very heavens it is crowded. And the stars, those of the upper and the under spheres, moving in their ordered path, fellow travellers with the universe, how can they be less than gods? Surely they must be morally good: what could prevent them? All that occasions vice here below is unknown there – no evil of body, perturbed and perturbing.<sup>34</sup>

Now, if the sight of Beauty excellently reproduced upon a face hurries the mind to that other Sphere [the Intellectual Realm], surely no one seeing the loveliness lavish in the world of sense – this universal symmetry, this vast orderliness, the Form which the stars even in their remoteness display – no one could be so dull-witted, so immovable, as not to be carried by all this to recollection, and gripped by reverent awe in the thought of all this, so great, sprung from that greatness.<sup>35</sup>

And we must recognize, that even in the world of sense and part, there are things of a loveliness comparable to that of the Celestials – forms whose beauty must fill us with veneration for their creator and convince us of their origin in the divine, forms which show how ineffable is the beauty of the Supreme since they cannot hold us but we must, though in all admiration, leave these for those.<sup>36</sup>

In Plotinus's thought, this material world, being filled with beauty, proportion and order, expresses the wisdom of the creator, arouses humans to seek the supreme Beauty and points to a source from which such structure of the world emanates. As Paul Kalligas observes, the sensible world is not something to be loathed as a detrimental obstacle to the 'pneumatic' human. Rather, for Plotinus, corporeal existence is "the result of an outflow from the Good, that calls for a re-orientation of the soul and the rectification of its attitude towards the body,

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<sup>34</sup> Plotinus, *The Enneads*, trans. Stephen MacKenna (Burdett, NY: Larson Publications, 1992), 2.9.8 (158-59). In brackets, I put corresponding page numbers from the translation of Stephen MacKenna.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 2.9.16 (168-69).

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 2.9.17 (170).



without involving any real rejection of the material universe as a whole.”<sup>37</sup>

Although Bonaventure is clearly influenced by Neo-Platonism, he positively accepts some insights of Aristotelianism as well. As his sermon – “Christ, the One Teacher of All” – shows, he follows Aristotle’s view of the primacy of the phenomenal world and sensory perception in the generation of universal ideas:

What the Philosopher says is true beyond doubt, namely, that knowledge is generated in us by way of sense, memory, and experience, from which the universal is formed in us. And the universal is the principle of art and science. Because Plato related all certain knowledge to the intelligible or ideal world, he was justly criticized by Aristotle, not because he was wrong in affirming the Ideas and the eternal reasons, since Augustine praises him for this; but because – despising the sensible world – he wished to reduce all certain knowledge to the Ideas.<sup>38</sup>

Because he demonstrates a sound grasp of Aristotle’s understanding of empirical realities and his theory of knowledge, it is too simplistic to say that Bonaventure’s position stands entirely in opposition to Aristotelianism. His caution with regard to Aristotelian thought can best be seen within the context of medieval anti-Aristotelianism where the opponent was not Aristotle but those radical Aristotelians or Averroists who claimed the legitimacy of the self-sufficiency of philosophy.<sup>39</sup> Many Masters of Art in Bonaventure’s time were convinced of the independent value of rational enquiry under the influence of Aristotelian philosophy. On the contrary, Bonaventure firmly held to the superiority of faith over reason, in the harmonious unity of both – to express it otherwise, theology is the queen of the sciences whereas philosophy is its handmaiden.<sup>40</sup>

Bonaventure adopts Aristotle’s concept of causality. In Aristotle’s philosophy, there are four types of cause: efficient, material, formal and final. An efficient cause is that which constitutes a being in existence. A material cause is that by which prime matter is principle in the formation of something material. A formal cause is the principle of the intelligibility of beings, the principle by which the intelligent form of beings is abstracted and so they are

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<sup>37</sup> Paul Kalligas, “Plotinus against the Gnostics,” *Hermathena*, no. 169 (Winter 2000): 125.

<sup>38</sup> Bonaventure, “Christ, the One Teacher of All,” in *What Manner of Man?: Sermons on Christ by St. Bonaventure*, ed. Zachary Hayes (Chicago, IL: Franciscan Herald Press, 1989), 37.

<sup>39</sup> Hayes, “Bonaventure: Mystery of the Triune God,” 44.

<sup>40</sup> Grant, *The Foundations of Modern Science in the Middle Ages*, 72-73.

universally known. A final cause is that which entices a being towards its goal.<sup>41</sup> As I will show in the later section of this chapter, Bonaventure excludes a material cause in his Trinitarian concept of creation.

In addition to the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, the Christian intellectual tradition, including the Eastern tradition of the Cappadocian Fathers, as well as the Western tradition of Augustine, influenced Bonaventure's theological thought. The Cappadocians contributed a firm foundation to Trinitarian theology through their clarification of the Greek terms *ousia* and *hypostasis*, as applied to the doctrine of oneness and three persons. Philosophy prior to the Cappadocians had seen these terms used interchangeably as referents for that which mediaeval thought called the "substance", the real thing in which accidents subsist. Through a long development in Christian thought, adopted and amplified by the Cappadocians, *ousia* came to mean the one nature of God, while *hypostasis* three distinct persons within the One God. The Cappadocians saw each person's origin and relation to the other as identifying and distinguishing the persons. At the same time, they avoided falling into the error of tritheism, by maintaining that the essential unity of the Trinity can be seen in the common action of the three divine *hypostases*, a common action ensured by the single divine *ousia* in which each person co-inherited. In this tradition, John Damascene devised the term *perichoresis* to describe the mutual indwelling of the persons.<sup>42</sup> As Denis Edwards indicates, Bonaventure used this term in its Latin translation as *circumincessio* (*circum-incedere*) which points to the three divine persons' dynamic movement around one another in their mutual intimacy.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Osborne, *The Franciscan Intellectual Tradition*, 21-22.

<sup>42</sup> Anne Hunt, *Trinity: Nexus of the Mysteries of Christian Faith*, Theology in Global Perspective Series (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 14-17.

<sup>43</sup> Denis Edwards, *Jesus the Wisdom of God: An Ecological Theology*, Australian ed. (Homebush, NSW: St. Pauls, 1995), 104; Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.19, p.1, a.u., q.4, conc. (I, 349). In his comment on *circumincessio* in the *Commentary on the First Book of Sentences*, Bonaventure emphasises that the distinct persons, united in the same essence, are in each other: "There is a supreme and perfect *circumincession* in the divine. And this is called a *circumincession* signifying that one is in the other and vice versa; and this is properly and perfectly only in God because a *circumincession* essentially assumes unity and distinction at once. And since supreme unity with distinction exists only in God, therefore the distinction is unconfused and unity is not separated. Hence it is that there is a perfect *circumincession* only in God. And the reason of this is clear, because the reason of a *circumincession* is the perfect unity of nature with the distinction of persons." (In divinis est summa et perfecta *circumincessio*. Et haec vocatur *circumincessio*, qua dicitur, quod unus est in alio et e converso; et hoc proprie et perfecte in solo Deo est, quia *circumincessio* in essendo ponit distinctionem simul et unitatem. Et quoniam in

St. Augustine's Trinitarian theology is considered to be ground-breaking work in the Western theological tradition. Certainly, the most prominent achievement of Augustine's thought on the Trinity is his psychological analogy with which he used the human experience of the mental acts (remembering, knowing and loving), to describe the procession of the second and third persons within the Trinity. However, while embracing Augustine's insight as shown in the third chapter of the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, Bonaventure does not overly stress this analogy. Instead, he puts more emphasis on divine goodness, love and particularly the fecundity of the Father as the origin from which internal divine processions arise.<sup>44</sup> Having said that, like the Cappadocian Fathers, Augustine understood the distinction of persons on the basis of their origin and mutual relations within the one God. He also had a concept of the mutual indwelling of persons to grasp the unity in their distinctiveness as he writes that "each in each, and all in each, and each in all, and all in all, and all are one."<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, his thought of creation has a Trinitarian character, and many notions from it were adopted and developed by Bonaventure. These include Augustine's concept of the Word as the exemplar of creation and his appreciation of creation's sacramentality as well as its own beauty.<sup>46</sup>

Pseudo-Dionysius and Richard of St. Victor are regarded as two important figures in the background of Bonaventure's thought on the Trinity, especially in terms of the Trinitarian processions. The most important idea that Bonaventure inherits from Pseudo-Dionysius is a proposition that goodness is self-diffusive (*bonum diffusivum sui*) by nature. As Francis's vision of God shows, goodness is the principal characteristic and name of God. The self-diffusive nature of goodness, then, leads to the insight that God's nature is self-communicative in essence. This view becomes in Bonaventure's theology the underlying

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solo Deo est summa unitas cum distinctione, ita quod distinctio est inconfusa et unitas indistincta: hinc est, quod in solo Deo est circumincessio perfecta. Et patet ratio huius, quia ratio circumincessionis est perfecta unitas essentiae cum distinctione personarum.)

<sup>44</sup> Hunt, *Trinity*, 19; 27.

<sup>45</sup> Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 6.12., quoted in Hunt, *Trinity*, 19.

<sup>46</sup> Edwards, *Christian Understandings of Creation*, 75-76. In a similar vein to Edwards, Cousins remarks that Bonaventure adopted Augustine's idea of the world as the vestige of the Trinity. However, he points out that, by virtue of St. Francis's inspiration, Bonaventure has a stronger sense of divine presence in the material world than Augustine does. The influence of Manichaeism, which occupied Augustine's thinking in his early period, and his strong focus on the human soul and psyche as the locus to detect God, are exemplified as likely causes. Cf. Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, 45.

foundation for the Godhead's creative act as well as the divine emanations.<sup>47</sup>

Richard of St. Victor's thought supplements the Pseudo-Dionysian view which cannot specify the mode or number of divine emanations as it defines only self-diffusion. What Bonaventure takes from Richard is his analysis of love. Richard's reflection on love presents charity as the supreme form of the good. Since the nature of God is goodness in a perfect sense, the divine nature is to be perfect charity at the same time. However, charity is impossible through a single person because, without a relationship with another, there is not literally love. Even in the love between two persons, there is not the fullness of charity because this fullness requires that two loving persons do not keep their love apart from any other, but rather share it with an "other."<sup>48</sup> Richard's view, along with that of Pseudo-Dionysius, plays a key role in Bonaventure's argument for the multiplicity of the persons in God.

### **2.3 The Unity of the Trinity and the Position of the Divine Persons in God's Creative Act**

It is noticeable that the theme of the Holy Spirit and creation has been relatively less attended to in the studies of Bonaventure's Trinitarian doctrine of creation, with the focus placed mainly on the Father and the Son. For Bonaventure does not give an overall exposition of the third person's role in the Trinity's creative act, concentrating rather on the role of the first and second persons. I will suggest, however, that the third person's position with respect to creation can be inferred on the basis of its procession in the immanent Trinity and connotations derived from its titles.

Before exploring the position of each of the three persons in terms of God's creation, I will first investigate how Bonaventure reconciles a plurality of divine persons with the unity of divine nature, which will show the relational character of God in Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology.

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<sup>47</sup> Zachary Hayes, Introduction to *St. Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, Works of St. Bonaventure III (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 2000), 32-33; Edwards, *Jesus the Wisdom of God*, 101.

<sup>48</sup> Hayes, Introduction to *St. Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 15-17; Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 42.

### 2.3.1 The Unity of Divine Nature and a Plurality of the Divine Persons

Bonaventure gives an extensive treatment of the unity of the divine nature in his *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*. Based on Anselm's definition that "God is that than which nothing greater or better can be conceived," he demonstrates that divine attributes, such as sublimity of nature, omnipotence, influence, the highest wisdom, good and causality, can be ascribed to only one divine being. Bonaventure's arguments concerning each of the qualities can be expressed in the following manner. According to the Anselmian description, God is "that being than which no greater can be conceived," and, therefore, possesses divine qualities to the greatest extent. If there are several gods, each of them has those qualities to the utmost extent. As a result, there are three possible propositions: "either they agree totally in all their essential qualities, or they differ totally, or they agree in part and differ in part."<sup>49</sup> As far as the first proposition is concerned, it can be said that only one self-same God exists since there is not any distinctiveness among several gods. In the case of the second, the proposition itself is contradictory because it cannot be said that each god, as a "being than which no greater can be conceived," has the divine qualities to the most perfect extent with the other gods being likewise. The third proposition implies that each god is both differentiated and assimilated through the qualities held or not held in common. This, however, would annul divine simplicity as it, of necessity, includes diversity of natures. The divine nature, then, must be solely one.<sup>50</sup>

Notwithstanding the unity of the divine nature, because the concept of "person" is different from that of "nature," Bonaventure understands that plural divine persons exist with such unity. Person, as "the individual or incommunicable supposite," is that which produces or is produced, whereas nature, as "the form itself by which each thing is what it is," is that which is communicated through production.<sup>51</sup> Hence, even if there are multiple persons, one nature can be preserved in and communicated through these persons.

Bonaventure's argument for a plurality of the divine persons is elaborated from a supposition that, in God, there is a most high beatitude, simplicity, perfection and primacy.<sup>52</sup> A most high beatitude is related to the most high goodness, caritas and pleasure. Following

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<sup>49</sup> Hayes, Introduction to *St. Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 81.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.; Bonaventure, *Myst. Trin.*, q.2, a.1, fund.1-7 (WSB III, 139-40).

<sup>51</sup> Bonaventure, *Myst. Trin.*, q.2, a.2, conc. (WSB III, 152).

<sup>52</sup> Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.2, a.u., q.2, fund.1-4 (I, 53).

the Pseudo-Dionysian axiom, goodness communicates itself by nature, and the supreme goodness does so in a supreme manner. Since supreme communication is to produce things consubstantial with itself, the divine person ought to have a plurality of persons who are co-equal. In a similar vein, *caritas* and pleasure also imply the necessity of a plurality of the persons in God because both are actually impossible in a single person:

But if there is the highest *goodness*, since it belongs to goodness to communicate itself in the highest degree, and this is (manifested), most of all, in producing an equal from itself and by allowing (that equal) to belong to itself. Therefore etc. If there is the highest *charity*, since charity is not a private love but (looks) to another, it therefore requires a plurality. In the same way, if there is the highest *pleasure*, since a pleasing possession is not of any good without an associate, therefore, for the highest pleasure, association and thus plurality is required.<sup>53</sup>

Hence, God can be said to have goodness, *caritas* and pleasure to the highest extent only if there is a multiplicity of persons who share such attributes.

Simplicity denotes an essential integrity, that is, a constitution not made of separable parts or immanent actions attributable to something other than the simple unity, the whole. It is necessarily an attribute of God, than which nothing greater can be thought, as, if God had components, God could be made greater by addition. Because of simplicity, the self-diffusive nature of goodness in God does not multiply divine essence, but rather, makes the same divine essence of integrity present in a plurality of persons.<sup>54</sup> Bonaventure remarks, “Since some nature exists in plurality, as is evident from the universal, but it is because of lack of simplicity that it is numbered in them. Therefore, if in God simplicity is in no way lacking, essence is not numbered in the plural.”<sup>55</sup> He clarifies the implications of this simplicity in a later part of his *Commentary on the First Book of Sentences*:

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<sup>53</sup> Bonaventure, *1 Sent.*, d.2, a.u., q.2, fund.1 (I, 53): “Sed si est summa *bonitas*, cum bonitatis sit summe se communicare, et hoc est maxime in producendo ex se aequalem et dando esse suum: ergo etc. Si summa *caritas*, cum *caritas* non sit amor privatus, sed ad alterum: ergo requirit pluralitatem. Item, si summa *iucunditas*, cum « nullius boni sine socio sit iucunda possessio », ergo ad summam iucunditatem requiritur societas et ita pluralitas.”

<sup>54</sup> Hayes, Introduction to *St. Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 35.

<sup>55</sup> Bonaventure, *1 Sent.*, d.2, a.u., q.2, fund.3 (I, 53): “Quod aliqua natura sit in pluribus, ut patet in universali, sed ex defectu simplicitatis est, quod numeretur in illis: ergo si in Deo est simplicitas in nullo deficiens, erit in pluribus non numerata essentia.”

Since where the *highest* simplicity is understood, it is proper that this highest actuality is to be understood, if it is completely *noble*. Where there is the highest actuality, the highest diffusion and communication must be posited; and this cannot exist except in the eternal production of something altogether infinite and equal in virtue; and this cannot be in an otherness of essence.<sup>56</sup>

In this way, God's simplicity implies a level of communicability and a concomitant plurality of divine persons in consubstantiality.

As Zachary Hayes points out, perfection has different meanings in Bonaventure's works.<sup>57</sup> On the one hand, in the *Collations on the Hexaemeron*, the meaning of perfection is the perfection of God in origin, order and indivisibility.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, in the *Commentary on the First Book of Sentences*, perfection indicates a productive power of God:

If there is the highest *perfection*, it belongs to perfection to produce something, as being natural to it. Therefore, while it is necessary for there to be multiplication, this cannot be according to another essence. Therefore, it is proper that it is according to another person or substitute.<sup>59</sup>

In this way, perfection in God, supreme perfection, is understood as the power or ability to produce another of the same nature, not generating another of different essence.

Bonaventure's concept of primacy means that the divine essence is prior to all other essences. He describes it as follows:

If there is the highest *primacy*, insofar as something is prior, then it is more fecund and the principle of other things. Therefore, as the divine essence, because it is first,

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., d.8, p.2, q.1, ad 1 (I, 166): "Quoniam ubi *summa* simplicitas intelligitur, oportet summam actualitatem intelligi, si summe *nobilis* est. Et ubi est summa actualitas, summa diffusion et communicatio debet poni; et ista non potest esse nisi in sempiterna productione rei omnino infinitae et aequalis in virtute; et hoc non potest esse in alietate essentiae."

<sup>57</sup> Hayes, Introduction to *St. Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 35.

<sup>58</sup> Bonaventure, *Hex.*, c.11, n.6-8 (WB V, 160-61).

<sup>59</sup> Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.2, a.u., q.2, fund.2 (I, 53): "Si est ibi summa *perfectio*; sed «perfectionis est producere talem, qualis ipse est in natura»: ergo necesse est, ibi esse multiplicationem; sed hoc non potest esse secundum aliam essentiam: ergo oportet, quod sit secundum aliam personam sive suppositum."

is the principle of other essences, so the person of the Father, since it is first, because it (comes) from nothing, is the principle and has a fecundity in respect of persons; but a fecundity in God in respect of God cannot exist unless it is conjoined to act.

Therefore, it is necessary that multiple persons exist.<sup>60</sup>

The concept of primacy is closely connected to fecundity, as Bonaventure particularly notes the axiom of the Neo-Platonic tradition that “insofar as something is prior, then it is more fecund and the principle of other things.”<sup>61</sup> Based on this proposition, it is claimed that “God is the source of all other beings to the degree that the divine reality is first.”<sup>62</sup> As is mentioned in the quotation and will be discussed again, Bonaventure holds that primacy and concomitant fecundity are primarily applied to the Father because, in the inner life of the Trinity, the Father, as the originator without origin, is the principle of the other divine persons. The Father’s primacy and fecundity with respect to the other divine persons ought to be actualised “since whatever God is in Himself He is in act.”<sup>63</sup> Accordingly, the primacy of the Father results in a plurality of persons.

Thus, divine characteristics – beatitude, simplicity, perfection and primacy – essentially connote communicability at the level of nature, and productivity at the level of person. Bonaventure elicits the logic of a plurality of divine persons on the basis of these characteristics, without losing the notion of the unity of one divine nature.

Having said that, Bonaventure affirms that the number of the divine persons must be three, not more or less. Two major grounds for this argument are the nature of perfect love and the modes of perfect production. Concerning the former, as has been shown in Richard’s analysis of love, the essence of perfect love demands not only both the lover and the object of that love, but also the one who is co-loved by these two. Similarly, Bonaventure argues that, for perfect love, along with two persons who are freely devoted to each other in love (*dilectio*), there must be a common one to be loved by them (*condilectio*). Without the third

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., d.2, a.u., q.2, fund.4 (I, 53): “Si est ibi summa *primitas*; sed quanto aliquid prius, tanto fecundius est et aliorum principium: ergo sicut essentia divina, quia prima, est principium aliarum essentiarum, sic persona Patris, cum sit prima, quia a nullo, est principium et habet fecunditatem respectu personarum; sed fecunditas in Deo respectu Dei non potest esse nisi actui coniuncta: ergo necesse est, plures esse personas.”

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.: “Sed quanto aliquid prius, tanto fecundius est et aliorum principium.” Cf. *libr. de Causis*, prop.1, 17.

<sup>62</sup> Hayes, “Bonaventure: Mystery of the Triune God,” 56.

<sup>63</sup> Hayes, Introduction to *St. Bonaventure’s Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 36.



being loved by the other two, perfect love would not exist.<sup>64</sup> As a result, given that there is a fullness of charity in God, it should be concluded that there are only three divine persons.

With regard to the modes of perfect production, Bonaventure considers the two modes of divine emanation: namely, emanation through nature and through will.<sup>65</sup> Accordingly, two persons emanate from each mode, respectively. As I will explore later in this chapter, the Son's emanation corresponds to the production through nature, and the Holy Spirit's emanation to that through will. In addition to these two persons, since there must be one person, the Father, who is the origin of such emanations, there are ultimately three persons in God.<sup>66</sup>

Bonaventure further describes that four relations are drawn from the two modes of emanation, and that the three persons are made known by these relations. In the emanation through nature, the Father has the relation of fatherhood to the Son as he begets the Son; the Son has the relation of sonship to the Father as he is begotten by the Father. In the emanation through will, the Father and the Son have the relation of spiration to the Holy Spirit as together they spirate the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit has the relation of procession to the Father and the Son as it proceeds from the two. These four relations also become the four characteristics by which the three persons are distinguished. To these characteristics, Bonaventure adds the Father's characteristic of innascibility in that the person is the origin of the emanations. In this way, the three persons are made known and distinguished by their relations and characteristics vis-à-vis the other(s).<sup>67</sup>

Bonaventure develops his insight into supreme interpersonal intimacy and interpenetration between the three persons: namely, *circumincessio*, as translated from *perichoresis*. This concept results from his consideration of the supreme communicability, consubstantiality and a series of co-attributes evolving from them:

And because of supreme communicability, there must be consubstantiality; and from supreme consubstantiality there must be supreme conformability; and from these there must be supreme co-equality; and because of this there must be supreme co-eternity; and from all of the above, there must be supreme mutual intimacy by which

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<sup>64</sup> Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.2, a.u., q.4, fund.1 (I, 56).

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., d.2, a.u., q.4, fund.2 (I, 56); Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.1, c.3, n.2 (WSB IX, 34).

<sup>66</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.1, c.3, n.3 (WSB IX, 34).

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p.1, c.3, n.4-5; note 19 (WSB IX, 34-35).

each is necessarily in the others by reason of their supreme interpenetration (*circumincessionem*), and one acts with the others in a total unity of substance, power, and activity within the most blessed Trinity itself.<sup>68</sup>

This quotation of *circumincessio* affirms that in God there is no one isolated person but rather the relational persons communicating God's very essence, and that, by virtue of mutual intimacy and co-inhering, the Trinitarian persons act together in the full unity of divinity. The same is true in God's act of creation. The three persons, as one divine Being, bring creatures into existence. Keeping in mind the unity of the divine essence and action, along with the communicability and relationality of the Godhead, the following sections will focus on the specific position and role that each divine person has in the one act of creation.

### 2.3.2 The Father as the Fountain Fullness

Bonaventure's theology of the divine persons' position and role in the Trinity's creative act is closely associated with the basic metaphysical framework of his thought. This framework is the movement of *egressus* and *regressus*, symbolised by a circle. It is the perfect figure, as Bonaventure states, "For there is the consummation of perfection, as it appears in a circle which is the most perfect form and which terminates at the same point at which it began."<sup>69</sup> Accordingly, the circular movement of *egressus* and *regressus* means that all things come out of their source (*egressus*) and then, return to their same source (*regressus*). In this movement, the source is also the simultaneous goal.<sup>70</sup> In Bonaventure, the inner-divine emanations and the external production of the created world are compared to the *egressus* of this circular movement, of which the starting point is the Father who is also the end point of their *regressus*.<sup>71</sup>

First of all, the Father is the source of the other persons' processions in the inner life of the Trinity. In this regard, note has to be taken of the three major attributes of the Father

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<sup>68</sup> Bonaventure, *Itin.*, c.6, n.2 (WSB II, 125).

<sup>69</sup> Bonaventure, 3 *Sent.*, d.1, a.2, q.1, conc. (III, 20): "Ibi enim est perfectionis consummatio, sicut apparet in circulo, qui est perfectissima figurarum, qui etiam ad idem punctum terminatur, a quo incepit."

<sup>70</sup> Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 16-17; Dominic Monti, Introduction to *Breviloquium*, trans. Dominic V. Monti, Works of St. Bonaventure IX (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2005), xlviii.

<sup>71</sup> Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 16-17.

which are interlinked elaborately by Bonaventure: innascibility, primacy and fecundity. The Father's innascibility connotes positive and negative aspects concurrently. From a negative viewpoint, it means that the Father is not begotten from another as he has no origin. However, from a positive aspect, it results in the concept of the primacy of the Father, who is the beginning, with nothing prior. Bonaventure writes, "The Father is said (to be) innascible, because he is not from another; and 'to not be from another' is 'to be first', and primacy is a noble *position*."<sup>72</sup> With regard to the immanent Trinity, primacy denotes that the Father is to be the first in relation to the Son and the Spirit, and so to be prior to the two persons, without any origin. Again, this primacy of the Father involves the concept of his fecundity, as Bonaventure acknowledges the axiom of the Neo-Platonic tradition, to which I have already referred: "Insofar as something is prior, then it is more fecund and the principle of other things."<sup>73</sup> Accordingly, it follows that, as the Father is the unequivocal first person without anything anterior, he is the fecund source of the other persons' immanent processions.<sup>74</sup> In this sense, Bonaventure attributes *fontalis plenitudo* to the Father: "But if a being is said to be first because of the lack of origin, that is, because it does not take its origin from another, in this sense, primacy resides principally in the person of the Father; and for this reason, the fontal-fullness (*fontalis plenitudo*) for the production of all the persons is found in Him."<sup>75</sup>

The Father is also, in an appropriate sense, the ultimate origin of creation because, although the Son and the Spirit, with the Father, are the fecund source of creation, their fecundity originates from that of the Father. In this regard, it should be first noted that, while primacy and fecundity are uniquely applied to the Father in terms of the immanent processions, these characteristics are also applicable to the common divine essence in terms of the Trinity's external production of a world of creatures. Bonaventure spells this out as follows, in his *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*:

The first being may be understood in two ways; by way of the lack of essential anteriority, and by way of the lack of personal origin. Thus, it includes a two-fold fontality depending on whether it refers to the lack of essential anteriority or to the

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<sup>72</sup> Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.u., q.2, ad 3 (I, 470): "Innascibilis enim dicitur Pater, quia non est ab alio; et non esse ab alio est esse primum, et primitas est nobilis *positio*."

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., d.2, a.u., q.2, fund.4 (I, 53): "Sed quanto aliquid prius, tanto fecundius est et aliorum principium."

<sup>74</sup> Hayes, Introduction to *St. Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 41.

<sup>75</sup> Bonaventure, *Myst. Trin.*, q.8, ad 4 (WSB III, 265). Cf. Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.1, c.3, n.7 (WSB IX, 35); *I Sent.*, d.27, p.1, a.u., q.2, ad 3 (I, 470).

lack of personal origin. When it is taken to mean the lack of essential anteriority, it includes fontality with respect to the effects and essences to be produced. Thus, since this condition is equally fitting to all the persons, it is equally proper to all of them to possess the nature of fontality in the production of created beings, since they are not three but one principle of creation. But in as far as it involves the lack of personal origin, it befits only that person who is innascible; namely, the Father in whom resides the fullness of fontality for the production of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.<sup>76</sup>

As the passage above points out, while the concept of primacy is used properly of the Father in the meaning of primacy by way of the lack of personal origin, it is ascribed to the three persons in the meaning of primacy by way of the lack of essential anteriority. This latter perspective on primacy affirms that the divine essence, which the three persons share equally with one another, is absolutely prior to, and the origin of, all other essences produced.

A related idea appears in the *Collations on the Hexaemeron*. In the 11<sup>th</sup> collation of this work, Bonaventure asserts that, in terms of production, something similar, equal and consubstantial is necessarily produced prior to something dissimilar, unequal and essentially different, since the latter logically presupposes that which precedes it. Based on this presupposition, the inner emanations in the Trinity must be the first in respect to all other created beings which are dissimilar to, unequal to and essentially different from the divine.<sup>77</sup> Bonaventure develops a similar logic in the *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*:

Again, the perfect is prior to the imperfect both in reality and in our mind; that which is complete is prior to that which is diminished; unity is prior to multiplicity; the simple is prior to the composite; the infinite to finite; act to potency; the immutable to the mutable; the eternal to the temporal; the necessary to the possible. Therefore, if every creature that is produced is imperfect, lacking in the highest unity, composed, finite, and in potency, in some way it is temporal, variable, possible, lacking in actuality and supreme necessity. It is necessary, therefore, that before the production of the creature there be a production of something most perfect, supreme, undivided, most simple, most infinite, eternal, immutable, and necessity. This cannot be through the production of something distinct in essence. It is necessary, therefore, that it be

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<sup>76</sup> Bonaventure, *Myst. Trin.*, q.8, ad 7 (WSB III, 266).

<sup>77</sup> Bonaventure, *Hex.*, c.11, n.9 (WB V, 161-62).

through the production of a person who is one in essence with the person producing, and equal in power, wisdom, and goodness. But this is to affirm the most blessed trinity.<sup>78</sup>

Contrasting the imperfect attributes of creatures with the perfect attributes of God, Bonaventure points out that the attributes of God are logically and really prior to those of creatures. If so, there must first be a divine essence and the emanations of the persons, who share such an essence, before the production of imperfect creatures. Then, based on the Neo-Platonic axiom regarding primacy and consequential fecundity, the three persons, as the same one divine essence, must have divine fecundity in common vis-à-vis created beings even though it is attributed fundamentally to the Father.<sup>79</sup> As a result, it can be claimed that the Trinity of persons, including the Son and the Spirit, is the fecund source from which all creatures flow, and that the inner-divine emanations of the two persons are the ground of the external creative act.

Again, the two persons proceed from the “fullness of fontality” of the Father, which is also the source of the fontality of the Son and the Spirit. Bonaventure notes, “In a certain way, this sort of fontality is the origin of the other fontality. For, since the Father brings forth the Son, and through the Son, and together with the Son brings forth the Holy Spirit, God the Father through the Son and with the Holy Spirit is the principle of everything created.”<sup>80</sup> The Father brings all creation into being in time through the Son and with the Spirit, as long as he produces the two persons in eternity.<sup>81</sup> In this sense, the Father can be rightly understood as the “Fountain Fullness” (*fontalis plenitudo*) not only in the immanent emanations of the Trinity but also in the external production of creation.<sup>82</sup> The fecundity of the Father is the foundational source of the whole of creation in an appropriate sense.

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<sup>78</sup> Bonaventure, *Myst. Trin.*, q.8, fund.8 (WSB III, 262-63).

<sup>79</sup> Hayes, Introduction to *St. Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 101-02.

<sup>80</sup> Bonaventure, *Myst. Trin.*, q.8, ad 7 (WSB III, 266).

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Edwards, *Christian Understandings of Creation*, 120-21. Here, I cite the different translation of *fontalis plenitudo* by Denis Edwards.

### 2.3.3 The Word as the Eternal Exemplar of Creation

Bonaventure's argument of the Son's emanation primarily relies on the proposition of Pseudo-Dionysius that the good is self-diffusive by nature (*Bonum diffusivum sui*). As I have said earlier, communicability and a concomitant plurality of the persons in God exist by means of the self-diffusive character of goodness in God. As goodness is self-diffusive by nature, God is essentially self-communicative and so emanation necessarily happens within God on account of this divine goodness. Bonaventure understands this self-diffusion of goodness by nature as the metaphysical basis for the emanation of the Son.<sup>83</sup>

In addition, Bonaventure considers the Son's emanation to be generation from the Father, as he affirms that the Son is generated from the Father substantially and originally.<sup>84</sup> The perfect manner of generation, Bonaventure says, is the producing out of one's very self, which brings forth the likeness between a producer and what is produced. To apply this analogy to God, Bonaventure emphasises that God generates the Other out of God's whole self because of the unity and simplicity of divine nature and therefore, there is the total communication of the same substance. On the contrary, a creature does so out of part of itself and thus, there are somewhat different aspects between a producer and what is produced.<sup>85</sup> In this way, God gives the perfect likeness to the One produced in generation. As a result, it can be said that the Son possesses the perfect likeness, generated from the Father. By virtue of the likeness with the Father, the Son, as is shown in the quotation below, plays a role as a beginning, producer and head of all things, like the Father, although produced by him:

And since God the Father is the principle of the Son, and the Son the principle of all things, thus because the Son is produced and produces, for that reason the Son *is* a head and *has* a head. However, the Father is the head of all things because he does not have a head since he is innascible; and therefore he is said (to be) *the fontal principle* out of whom all things (come) and into whom all things are led back through the Son. ... With respect to the objection concerning the Holy Spirit, it must be said that the Holy Spirit itself is led back to the Father through the Son with others,

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<sup>83</sup> Hunt, *Trinity*, 105.

<sup>84</sup> Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.5, a.1, q.2, conc. (I, 115).

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, d.9, a.u., q.1, conc. (I, 181).

since it proceeds from the Son.<sup>86</sup>

It is noteworthy, as this passage also implies, that, for Bonaventure, the Son is the intermediate person at each aspect of the circular movement of *egressus* and *regressus*. As the inner-divine emanations and the external creative act are compared to *egressus*, the Son is at work at the centre of each productive *egressus*. This centrality of the Son is the same in the *regressus* of the immanent Trinity and creation.

The second person has the titles Image and Word, as well as the title Son.<sup>87</sup> Each title remarkably demonstrates how this second person possesses the central position in the internal and external acts of the Trinity, and how this person is related to the other persons and the created world. The title Son makes clear that the second person is begotten from the Father and, as the personal likeness, possesses the same divine nature with him. The title Image points out that the Son is the expressed likeness of the Father in the highest degree. As only the Son proceeds from the Father alone, he becomes the fullest likeness and Image of the Father, and possesses the characteristic of being the source of another, like the Father, although not as the originator without origin. By means of the productive power shared from the Father, the Image becomes the co-principle in the spiration of the Spirit and thereby has a relationship with the third person.<sup>88</sup> In this way, the Image is rightly said to be the centre in the inner triune structure of God because, concurrently, the Image is a source of another person, like the Father, as well as being one emanating from the Father, like the Spirit. That is to say, the Image shares the properties of the Father and of the Spirit together: with the Father, the property of productivity and, with the Spirit, that of receptivity.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., d.31, p.2, dub.7, resp. (I, 552): “Et quoniam Deus Pater est principium Filii, et Filius principium omnium, ita quod Filius producit et producit, ideo *est* caput, et *habet* caput. Sed Pater quoniam caput non habet, cum sit innascibilis, est caput omnium; et ideo dicitur *fontale principium*, a quo omnia et in quem omnia per Filium reducuntur. ... Quod obiicitur de Spiritu sancto, dicendum, quod ipse Spiritus sanctus, cum procedat a Filio, per Filium cum aliis ad Patrem reducitur.”

<sup>87</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.1, c.3, n.8 (WSB IX, 36).

<sup>88</sup> Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.31, p.2, a.1, q.2, conc. (I, 542); Hayes, Introduction to *St. Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 48-50; Joseph Wawrykow, “Franciscan and Dominican Trinitarian Theology (Thirteenth Century): Bonaventure and Aquinas,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*, ed. Gilles Emery and Matthew Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 188, accessed August 8, 2014, Oxford Handbooks Online.

<sup>89</sup> Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 47; Hayes, Introduction to *St. Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 53.

The title Word is the most preferred title for Bonaventure, for it involves every relationship of the Son, from the inner life of the Trinity to the whole mystery of creation, revelation and incarnation. Bonaventure refers to this title as follows:

It has to be said that the word Son only expresses a relationship with the Father while the term Word refers to relationships to the speaker, to what is being said by the word, to the voice that embodies the word, and to the teaching that is learned by another through the medium of the word. And since the Son of God had to be described in these sentences not only in relationship to the Father, from whom he proceeds, but also to creatures, which he made, and to the flesh which he took on, and to the teaching that he communicated, he had to be described in a most excellent and fitting manner with the term Word. For that term relates to all these matters, and a more appropriate term could not be found in the world.<sup>90</sup>

Bonaventure introduces the analogy of an inner speaking at work in the title Word.<sup>91</sup> An inner speaking – i.e., speaking to oneself – is to conceive something in one’s mind. This conception means, in fact, the understanding of self and/or the other, and thus, by virtue of this understanding, the knowing subject can conceive something similar to oneself and/or to the other in one’s mind. Bonaventure defines this likeness as a word, saying that “a word is nothing other than *expressed* and *expressive* likeness, conceived by the force of the spirit of understanding, according to which it considers itself or the other.”<sup>92</sup> Accordingly, in one’s mind, the knowing subject generates the likeness which is, so-called, the “conceived word” (*verbum conceptum*), when one understands oneself or the other.

When it comes to applying this analogy to God, it can be said that God possesses the full knowledge of all things as well as God’s self, and that God’s conception of this perfect knowledge generates something similar to an object known in God’s self. However, it should be noted that the knowledge of God’s self and that of others are not separate in God, as Bonaventure remarks that God “recognises himself and all things in the one and same aspect.”<sup>93</sup> In this divine understanding, God conceives one comprehensive likeness through

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<sup>90</sup> Bonaventure, *Comm. Io.*, c.1, p.1, n.6 (WSB XI, 62).

<sup>91</sup> Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.27, p.2, a.u., q.1, conc. (I, 482-83).

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., d.27, p.2, a.u., q.3, conc. (I, 488): “Verbum autem non est aliud quam similitudo *expressa* et *expressiva*, concepta vi spiritus intelligentis, secundum quod se vel aliud intuetur.”

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., d.27, p.2, a.u., q.2, conc. (I, 485): “... se et omnia uno aspectu et eodem cognoscit.”



which God knows God's self and all others together. This is the inner Word or, in Bonaventure's own words, the "Eternal Word."<sup>94</sup> As a result, it is said that God knows God's self and all things in this one Word. Similarly, it is in this same Word, as the second person, that the Father expresses what he is and what he is able to or will do. In this sense, the Word is the Father's self-expression and the Father's Art. Bonaventure articulates this point as follows:

For from all eternity the Father begets a Son similar to Himself and expresses Himself and a likeness similar to Himself, and in so doing He expresses the sum total of His [active] potency; He expresses what He can do, and most of all, what He wills to do, and He expresses everything in Him, that is, in the Son or in that very Center, which so to speak is His Art.<sup>95</sup>

Ultimately, it can be concluded that God's fecundity is fully represented in the divine Word who contains and expresses the sum total of God's self and of God's knowledge of the world and reality in a unified mode. This insight into the Word entails the important doctrine of a relationship between God and creation: that is, exemplarism.

The discussion on exemplarism fundamentally presupposes the Platonic worldview about prototypical reality and material beings. According to this perspective, prototypical reality exists in the ideological realm transcending the empirical world, while material beings are the blurred reflection of such reality. As this worldview was applied in the Christian intellectual tradition, the concept of prototypes transcending sensible reality was employed to point to the divine ideas in God.<sup>96</sup>

Bonaventure sees an idea as a "likeness of a thing, through which it is known and produced" by a rational agent.<sup>97</sup> Based on God's immeasurable knowledge, ideas in God contain the infinite variety of things. In his *Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ*, Bonaventure elaborates this point by clarifying the differences between the connotations of the three modes of divine knowledge. These modes include a knowledge of approbation, a knowledge of vision and a knowledge of intelligence. Bonaventure explains the first two as

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., d.27, p.2, a.u., q.1, conc. (I, 482).

<sup>95</sup> Bonaventure, *Hex.*, c.1, n.13 (WB V, 8).

<sup>96</sup> Hayes, "Bonaventure: Mystery of the Triune God," 73.

<sup>97</sup> Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.35, a.u., q.1, fund.2 (WSB XVI, 195).

follows: “The knowledge of approbation refers only to things that are good and finite. The knowledge of vision is a knowledge of both good and evil, and of finite things in as far as they are realized in time. Therefore, it is a knowledge only of those things which have existed, or do exist, or will exist.”<sup>98</sup> While these two types of knowledge are about finite things within the time range, the knowledge of intelligence is about all the possible things that God knows. Bonaventure states, “The knowledge of intelligence is a knowledge of infinite objects in as far as, by this knowledge, God knows not only future realities, but possibilities as well. But for God, possibilities are not finite but infinite.”<sup>99</sup> In short, God knows the infinite numbers and potentials of things, beyond time, even if not all of them will be actualised. However, God knows things not by means of their actual existence but by means of the likeness – i.e., the idea – of them, since God absolutely precedes all other things.<sup>100</sup> Therefore, the ideas in God ought to be infinite.

In a strict sense, however, the infinite content of the divine ideas is conceived as one Idea in God.<sup>101</sup> If the ideas, as such, reside within God, it would mean there are parts in God and then, this would not match up with God’s simplicity. Bonaventure writes, “Since God’s wisdom is utterly simple, all the likenesses of these beings [all individual beings] are one in this same knowledge.”<sup>102</sup> In this sense, in God there is one divine Idea possessing the boundless content of ideas. The divine Idea is identified with the Word, since Bonaventure defines likeness as a word and sees that the Word, as the comprehensive likeness, is the full and unified expression of the immeasurable fruitfulness of God the Father.<sup>103</sup>

Bonaventure sees the divine ideas as the exemplary likeness, and the Word, who contains these ideas, as the exemplative likeness of things (*similitudo rerum exemplativa*).<sup>104</sup> The exemplary character of the divine ideas is predicated on the ontological difference between divine essence and creaturely essence and on the divine knowledge being true and thus expressive. The divine ideas hold the divine nature because, if they were to have distinct natures from the divine substance, it would contradict the unity and simplicity in God. Such

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<sup>98</sup> Bonaventure, *Scien. Chr.*, q.1, conc. (WSB IV, 77).

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., (WSB IV, 77-78).

<sup>100</sup> Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.35, a.u., q.1, fund.2 (WSB XVI, 195).

<sup>101</sup> Hayes, “Bonaventure: Mystery of the Triune God,” 73.

<sup>102</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.1, c.8, n.7 (WSB IX, 52).

<sup>103</sup> Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.27, p.2, a.u., q.3, conc. (I, 488); *Myst. Trin.*, q.4, a.2, ad 8 (WSB III, 201); *Hex.*, c.1, n.13 (WB V, 8); c.3, n.4 (WB V, 43).

<sup>104</sup> Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.27, p.2, a.u., q.2, conc. (I, 485).

divine ideas cannot be the nature of creatures, as created beings are ontologically different from the divine Being. Accordingly, the divine ideas are “the exemplary forms” and “the representative likenesses of created beings.”<sup>105</sup> In addition, the divine knowledge is perfect and true in itself. While human intellect receives the likeness of a thing from outside and knows the thing through its likeness, nothing from outside God impacts the divine knowledge. Bonaventure writes, “It [the divine knowledge] has an intrinsic object because, in the act of knowing, the divine vision does not look at objects outside the divinity itself. Rather, it knows all truth in as far as it gazes upon the divinity itself precisely as truth.”<sup>106</sup> Without depending on external objects, God knows everything in the divine ideas which are then equal to the divine truth as such. External creation is expressed according to this truth. In this sense, the divine ideas are the exemplary ideas with respect to created things.<sup>107</sup> All created beings are produced through these exemplary ideas. The Word, who is expressive, holds and represents all ideas of creatures. Therefore, in regard to the Godhead’s creative act, the Word is called the Exemplar of creation.<sup>108</sup> In addition, given this position of the Word as the Exemplar in God’s creating, the Word is rightly said to be the centre between God and the world.<sup>109</sup> As I will explore later, this concept of the Word, in Bonaventure’s theology, warrants the intimate association between God and all creatures.

#### 2.3.4 The Holy Spirit as the Bond of Love and the Gift of Love

Bonaventure sees the Holy Spirit as proceeding from the Father and the Son, both of whom are one principle. He considers this procession in two aspects. Firstly, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the liberality of the two persons. According to Bonaventure, just as the most fecund nature of God produces a person, God’s most liberal will does the same.<sup>110</sup> While the former corresponds to the emanation of the Son by the self-diffusive nature of divine good (*per modum naturae*), the latter corresponds to the emanation of the Spirit by divine will (*per*

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<sup>105</sup> Bonaventure, *Scien. Chr.*, q.2, conc. (WSB IV, 89).

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., q.1, conc. (WSB IV, 78).

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., q.2, conc. (WSB IV, 90-91); Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.35, a.u., q.1, conc. (WSB XVI, 198).

<sup>108</sup> Bonaventure, *Scien. Chr.*, q.2, fund.8 (WSB IV, 85); *Hex.*, c.12, n.7 (WB V, 175); Bowman, “The Cosmic Exemplarism of Bonaventure,” 182-83.

<sup>109</sup> Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.27, p.2, a.u., q.2, conc. (I, 485).

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., d.10, a.1, q.1, fund.3 (I, 195).

*modum voluntatis*).<sup>111</sup> In this will, the Father and the Son become one fecund spirator of the Holy Spirit due to the unity of the divine nature and to the divine attributes of primacy and fecundity. The Father and the Son are not separated in the divine will, as they possess one and the same divine nature. Based on primacy and concomitant fecundity, the divine will of the two persons is said to be the principle of the emanation of the third person. As the Father is prior to the inner-divine emanations, he is the fecund origin not only of the second person but also of the third person in the immanent Trinity. Although generated from the Father, the Son is also the fecund source with respect to the procession of the Holy Spirit, since his generation is logically prior to its spiration. As the Father and the Son are productive with respect to the Holy Spirit and are unified in the divine will, they share the one fecund will by which they spirate the Holy Spirit.<sup>112</sup>

Secondly, in association with the manner of liberal will, the Holy Spirit proceeds in the manner of love as well, since love is the first and most noble affection of a will.<sup>113</sup> Given that love is an act of volition, not of coercion, and that in God there is perfect love, the Spirit is understood as proceeding from the fullness of love which is communicated by the divine free will. As has been shown before on the basis of Richard's analysis of love, the perfection of love in God demands not only two loving persons but also a person co-loved by these two. Accordingly, Bonaventure sees that there are three persons in the threefold love in God: "*One*, who only gives, in whom is gratuitous love; *the Other*, who only accepts, in whom is due love; and *a Middle*, who gives and accepts, in whom there is a love mixed from each of two."<sup>114</sup> The Spirit corresponds to the second one who only accepts. The Father, as the origin of the divine emanations, has a generative power, and the Son, as the perfect Image of the

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., d.10, a.1, q.1, fund.2 (I, 195). In terms of the internal divine-emanations, the will is understood either as that which principally produces with concomitant nature or that which is concomitantly accompanied to nature. The will in the former meaning corresponds to the procession of the Holy Spirit in the sense that the Holy Spirit proceeds through the manner of love by divine will, still holding the same nature. The will in the latter meaning corresponds to the generation of the Son in the sense that the Son is generated as the beloved of the Father, although through the manner of nature. Hayes refers to it here as a "dialectical unity" of both the necessity of immutability and the accompanying will, which unity transcends the finite division of necessity and freedom. Cf. Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.6, a.u., q.2, conc. (I, 127-28); Hayes, Introduction to *St. Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 46.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., d.11, a.u., q.2, conc. (I, 215).

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., d.10, a.1, q.2, conc. (I, 197).

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., d.2, a.u., q.4, conc. (I, 57): "*Una*, quae tantum dat, in qua est amor gratuitus; *alia*, quae tantum accipit, in qua est amor debitus; et *media*, quae dat et accipit, in qua est amor permixtus ex utroque."

Father, also has the same capability, whereas the Spirit does not possess such a power. Hence, the Spirit is not called the Image even though it has the titles of the Gift, the mutual bond or Love and the Holy Spirit as such. The Spirit is totally passive and receptive to the mutual love of the Father and the Son.<sup>115</sup>

With reference to the principle of the Holy Spirit's procession and its title as Love, Bonaventure's concept of the three levels of love needs to be noted – essential love, notional love and personal love. Essential love is, in fact, divine love as the nature of God; it is common to the three persons altogether. Notional love indicates mutual love – or, so-called concord – between the first and second persons and is the principle of the Spirit's procession. Personal love means that the Spirit is Love itself as the fruit of a perfect liberal will in the concord that exists between the first and second persons while being a person distinct from these two persons but holding the same divine essence.<sup>116</sup> Ultimately, it can be claimed that the Holy Spirit, as Love and a distinct person, emanates from the free mutual love between the Father and the Son.

The Holy Spirit's position as Love is postulated in Bonaventure's explanation of how the third person is titled the Holy Spirit. He uses the analogy of spiration in a body, in a rational substance and in God. The act of spiration in a body is breathing, so a spirit means a breath. To apply this analogy to spiration in a rational substance, a spirit points to love. Just as breathing comes from within, is enduring and is life-giving, so too is love in a rational substance. Again, to apply this analogy to spiration in God, a spirit refers to the third person as the Spirit that is Love. Since this Love is pure and perfect, the Spirit is rightly called the Holy Spirit.<sup>117</sup>

The title mutual bond, in close connection with the title Love, is applied to the Holy Spirit. As Bonaventure observes, love points to a bond between persons. Since the Father and the Son communicate in the procession of the Holy Spirit who is the Love, the Holy Spirit becomes the bond or link (*nexus*) of the two persons.<sup>118</sup> However, the Holy Spirit's position as the mutual bond does not imply the Spirit's active role in connecting the separation

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<sup>115</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.1, c.3, n.9 (WSB IX, 36); Wawrykow, "Franciscan and Dominican Trinitarian Theology (Thirteenth Century)," 189.

<sup>116</sup> Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.10, a.2, q.1, conc. (I, 201); Hayes, Introduction to *St. Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 55-56.

<sup>117</sup> Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.10, a.2, q.3, conc. (I, 204).

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, d.10, a.2, q.2, conc. (I, 202); Hayes, Introduction to *St. Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 60-61.

between the Father and the Son, or forcing those two persons to love. When it is said that the Spirit is the bond of the Father and the Son, it posits the distinction of each of the two persons, not their local or substantial separation. Although the Father and the Son are distinct persons, they are united as the origin of the Spirit. In other words, by their producing the Spirit, the two persons are joined. Because the Spirit possesses the total characteristic of receptivity without generative power, the Spirit proceeds in a passive way. Hence, that the Spirit is the mutual bond does not mean that it causes the love between the two persons and its own procession but affirms that it is a sort of passive bond originating from them – the effect of their mutual love.<sup>119</sup> In this regard, the Spirit can be called “a bond that is a product of their common love.”<sup>120</sup>

The title Gift is also related to the Holy Spirit’s position as Love. Bonaventure postulates that a gift (*donum*) is truly a gift as long as it is driven by love.<sup>121</sup> Then, since the Holy Spirit emanates from the mutual love between the other two persons, it is titled the Gift. The Holy Spirit is the Gift in which all other gifts are given. Bonaventure explains this point in two senses. Firstly, insofar as gifts are “the gifts of grace that makes one pleasing” (*dona gratiae gratum facientis*), they are granted concomitantly with the Holy Spirit.<sup>122</sup> Secondly, all gratuitous gifts of God are given through the Holy Spirit who is the first gift from the Father and the Son. In a sense, it is rightly said that all gifts are bestowed from the three divine persons equally and that, given the Father’s identity as the ultimate source in an appropriate sense, all gifts are bestowed through the Son and through the Holy Spirit. However, since the Holy Spirit is properly called the Gift coming from the will of the two loving persons in the immanent Trinity, it is the appropriate model of God’s gratuitous giving in love.<sup>123</sup>

These insights of Bonaventure into the Holy Spirit shed light on the Spirit’s role in creation as both the bond and the gift of love. In the next section of this chapter, I will come

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<sup>119</sup> Walter H. Principe, “St. Bonaventure’s Theology of the Holy Spirit with Reference to the Expression ‘Pater Et Filius Diligunt Se Spiritu Sancto’,” in *S. Bonaventura 1274-1974, 4: Theologica*, ed. Jacques G. Bougerol (Grottaferrata: Collegio S. Bonaventura, 1974), 257-58.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>121</sup> Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.18, a.u., q.1, fund.4 (I, 323).

<sup>122</sup> I will bring up again this Bonaventuran concept of grace in the section 3.4.1.

<sup>123</sup> Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.18, a.u., q.1, conc. (I, 323-24); Hayes, Introduction to *St. Bonaventure’s Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 61-62.

back to what this view of the Holy Spirit means in terms of the structure of Bonaventure's theology of creation.

## **2.4 Bonaventure's Concept of Creation Based on His Trinitarian Doctrine**

On the basis of the exploration of Bonaventure's Trinitarian doctrine so far, I will explore further the following key aspects of Bonaventure's concept of creation: the sacramentality of creation; exemplarism and creation; and creation as a gift of divine love and freedom. Lastly, I will point out that, in Bonaventure's thought, there is the ontological gap between God and creation, and thus his concept of creation is different from the pantheistic view.

### **2.4.1 The Sacramentality of Creation**

Bonaventure's creation theology is fundamentally sacramental because he sees that the whole of creation is the external self-expression of the Trinity and so represents the unity and multiplicity of the Godhead. As the divine fecundity of the Father overflows into the emanation of the Son and the Spirit *ad intra*, the same divine fecundity overflows into creation *ad extra* through the Word. Ultimately, all creatures are a kind of sacrament manifesting the relational and fecund Trinity.<sup>124</sup> Hayes spells out this point as follows:

Because theology conceived of God as immensely rich and communicative being within Himself, it could readily move to the further, free communication of being which takes the form of the doctrine of creation, or the communication *ad extra*. Viewed in this way, the mystery of the created world appears as an external and free expression of the inner, spiritual fecundity of the divine being. For Bonaventure, as we have seen, this includes the conviction that the world reflects not only the divine nature as one, but the divine nature as trinitarian also. In its unity and in its rich

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<sup>124</sup> A number of contemporary theologians have made use of this position of Bonaventure. For example, see Bowman, "The Cosmic Exemplarism of Bonaventure," 183; Denis Edwards, "Theological Foundations for Ecological Praxis," *Ecotheology* 5 and 6 (1998-1999): 129-30; *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 71; 77; Zachary Hayes, "Christ, Word of God and Exemplar of Humanity," *The Cord* 46, no. 1 (1996): 11; Anthony Murphy, "Francis, Bonaventure and the Environmental Crisis," *The Cord* 54, no. 1 (2004): 19-20; Nothwehr, *Ecological Footprints*, 108.

diversity, the world is a symbol of that being in whom unity and multiplicity are united in a most perfect way.<sup>125</sup>

To the greatest extent God possesses the attributes which essentially connote communicability and productivity. Because God cannot bring forth in God's self what is other than the divine, and because the supreme communicability is to produce a being who is consubstantial with the source of all, Bonaventure argues that, in God there is a plurality of the divine persons who are united in one divine nature. As his concept of *circumincessio* shows, the divine unity, in conjunction with the plurality of the persons, implies that each person is intimately related to, and interpenetrated in, other persons and thereby acts jointly in a unity of essence and activity.<sup>126</sup> Bonaventure views the diversity among creatures as involving order and relationships that together form one universe.<sup>127</sup> Then, when it is said that the entirety of creation expresses the relational Trinity, it means that the mystery of the unity and multiplicity of the relational Godhead is manifested by the created world which is whole and contains a diversity of relational realities within it.

In Bonaventure's thinking, the whole of creation's existence is fundamentally grounded in the movement back and forth of the divine fecundity of God. In the immanent Trinity, the fontality of the Father generates the Son and, with the Son, spirates the Holy Spirit. Outside the inner life of the Trinity, the same fontality of the Father, through the Son and with the Holy Spirit, brings forth the whole of creation. In this act, the three persons are one unified source of all created beings.<sup>128</sup> For Bonaventure, it is evident that various creatures are produced from this one principle because a single created being cannot appropriately express the greatest power, wisdom and goodness of God. Instead, the variety of creatures can do so, as an outflow of a great richness of God.<sup>129</sup> Bonaventure further sees that these diverse creatures, again, are led back to the divine who is also their termination point because, otherwise, an infinite number of their successive beings would follow.<sup>130</sup> In this way, as the expression of the creative fecundity of God, who is its single source, a world of various creatures is ontologically based on the circular movement of proceeding from

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<sup>125</sup> Hayes, Introduction to *St. Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 63.

<sup>126</sup> Bonaventure, *Itin.*, c.6, n.2 (WSB II, 125).

<sup>127</sup> Bonaventure, *Myst. Trin.*, q.2, a.1, conc.; ad 10 (WSB III, 143; 146).

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, q.8, ad 7 (WSB III, 266).

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, q.2, a.1, ad 10 (WSB III, 146-47).

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, q.2, a.1, conc. (WSB III, 143).



(*egressus*), and returning to the fecund God (*regressus*).

The sacramentality of creation can be examined in terms of the Word. As I have cited before, Bonaventure introduces the analogy of an inner speaking to his explanation of the concept of the Word. Continuing, he refers to the analogy of an outer speaking to indicate creation as being likened to the pronounced word, the created word, distinguished from the inner divine Word: “In another manner, ‘to speak *to the other*’ is ‘to express the concept of mind’; and the said word corresponds to this *speaking*.”<sup>131</sup> To apply this analogy to God, Bonaventure means that God exteriorly expresses the Word, the likeness to God’s self, through a creature. Hence, creation is said to be the “external word” expressing the inner divine Word.<sup>132</sup> As the divine Idea, this Word contains and expresses the bountiful ideas of the Father’s self and of all he knows and can do, which ideas point to the Father’s fecundity. Since creatures are produced according to such divine ideas, they are considered to be the external expression of the same fecundity of the Father, as the Word expresses it. At the same time, since the Word itself is the full self-expression of the Father’s fecundity, when it is said that creation is the expression of the divine fecundity, it means that creatures express the Word who is their eternal Exemplar. In this sense, creation itself is a “little word” of God.<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, given that the Word is called the Father’s Art in whom he expresses everything he means and that the Father brings them forth in time through his Art, it can also be claimed that creation is the work of God’s Art.

#### 2.4.2 Exemplarism and Creation

The sacramental view of creation is fleshed out by Bonaventure’s concept of exemplarism as the principle by which creatures represent God. In his *Breviloquium*, Bonaventure describes that the created world reflects the Trinity at the three different levels of vestige, image and likeness: “The aspect of vestige (‘footprint’) is found in every creature; the aspect of image, only in intelligent creatures or rational spirits; the aspect of likeness, only in those spirits that are God-conformed.”<sup>134</sup> Prior to the level of vestige, Bonaventure puts the level of shadow at the most elementary stage of the reflective levels of God, in his *Commentary on the First*

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<sup>131</sup> Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.27, p.2, a.u., q.1, conc. (I, 482): “Alio modo dicere *ad alterum* est conceptum mentis exprimere; et huic *dicere* respondet verbum prolatum.”

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.; Hayes, Introduction to *St. Bonaventure’s Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 52.

<sup>133</sup> Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 61.

<sup>134</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.2, c.12, n.1 (WSB IX, 96).

*Book of Sentences*, albeit not mentioning the level of likeness: “For something is called a shadow, because it represents from a distance and confusedly; something is called a vestige because it represents God from a distance but distinctly; and something is called an image because it represents God closely and distinctly.”<sup>135</sup> The essential difference between the use of shadow and of vestige is that the former mirrors God as its cause in an indeterminate way and makes known the common attributes of God, while the latter reflects God as triple cause and highlights the appropriate attributes of the persons of the Trinity. In spite of this difference, both levels can be seen as one level, for they reflect God in reference to causality and, as I will show below, they have some overlapping aspects. Above all, whereas the levels of image and of likeness correspond to a rational creature and to God-conformed spirits, respectively, the levels of shadow and of vestige correspond to all creatures, including non-human.<sup>136</sup> Accordingly, it can be claimed that, overall, Bonaventure observes that there are three ways in which creatures give expression to God as shadow and vestige, as image and as likeness.

Leonard Bowman remarks that the treatment of shadow is shown in the first chapter of the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, with the examples of the general properties of creatures. Bonaventure writes that the immensity of the power, wisdom and goodness of God is revealed: by the greatness of created things in the efficiency of their operations as well as in their magnitude and power; by the multitude of created things in existence; and by the manifold activities in the created world.<sup>137</sup> That is to say, such properties of creatures are the shadow of divine immensity and infinity. At the same time, this consideration of shadow is overlapped with the level of vestige because the former is also related to the reflection of the Trinitarian persons which the latter signifies. As Bowman states, infinity is regarded not only as a common attribute of God but also as an individual attribute of the Word, who is part of the triple causes, in that the infinitude of the divine ideas are expressed by the Word.<sup>138</sup> Moreover, in a strict sense, the general properties of creatures point to attributes appropriated to each Trinitarian person as well – i.e., power to the Father, wisdom to the Son and goodness

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<sup>135</sup> Bonaventure, *1 Sent.*, d.3, p.1, a.u., q.2, ad 4 (WSB XVI, 77).

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., d.3, p.1, a.u., q.2, ad 4 (WSB XVI, 77-78). In other words, spiritual beings are also regarded as shadows and vestiges of God. The reason why non-human creatures are considered to be so is not because they do not possess rational or spiritual aspects in themselves, which are necessary for the levels of image and likeness, but because the levels of shadow and vestige are the universal dimension of all created beings.

<sup>137</sup> Bonaventure, *Itin.*, c.1, n.14 (WSB II, 57; 59).

<sup>138</sup> Bowman, “The Cosmic Exemplarism of Bonaventure,” 191.

to the Holy Spirit.<sup>139</sup> The greatness, multitude and activity of created things which are cited above reflect the immensity of God by referring to these three appropriated attributes. Hence, it can be claimed that, in a sense, the level of shadow is included in that of vestige.

Vestige reflects the Triune God through a pattern of three causes in the internal structure of things: efficient, exemplary and final causes.<sup>140</sup> This triple causality, according to Bonaventure, becomes the ground by which all creatures have a relationship with God: “Hence, this Principle must have, in respect to any creature, the role of a threefold cause: efficient, exemplary and final. As a result, every creature must bear within itself this threefold relationship to its first Cause.”<sup>141</sup> Each cause corresponds to a divine person of the Trinity. The first person is the efficient cause; creatures reflect the Father as the Power that constitutes them in being. The second person is the exemplary cause; creatures are patterned after this Wisdom, the Exemplar, and their pattern reflects it. The third person is the final cause; creatures reflect the third person as the Goodness by which they will be led to their consummation.<sup>142</sup>

This triple causality parallels the pattern of a triad of essential characteristics in which all creatures, as vestiges of the Trinity, participate – measure, number and weight; mode, species and order; unity, truth and goodness.<sup>143</sup> Each triad is closely related to the other and, like the three causes, each characteristic corresponds to each divine person.

Measure relates to the specific limitation of a creature compared to God’s immeasurability. Whereas there is no beginning or end, termination or limitation, in God, creatures come into being out of nothingness, which implies a starting point to their being, and they terminate their existence due to their finitude.<sup>144</sup> Hence, Bonaventure says, “No

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<sup>139</sup> Bonaventure, *Itin.*, c.1, n.14 (WSB II, 57; 59); *Brev.*, p.1, c.6, n.1-5 (WSB IX, 44-47).

<sup>140</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.2, c.1, n.2, 4 (WSB IX, 60-62); Boyd Taylor Coolman, “Part II: On the Creation of the World,” in *Bonaventure Revisited: Companion to the Breviloquium*, ed. Dominic V. Monti and Katherine Wrisley Shelby (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2017), 146-47; Edwards, *Jesus the Wisdom of God*, 106. Here, we can notice that, in Aristotle’s concept of four causes, Bonaventure does not take a material cause into his Trinitarian concept of creation.

<sup>141</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.2, c.1, n.4 (WSB IX, 62).

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*; *Brev.*, p.1, c.6, n.4 (WSB IX, 46); Edwards, *Jesus the Wisdom of God*, 106.

<sup>143</sup> Bonaventure, *Myst. Trin.*, q.1, a.2, conc. (WSB III, 128-29); *Itin.*, c.1, n.11 (WSB II, 55); *Brev.*, p.2, c.1, n.2, 4 (WSB IX, 60-62); *Sermo De Trinitate* (IX, 353); Bowman, “The Cosmic Exemplarism of Bonaventure,” 186-87. The triad of mode, species and order is equivalent to that of measure, number and weight.

<sup>144</sup> Bonaventure, *Sermo De Trinitate* (IX, 353); *Itin.*, c.1, n.11 (WSB II, 55).

creature is immeasurable according to duration but measured.”<sup>145</sup> This notion of creatures’ limitation posits one fecund source from which all of them come and to which all of them return again. All these ideas reflect the Father as the Fountain Fullness.<sup>146</sup>

Number is the principle of the distinct existence of each being. In other words, each being is distinguished from other beings by number.<sup>147</sup> Bonaventure relates number to the Son who possesses the “wisdom which distinguishes and knows everything.”<sup>148</sup> The Son, as the Word of God, is truth itself. As I have explored before, God knows all things in the Word, the divine truth, and creatures are expressed after this truth. This truth is the divine ideas which are the exemplary forms with respect to creation.<sup>149</sup> Each creature, patterned after these forms, mirrors the truth – the Exemplar – which is the Son.

Weight means the determined place of each thing, or the tendency of each thing towards that place, such as, in scholastic cosmology, fire’s rising upwards, stone’s falling downwards.<sup>150</sup> This concept of weight is suggestive of the Holy Spirit. Bonaventure says, “*Weight* indeed concerns the Holy Spirit on account of its goodness holding all things, as each single thing is established and held in its location by weight.”<sup>151</sup> For Bonaventure, goodness is equivalent to finality because, following Aristotle, he sees goodness as the goal to which all things aim.<sup>152</sup> Then, the Holy Spirit is reflected by creatures as their goodness, insofar as they are inclined towards their final cause which is God.<sup>153</sup> In addition, as the Holy Spirit is the bond of mutual love between the Father and the Son to complete their divine love, it can be thought of as the force of love directing creatures towards their completion in God.

The pattern of a series of triads shows that the whole of creation, as vestige, harbours the imprint of the Trinity. All creatures, including the non-human like animals and plants, are modelled after the Word who is the centre of the inner Trinitarian life. Like the Spirit, the Word is produced by the Father; at the same time, like the Father, the Word spirates the Spirit.

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<sup>145</sup> Bonaventure, *Sermo De Trinitate* (IX, 353): “... nulla creatura est immense secundum durationem, sed mensurata.”

<sup>146</sup> Ibid. (IX, 352-53).

<sup>147</sup> Bonaventure, *Itin.*, c.1, n.11 (WSB II, 55); *Brev.*, p.2, c.1, n.4 (WSB IX, 62).

<sup>148</sup> Bonaventure, *Sermo De Trinitate* (IX, 353): “... sapientiam omnia distinguentem et cognoscentem.”

<sup>149</sup> Bonaventure, *Scien. Chr.*, q.2, conc. (WSB IV, 89-91); *I Sent.*, d.35, a.u., q.1, conc. (WSB XVI, 198).

<sup>150</sup> Bonaventure, *Itin.*, c.1, n.11 (WSB II, 55); *Brev.*, p.2, c.1, n.4 (WSB IX, 62).

<sup>151</sup> Bonaventure, *Sermo De Trinitate* (IX, 353): “*Pondus* vero respicit Spiritum sanctum propter sui bonitatem omnia terminantem, sicut pondere unumquodque suo loco constabillitur et terminatur.”

<sup>152</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.1, c.6, n.4, note 49 (WSB IX, 46).

<sup>153</sup> Bowman, “The Cosmic Exemplarism of Bonaventure,” 187.

The Word is receptive and communicative.<sup>154</sup> This ultimately means that, as the Word possesses the characteristics of receptivity and productivity altogether, the Word contains and presents the whole order of the immanent Trinity in himself. Accordingly, it can be claimed that all creatures, patterned after this Word, contain and present the order of the Trinity through a series of triads in their existence. In this sense, the created world is the external expression of the Triune God and, more concretely, is the representation of the inner Word.

Further, the position of the Word as the Exemplar and pattern of creation becomes a ground to affirm that creatures are directly created by, and equally related to God.

Bonaventure writes:

Both the highest and the lowest things are represented by the Word. And although an angel, in so far as he is a likeness of God and possesses nobler attributes, partakes in the Word in a larger measure than a worm, yet in the order of exemplarity, the principle “angel” is not nobler than the principle “worm”: hence the principle “worm” expresses or represents the worm in the same way as the principle “angel” expresses and represents the angel, nor is there in this regard any superiority of the angel over the worm. For any creature is a mere shadow in regard to the Creator.<sup>155</sup>

All creatures are modelled after the Word and through the Word are imprinted with Trinitarian footprints, possessing a triadic structure, despite a difference of degree and mode of reflecting the Godhead. In other words, such a difference does not diminish the value of non-human creatures as the expression of the divine. For, as vestiges, they represent God in their own distinct manner from that of rational creatures, and have a direct relationship with the Word, and through the Word, with the Trinity of persons. They are equally associated with their Creator. Bonaventure’s concept of the direct relationship between the Word and each creature, Bowman claims, is decisively distinguished from the Neo-Platonic worldview which describes the production of the universe in terms of a hierarchical descent, down through grades of being, from the One as the transcendent source of all being.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Hayes, Introduction to *St. Bonaventure’s Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 53.

<sup>155</sup> Bonaventure, *Hex.*, c.3, n.8 (WB V, 46).

<sup>156</sup> Bowman, “The Cosmic Exemplarism of Bonaventure,” 187. In his *Breviloquium*, Bonaventure articulates this point as follows: “When we say ‘unique and supreme,’ we exclude the erroneous idea that God produced the lower creatures through the ministry of [created] intelligences.” See Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.2, c.1, n.2 (WSB IX, 60).

### 2.4.3 Creation as a Gift of Divine Love and Freedom

Another key point that should be addressed is how the position of the Holy Spirit, as the mutual bond, Gift and Love in the inner Trinitarian life, sheds light on Bonaventure's concept of creation. As the mutual bond between the other two persons, the Holy Spirit is understood as the outcome of their reciprocal love through freedom. The Trinity of the three persons, including the third, reveals perfect and unqualified love. Bonaventure claims that, in the Godhead's act of creation, the three divine persons, God the Father through the Son and with the Holy Spirit, become one principle of all created beings.<sup>157</sup> Given that the Holy Spirit, proceeding by volition, is the fruit of perfect divine love, it follows that, when God the Father with the Holy Spirit creates everything, the Godhead freely gives rise to all creatures with a bountiful love of the Spirit. In the Spirit, the three persons share their love with creatures as well, notwithstanding that these are not divine. Hence, creation is the finite but bountiful way that God liberally shares perfect divine love with others.<sup>158</sup>

I propose that this suggests that each creature is a gift of God, a gift of the Holy Spirit, in an analogous sense.<sup>159</sup> For Bonaventure, a gift is bestowed by love. Since the Holy Spirit is the Gift proceeding from the love between the Father and the Son, creation, which is brought into being with a bountiful love of the Spirit, can be seen as a gift of God. Likewise, since the Holy Spirit is the Gift, in a sense of the model of God's freely giving in love, creation, which is created by divine free will, can be said to be a gift of God.

In addition, as I have pointed out above, the Holy Spirit is the final cause by which creatures are led to their consummation, and is associated with the concept of the weight by which creatures are inclined to their determined place, their goal. Given that the Holy Spirit is the Love of the immanent Trinity, the divine power to bring creatures to their final fulfilment can be seen as the work of the divine love of the Holy Spirit. As love in a rational substance gives life and is communicated through others, the Holy Spirit is understood as working for the sake of creatures by giving life to them, communicating divine love with them and

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<sup>157</sup> Bonaventure, *Myst. Trin.*, q.8, ad 7 (WSB III, 266).

<sup>158</sup> Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 54-55.

<sup>159</sup> The reason why I say an "analogous sense" is because, for Bonaventure, the word *donum*, which is translated to a "gift," refers to the Holy Spirit and God's gratuitous supernatural gift. This meaning of a "gift" is distinguished from the natural "given" (*datum*). Cf. Bonaventure, *1 Sent.*, d.18, a.u., q.3, fund.3 (I, 327); *Brev.*, p.5, c.1, note 1; p.5, c.2, note 13 (WSB IX, 169; 173).

bringing them to their final fulfilment in love.<sup>160</sup> In this way, reflecting upon the Holy Spirit logically shows that God's creative act is a free action full of unlimited love and goodness, and that creatures, directed by God, are the object of boundless divine love, the love that is the Spirit.

#### 2.4.4 The Ontological Distinction between the Trinity and Creation

Bonaventure's perspective on the ontological distinction between God the Trinity and creation is considered in two ways. Firstly, Bonaventure affirms that, even though creatures are regarded as representing God the Creator, they can never be God whereas the Son and the Spirit are the same God. God's creative act is fundamentally different from divine emanation which is not a creative act.<sup>161</sup> In other words, while, in Bonaventure's thought, the created world is considered to be the self-expression of the Trinity in time and space due to divine free will, the inner Trinitarian emanations are, by necessity, from all eternity. Hence, the nature of all created things is temporal and contingent, unlike the divine persons.<sup>162</sup>

In this regard, divine free will in God's creative act has to be distinguished from that in the Spirit's procession. With reference to the emanation of the Spirit, divine volition stems from that perfect love which is the necessary nature of God, and so the Spirit's procession, together with the Son's emanation, is regarded as a necessitated divine act. On the other hand, the production of creatures is never a compulsory and intrinsic act to God because God can exist as God without creation. The self-communication, from the divine nature, of goodness and love finds its fullness in the inner Trinitarian emanations. Creation adds nothing to such perfection. It is absolutely dependent on God's liberality. This perspective shows that the divine order in the immanent Trinity is fundamentally different from the order of creation, affirming the contingency of created beings.<sup>163</sup> As Denis Edwards quotes Bonaventure's *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, "That diffusion in time which is seen in creation is a mere center-point in comparison to the immensity of the eternal goodness. From this, it is possible to think of another greater diffusion; namely, that sort of diffusion in which the one diffusing itself communicates the whole of its substance and nature to the other."<sup>164</sup> All creatures point

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<sup>160</sup> Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.10, a.2, q.3, conc. (I, 204).

<sup>161</sup> Wawrykow, "Franciscan and Dominican Trinitarian Theology (Thirteenth Century)," 188.

<sup>162</sup> Murphy, "Francis, Bonaventure and the Environmental Crisis," 20.

<sup>163</sup> Hayes, Introduction to *St. Bonaventure's Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, 58-59.

<sup>164</sup> Bonaventure, *Itin.*, c.6, n.2 (WSB II, 125), quoted in Edwards, *Jesus the Wisdom of God*, 101-02.

to a greater and perfect self-expression in the inner life of the Trinity, rather than being a full divine manifestation in themselves.

Secondly, divine transcendence is understood in relation to divine immanence. Although the Trinity's imprint resides in all creatures, divine immanence cannot be thought of in a limited way. In his speculation about the divine being as transcendent, Bonaventure states:

Looking over the way we have come, let us say that the most pure and absolute being, because it is being in an unqualified sense, is first and last; and therefore it is the origin and consummating end of all things. Because it is eternal and most present, it embraces and enters into all things that endure in time, simultaneously existing as their center and circumference. Because it is most simple and greatest, it is within all things and outside all things, and hence "it is an intelligible sphere whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere." Because it is most actual and immutable, while "remaining unmoved, it imparts movement to all things." Because it is most perfect and immense, it is within all things but is not contained by them; and it is outside all things but is not excluded; it is above all things but not distant; and it is below all things, but not dependent. Because it is supremely one and all-embracing, it is *all in all*, even though all things are multiple and this is simply one. And because this is most simple unity, most peaceful truth, and most sincere goodness, it is all power, all exemplarity, and all communicability. Therefore, *from him and through him and in him are all things*, for he is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good.<sup>165</sup>

As this passage implies, God's immanence does not depend on, nor is it restricted by, creatures. God is intimately present to all things by God's substance which is beyond creatures' being and movement as well as beyond time and space. The premise of divine immanence is divine transcendence which, as the necessary nature of God, is essentially different from the contingent nature of the created order. This viewpoint of the ontological distinction, as Edwards points out, shows that God cannot be coterminous with creation. At the same time, it upholds the individual freedom of creatures to exist as themselves, within

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<sup>165</sup> Bonaventure, *Itin.*, c.5, n.8 (WSB II, 121).



their limited mode, as radically dependent on the Godhead and yet as standing apart from it in their own freedom as creatures.<sup>166</sup>

Thus, Bonaventure maintains the transcendence of God due to the intrinsic ontological gap between God and creation, although his theology contains ideas supporting the significance of creation. In this respect, his concept of creation is definitely distinguished from pantheism which believes that God and nature are the same.

## 2.5 Conclusion

Based on the exploration conducted throughout this chapter, I argue that Bonaventure's Trinitarian doctrine of creation bears the elements which can be reconstructed to underline the positive view of creatures and awaken a human concern for them. The first element is the sacramental dimension of creation. Bonaventure fundamentally recognises that creatures are brought into being from the fontal fullness of God, and thus that they are the sacramental expression of the relational and fecund God in finite yet various forms. The second element is creatures' direct relation to God on the basis of Bonaventure's exemplarism. His theology of the Word as the Exemplar illuminates the vision that, since all creatures, including non-human things, have the Trinitarian footprints in themselves by being patterned after the Word, they become a kind of external word which holds the order of the Trinity. Because all of them are related to the Word who is their Exemplar, and through the Word are associated to the Trinity whom they express through the structure of their being, they have equally a direct relationship with the Godhead. The third element is creatures as receivers of God's free love and gifts from God. As the Holy Spirit is the bond of love and the Gift of love by volition in the inner life of the Trinity, all creatures, brought into being by divine freedom and with the bountiful love of the Spirit, are gifts for humanity from God and participate in God's free love.

I believe that Bonaventure's thought is closer to weak anthropocentric senses as these elements ground the significance of creatures in some way. His sacramental view of creatures is, in a sense, understood as upholding their intrinsic value because they are, in themselves, regarded as a kind of divine word, divine revelation, imprinted with the vestiges of the Trinity. However, at the same time, in the words of David Toolan, such a view can be thought of as "theocentric utilitarianism" which means that creatures are nothing other than the instruments

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<sup>166</sup> Edwards, *Jesus the Wisdom of God*, 102.

for human spiritual progress towards God.<sup>167</sup> In other words, creatures are regarded as existing to contribute to the spiritual need of humans, even if it is not believed that they exist just to meet a human material need. As I will explore in more detail in Chapter 5, Bonaventure's sacramental view of creation is associated with this kind of an instrumental view, since creation is seen as a step leading humans to the recognition of God.<sup>168</sup> However, from the weak anthropocentric viewpoint, this instrumental value is acknowledged because, at any rate, it supports the significance of creatures which contribute to human spiritual growth as an ideal to be sought. Moreover, I insist that, even if Bonaventure's sacramental view is considered to be principally related to the instrumental value of creatures, the other two elements can support more clearly the intrinsic worth of their existence, regardless of whether they contribute instrumentally to human spiritual growth: creatures' direct relation to God and their participation in divine love. In this way, by upholding the value of creatures in an intrinsic sense as well as an instrumental sense, the reconstructed elements of Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology of creation differentiate his thought from strong anthropocentrism which justifies the unrestrained human exploitation of other creatures.

I am arguing that these elements of Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology of creation can have new and expanded meaning in relation to the contemporary scientific understanding of the natural world, which is a different background theory, and the ecological situation in this present age. As part of this dialogue, I will move my focus to Bonaventure's Christocentric theology in the next chapter in order to examine, despite his anthropocentric view of creation's consummation, whether these elements can still be effective in Bonaventure's thinking. This next chapter also aims at seeking positive clues in his Christology concerning the consummation of non-human creatures.

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<sup>167</sup> David Toolan, *At Home in the Cosmos* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 38.

<sup>168</sup> Bonaventure, *Itin.*, c.1, n.9 (WSB II, 53). See the section 5.3.3.

## Chapter 3

### The Fate of Non-Human Creatures in Bonaventure's Christocentric Theology

#### 3.1 Introduction

The eschatological fate of creatures – specifically, of non-human creatures – is an important issue that cannot be overlooked if ecological theology is to offer a Christian response to the ecological crisis and to call people to ecological conversion. For, as Elizabeth Johnson indicates, if non-human creatures are considered entirely excluded from God's promise of redemption, then environmental issues, such as the destruction of their habitats and the extinction of species, may be regarded as insignificant in the Christian context.<sup>1</sup> John Haught points to the fundamental importance of eschatology for ecological theology. According to him, Christian eschatology should not justify indifference to the existing environmental crisis by raising anticipation of the future world separated from the present world. Rather, it should contribute to arousing human concern about the natural world by articulating that the eschaton means a new creation, a transformation of this world, and that, together with human beings, this future fulfilment is promised to the whole of creation.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Denis Edwards also proposes that it is an important task of a Christian ecological theology to build a theology which can formulate a new creation of all creatures, including non-human, brought by the Christ event.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, I think it can be argued that any eco-theological interpretation of Bonaventure's theology ought to deal with how he understands the fate of non-human creatures in God's redemptive work if it is to be a meaningful resource in Christian ecological theology.

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth A. Johnson, "An Earthly Christology: 'For God So Loved the Cosmos'," *America* 200, no. 12 (2009): 27.

<sup>2</sup> John F. Haught, "Ecology and Eschatology," in *And God Saw That It Was Good: Catholic Theology and the Environment*, ed. Drew Christiansen and Walter Grazer (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1996), 47-64.

<sup>3</sup> Denis Edwards, "Sketching an Ecological Theology of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God," in *The Natural World and God: Theological Explorations*, ed. Denis Edwards (Adelaide, SA: ATF Theology, 2017), 49.

In Chapter 1, I have discussed the inherent limitations of Bonaventure's theology of the created world: namely, his anthropocentric view of human spiritual ascent to God and of final salvation that seems to exclude non-human creatures. I suggest, however, that Bonaventure's thought on the fate of non-human creatures be re-examined in light of his concept of Christocentricity, for, as I have briefly mentioned in the preceding chapter, Christ, in Bonaventure's thinking, is at work at the centre of creation's return to God (*regressus*), which means creation's final fulfilment. In this chapter, I will ask whether Bonaventure's Christology might contain positive clues for revision and further development of his eschatology, so that it might then be understood as involving non-human creatures in a way that goes beyond Bonaventure's explicit teaching.

Bonaventure's Christocentricity has two dimensions – the Trinitarian and the incarnational. The former dimension was explored in the preceding chapter, focusing on the Word as the centre of the Trinity and as the Exemplar of all creation. The latter dimension has two aspects. The first addresses the hypostatic union of Christ as divine and human. This union is the foundation for Christ's mediatorship and God's redemptive work. The second aspect, dependent on the first, deals with Christ not only as the centre of the soul's journey into God, but also as the centre of the universe and the centre of history.<sup>4</sup> This chapter will focus on the incarnational dimension of Bonaventure's Christocentricity with respect to the question of the eschatological fate of non-human creatures. I will begin by exploring some foundational aspects of his incarnational Christocentricity – i.e., his understanding of the reasons for the incarnation and his understanding of human nature. Then I will investigate his thinking about the incarnate Christ's work of completion and redemption, and determine meaningful implications for the final fulfilment of non-human creatures in today's ecological perspective.

### **3.2 The Foundation of Bonaventure's Incarnational Christocentricity**

As a beginning of my exploration of Bonaventure's incarnational Christocentricity, I will discuss what Bonaventure sees as the reasons for the incarnation. This discussion will present an outline of his broad picture of the mystery of Christ's incarnation and redemption. My examination of Bonaventure's understanding of human nature will focus on some aspects which are related to one of the main reasons for the incarnation – that is, the perfection of

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<sup>4</sup> Cousins, "The Two Poles of Bonaventure's Theology," 139-40.

creation.

### 3.2.1 The Reasons for the Incarnation

Bonaventure explores the reason for Christ's incarnation in the question as to why the Word's becoming flesh was fitting to God, or to put it another way, in Bonaventure's own words, whether appropriate congruity is observed in the work of the incarnation on the part of God (*Utrum in opere incarnationis servetur debita congruentia ex parte Dei*).<sup>5</sup> He does not believe that there is only one reason for the incarnation. Rather, he considers various reasons as follows in the *Commentary on the Third Book of Sentences*:

It must be said that, without doubt, it was fitting and appropriate for God to be incarnated. And this is on account of *the outstanding manifestation* of his power, wisdom and goodness, which certainly happened in the assumption of the human race. And it was suitable because of *the excellent consummation* of the divine works which indeed happened when the last was linked to the first. For there is the consummation of perfection, as it appears in a circle which is the most perfect form and which terminates at the same point at which it began. It was proper on account of *the abundant payment of value* for the liberation of human captives because there was one divine person who outweighed the whole human race. Finally, it was proper on account of *the overflowing glorification of a human being*, so that not only would a human being *find interior pastures* in God, but also, indeed, *exterior pastures*.<sup>6</sup>

At greater length, Bonaventure further examines the primary reason for the incarnation.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Bonaventure, 3 *Sent.*, d.1, a.2, q.1 (III, 19-21).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., d.1, a.2, q.1, conc. (III, 20): "Dicendum, quod absque dubio congruum fuit et Deum decuit incarnari; et hoc propter suae potentiae, sapientiae et bonitatis *eminentem manifestationem*, quae quidem facta est in humani generis assumptione. Congruum etiam fuit propter divinorum operum *excellentem consummationem*, quae quidem facta est, cum ultimum coniunctum est primo. Ibi enim est perfectionis consummatio, sicut apparet in circulo, qui est perfectissima figurarum, qui etiam ad idem punctum terminatur, a quo incepit. Decebat etiam propter *superabundantem pretii solutionem* ad liberationem hominis captivi, quia sola persona divina erat, quae praeponderabat toti humano generi. Postremo decebat propter *supereffluentem hominis glorificationem*, ut non tantummodo *inveniret* homo in Deo *pascua interius*, immo etiam *pascua exterius*."

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., d.1, a.2, q.2 (III, 21-28).

Noting that there are two opinions on this question – i.e., the completion of the whole universe or the redemption of humanity, – he asserts that the latter is the more important and principal reason rather than the former, based on the following arguments. Since the incarnation is such a great mystery, the cause for it should be the most momentous one of conciliating divine anger and restoring everything. He also states that this way of speaking of the incarnation, as being willed by God to remove human beings' sins, intensifies significantly the love and devotion of the faithful. Whereas these two arguments are mentioned briefly by Bonaventure, he addresses two others at length. For example, the opinion that the redemption of humankind is the principal reason for the incarnation is consonant with the authority of the Scriptures and saints, both of which speak of the same idea. In addition, this opinion honours God more than the idea that the completion of the universe is the primary reason. This latter idea assumes that such a completion occurs only through the incarnation, and this might be taken to mean that God is restricted, in a certain way, to be necessarily incarnated.<sup>8</sup>

Having said that, one must note that Bonaventure does not ignore the significance of the perfection of the universe as a reason for the incarnation. Before unfolding his arguments in favour of the redemption of humanity as the chief reason, Bonaventure states that both are in line with traditional Catholic doctrine:

He who deigned to be incarnated for us knew which of these ways of speaking is truer. And it is difficult to see which of these reasons must be preferred in view of the fact that each of them is Catholic and held by Catholic men. And both of them arouse the soul to devotion according to different insights.<sup>9</sup>

Subsequently, Bonaventure admits that it seems to be more consonant with the judgement of reason that the perfection of the universe is the principal reason for the incarnation.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, he definitively chooses the redemption of humanity as he generally prefers an argument that appeals more to faith rather than philosophical reason. This type of an

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., d.1, a.2, q.2, conc. (III, 24-25); Francis Xavier Pantheri, *The Universal Primacy of Christ*, trans. Juniper B. Carol (Front Royal, VA: Christendom Publications, 1984), 22.

<sup>9</sup> Bonaventure, *3 Sent.*, d.1, a.2, q.2, conc. (III, 24): “Quis autem horum modorum dicendi verior sit, novit ille qui pro nobis incarnari dignatus est. Quis etiam horum alteri praeponendus sit, difficile est videre, pro eo quod uterque modus catholicus est et a viris catholicis sustinetur. Uterque etiam modus excitat animam ad devotionem secundum diversas considerationes.”

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

argument, Gregory LaNave calls, an argument *ex pietate* which includes reasoning “in keeping with ‘the piety of faith’” towards Scriptures, the Church fathers and God as well as reasoning that promotes the religious life of the faithful.<sup>11</sup> Since the reasons for the dominance of the redemption of humanity, which I have outlined above, are built on this argument *ex pietate*, Bonaventure insists that such a redemptive purpose is the principal reason for the incarnation. However, he also holds that an argument in accord with philosophical reason is not illegitimate, and that the opinion of the perfection of the universe as the primary reason is also in line with Catholic tradition. This fact leaves room for understanding the two major reasons as being balanced in Bonaventure’s thought of the incarnation.

In this regard, Joshua Benson’s analysis of the *Breviloquium*’s structure is a notable work because it supports the idea that the cosmic completion, as well as the redemption of humanity, is an important meaning of the incarnation. The *Breviloquium* commences with a prologue in which Bonaventure presents the three constitutive categories with regard to Holy Scripture: its source (*ortus*), which flows from the Trinity; its procedure (*progressus/modus*), which concerns all the knowledge helpful for salvation and the knowledge of the whole universe in God, and involves various ways which God communicates this knowledge; and its purpose (*status/fructus*), which is the fullness of everlasting happiness with God.<sup>12</sup> The prologue is followed by seven parts: part 1 concerns the Trinity; part 2, the creation of the world; part 3, sin; part 4, the incarnation of the Word; part 5, the grace of the Holy Spirit; part 6, sacraments; and part 7, the final judgment. The structure of these seven parts can be examined in light of the three categories of *ortus*, *progressus/modus* and *status/fructus*. As is inferred by their titles, part 1 corresponds to the *ortus*, and part 7 to the *status/fructus*. Benson contends that, while parts 2 through 6 can be identified as the *progressus/modus*, it is also possible to find all of the three categories within them.<sup>13</sup> He first considers parts 2, 3 and 4:

Part 2, on creation, forms the *ortus* of creation’s temporal movement out from God.

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<sup>11</sup> Gregory LaNave, “Bonaventure’s Theological Method,” in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff, Brill’s Companions to the Christian Tradition 48 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 117-18; Bonaventure, *3 Sent.*, d.1, a.2, q.2, conc. (III, 24-25).

<sup>12</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, prol.1-4 (WSB IX, 1-4); Joshua Benson, “The Christology of the *Breviloquium*,” in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, and Jared Goff, Brill’s Companions to the Christian Tradition 48 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 253-54.

<sup>13</sup> Benson, “The Christology of the *Breviloquium*,” 254-55.

Part 3 describes the horrifying turn in the *progressus*, the *modus* that deformed creation: sin. Part 4, on the incarnation of the Word, brings these two movements to completion since, as we saw above, Bonaventure describes the incarnate Word in part four as the fulfilment of creation. Christ therefore functions as the *fructus* of creation's movement out from God – the *medium* in whom all things are brought to completion.<sup>14</sup>

In discussing the reason for the incarnation in part 4, Bonaventure puts three important questions, noting that God's restorative action manifests divine power, wisdom and goodness, as does God's creative action:

Now what is more powerful than to combine within a single person two natures so widely disparate? What is wiser and more fitting than to bring the entire universe to full perfection by uniting the first and last, that is, the Word of God, which is the origin of all things, and human nature, which was the last of all creatures? What is more benevolent than for the master to redeem the slave *by taking the form of a servant*?<sup>15</sup>

While the first question speaks of the magnificence of the hypostatic union itself, the second question points to the cosmic completion by the incarnation. The whole universe is led to perfection by the Word's union with human nature, and this union is the wisest way to achieve the cosmic completion. In part 4, Bonaventure brings up the idea of the cosmic completion again when he discusses the mode by which the incarnation came about. With regard to the manner of conceiving, Bonaventure discusses four possible ways, as earlier posed by Anselm: "First, out of neither man nor woman, as with Adam; then, out of man but not woman, as with Eve; third, out of both man and woman, as with all those born of concupiscence."<sup>16</sup> Then Bonaventure affirms that, for the consummation of the universe, a fourth way of conceiving had to be introduced – this is Mary's conception of Christ: "Out of woman without the seed of a man, through the power of the Supreme Maker."<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, when discussing the timing

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 255.

<sup>15</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.4, c.1, n.2 (WSB IX, 132-33).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p.4, c.3, n.5 (WSB IX, 142).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.



of the incarnation, he refers to the incarnation as the perfection of creation: “Now the Incarnation is the most perfect of all God’s works. Since development ought to proceed from the imperfect to the perfect, not the other way round, the Incarnation had to take place at the end of the ages.”<sup>18</sup>

As the third question posed by Bonaventure above shows, he does not forget to add that the healing of humanity is also effected by the incarnation. Benson explains, “This important theme of cosmic completion is immediately balanced by the theme drawn out by the third question, the healing the incarnation provides.”<sup>19</sup> From the perspective of the incarnation as a healing work for humans, the three categories of *ortus*, *progressus/modus* and *status/fructus* reappear in parts 4 to 6 of the *Breviloquium*. Part 4 on the incarnate Word is understood as the *ortus* of God’s redemptive work for humanity, an idea reinforced both in part 5 where Bonaventure calls the incarnation “the origin and wellspring of every gratuitous gift,”<sup>20</sup> and in part 6 where he describes the incarnate Word instituting the sacraments.<sup>21</sup> Then part 5 on the grace of the Holy Spirit may be seen as the *progressus/modus* of the incarnate Word’s redemptive work by this grace which rectifies the effects of human sin and transforms the soul to the God-conformed likeness. Part 6 on sacraments may be viewed as the *status/fructus* of this redemptive work instituted by the incarnate Word so that human beings are given grace and led to salvation.<sup>22</sup>

To sum up, the perfection of creation is not a less important reason for the incarnation even though Bonaventure chooses the redemption of humanity as the main reason *ex pietate*. In the structure of the *Breviloquium*, the incarnation, placed at the centre of the movement from *ortus* to *status/fructus*, is shown as willed for both reasons and linking them. As the *status/fructus* of creation, the incarnate Word itself is the completion of God’s creative work and brings the entire universe to its perfection. At the same time, as the *ortus* of God’s redeeming work, the incarnate Word offers healing to humanity.<sup>23</sup> As will be discussed later, the perfection of creation and the redemption of humanity are to be understood as two inseparable aspects within the broad scope of God’s redemptive action.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.4, c.4, n.4 (WSB IX, 145).

<sup>19</sup> Benson, “The Christology of the *Breviloquium*,” 248.

<sup>20</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.5, c.1, n.1 (WSB IX, 169).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.6, c.1, n.3 (WSB IX, 212-13).

<sup>22</sup> Benson, “The Christology of the *Breviloquium*,” 255-56.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 256.

### 3.2.2 Human Nature

As I have briefly mentioned, Bonaventure sees that, by being united with human nature, the Word brings the whole universe to its perfection. That being so, it needs to be examined how human nature is related to cosmic completion in Bonaventure's thought. In this regard, there are two important characteristics of human nature: being the microcosm (*minor mundus*) embodying all elements of the macrocosm (*major mundus*) and being directly ordered towards conformity with God.

Bonaventure brings out the idea of the microcosm in his argument as to why it is more suitable that divine nature, in the incarnation, is united with human nature rather than with angelic nature.<sup>24</sup> With regard to the disposition of human nature, he provides three reasons. The first concerns human nature's fittingness to express the personal distinction of the Trinity. The Son is a person distinct from the Father by being generated from the Father who is the origin, and thereby having the relation of sonship to him. Bonaventure sees these aspects encompassed in human beings and thus it is logical that incarnation, united with human nature, would more appropriately represent the Son's relation of sonship to the Father in the inner life of the Trinity.<sup>25</sup> Following this reason, Bonaventure adds the other two reasons which are related to the idea of the microcosm:

The second reason is on account of the greater *representation* of the divine *exemplar*, by reason of which a human being is said (to be) *a microcosm*. For the rational soul not only represents God as considered *in itself*, but also insofar as it is *united to a body*, which it rules and in all of which it dwells, it is like God in the macrocosm; and St. Augustine often states this. By reason of this greater conformity, the reason of unitability is greater (in the assumption of human nature).

The third reason is on account of *the manifold composition of a human being*. Indeed, as St. Gregory says, since a human being is composed of a corporal and spiritual nature, he or she shares (something) with every creature in this way; hence, when human nature is assumed and deified, all nature is exalted in it in this way, as

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<sup>24</sup> Bonaventure, *3 Sent.*, d.2, a.1, q.2 (III, 39-41). Here, too, Bonaventure understands the primary reason as the deserving need of and the redemptive benefit for the fallen human race, just as he views that the redemption of humanity is the more principal reason for the incarnation.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, d.2, a.1, q.2, conc. (III, 40); Hayes, *The Hidden Center*, 65.

long as (human nature) is united to the Deity in its similarity. And hence, the assumption of human nature is more effective than (the assumption of) angelic nature for the perfection of the whole universe.<sup>26</sup>

The second and third reasons, quoted above, are closely related to each other. The third particularly shows Bonaventure's understanding of humanity as a unique existence composed of both the spiritual and corporeal dimensions of the entire created order. In this order, angels are purely spiritual realities while non-human creatures, such as animals, plants and inanimate objects, are purely material realities. Only human beings, possessing both a soul and a body, unite the spiritual and the material dimensions. Thus, humans share something both spiritual and material with all created realities, and so reflect the whole of creation in themselves. Furthermore, by means of these dimensions, humanity itself mirrors God's relationship with the created world, as is stated in the second reason. The rational soul, representing God, rules the body and inhabits it, as God rules the material world and is present in it. In this sense, humanity, as the microcosm of the wider creation, is also rightly called the greater expression of the divine exemplar.<sup>27</sup>

Bonaventure sees human beings as directly oriented towards God by reason of their spiritual dimension. He presents this characteristic as a reason why divine union in the rational human creature is more suitable than in the whole universe:

When it is said that every creature is infinitely distant from God, distance is understood *as the lack of equality and of participation in a third nature*, because there is nothing univocal between a creature and the Creator, in nothing can a creature, indeed, be equated to the Creator; but it does not hold true concerning distance which is understood *through opposition to conformity according to a reckoning of order and*

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<sup>26</sup> Bonaventure, 3 *Sent.*, d.2, a.1, q.2, conc. (III, 40): "Secunda ratio est propter maiorem divini *exemplaris repraesentationem*, ratione cuius homo dicitur *minor mundus*. Anima enim rationalis non tantum repraesentat Deum, prout consideratur *in se*, sed in quantum *unitur corpori*, quod regit et in quo toto inhabitat, sicut Deus in maiori mundo; et hoc pluries dicit Augustinus. Ratione huius maioris conformitatis maior erat ratio unibilitatis. Tertia ratio est propter *multiplicem hominis compositionem*. Quia enim homo compositus est ex natura corporali et spirituali, et quodam modo communicat cum omni creatura, sicut dicit Gregorius; hinc est, quod cum humana natura assumitur et deificatur, quodam modo omnis natura in ea exaltatur, dum in suo simili Deitati unitur. Et hinc est, quod assumptio humanae naturae plus facit ad totius universi perfectionem quam angelicae."

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.; Hayes, *The Hidden Center*, 65.

*of imitation.* For the rational creature is *directly ordained towards God* and, among creatures, *imitates God most expressly*; and by reason of this *assimilation* and *conformity*, it possesses the reason of image and suitability in respect of divine union.<sup>28</sup>

Although the infinite distance between God and creature is evident in essence due to ontological inequality, Bonaventure posits that there is not an infinite distance between God and creature in terms of the rational creature's imitation of God. The whole universe "has parts in which is found only the reason of the vestige and, therefore, (has) *deficiencies in the conformity of the expression of likeness*."<sup>29</sup> In contrast, the rational creature possesses not just the aspect of vestige but also that of image by holding God as its personal desire through the three faculties of memory, intellect and will. A human creature is, indeed, an image of God on the basis of these faculties of its rational soul.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, a human soul has the potential to be assimilated to God by the influence of God's gift of grace, as Bonaventure states:

That *created grace* is compared to an *influentia* of light, and its *principle* is compared to the sun. Whence, Scripture also calls God or Christ the *sun of justice*, because, just as corporeal light from the material sun inflows through the air, through which it formally illuminates the air, so also spiritual light, which is God, influences the soul from a spiritual sun, by which the soul is formally illuminated, reformed, sanctified, and vivified ... So grace is a spiritual *influentia* that assimilates and conforms rational minds to the source of light.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Bonaventure, 3 *Sent.*, d.2, a.1, q.1, ad 2 (III, 38): "... cum dicitur, quod omnis creatura distat a Deo in infinitum, intelligitur de distantia *per recessum ab aequalitate et participatione tertiae naturae*, quia nihil univocum est creaturae ad Creatorem, in nullo etiam creatura Creatori potest aequari; sed non habet veritatem de distantia, quae attenditur *per oppositionem ad convenientiam secundum rationem ordinis et imitationis*. Nam rationalis creatura *immediate in Deum ordinatur* et *expressissime* inter creaturas *Deum imitatur*; et ratione huius *assimilationis et convenientiae* habet rationem imaginis et congruitatem respectu divinae unionis."

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., d.2, a.1, q.1, conc. (III, 38): "Habet etiam partes, in quibus reperitur solum ratio vestigii, et ideo *deficientes a conformitate expressae similitudinis*."

<sup>30</sup> Bonaventure, 1 *Sent.*, d.3, p.1, a.u., q.2, ad 4 (I, 73); *Brev.*, p.2, c.12, n.1, 3 (WSB IX, 96-97); *Itin.*, c.3, n.2-4 (WSB II, 81-91).

<sup>31</sup> Bonaventure, 2 *Sent.*, d.26, a.1, q.2 (II, 636). This translation is credited to Katherine Wrisley Shelby. Cited in Katherine Wrisley Shelby, "Part V: 'On the Grace of the Holy Spirit'," in *Bonaventure Revisited: Companion to the Breviloquium*, ed. Dominic V. Monti and Katherine Wrisley Shelby (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan

At this level of likeness achieved by means of the inflow of divine grace into the soul, a sanctified human creature who conforms to God more deeply and intimately than at the level of image, mirrors God most distinctly.

In summary, human nature encapsulates all realities of creation in itself, possessing the potential to be transformed to a God-conformed existence. As pure spirit, angelic nature does not have commonality with purely material creatures, notwithstanding its God-like intellect and immutability.<sup>32</sup> In contrast, by virtue of its bodily aspect, human nature has something in common with all material beings. At the same time, just like angelic nature, human nature is designed to be ordered and conformed to God by virtue of its spiritual dimension. Human nature is, therefore, a sort of intersection in the entire created order. This property has the important implication that Christ's taking of humanity is an event pertaining not to spiritual creatures alone nor to material creatures alone, but to the whole of creation. It further affirms that the completion of the material universe and realities within it are, in some way, related to and dependent on that of humanity. Hence, as a junction of God's creation, human nature was fitting for the event of the incarnation which was not only for humanity's redemption but also for cosmic completion.

Bearing in mind humanity's characteristics highlighted so far, as well as the two main reasons for the incarnation, I will explore in the next section how, for Bonaventure, Christ incarnate plays a role in the cosmic completion and humanity's redemption, and how these two actions are closely interrelated in God's salvific action.

### **3.3 Christ Incarnate in the Mystery of Redemptive-Completion**

In his book, *The Hidden Center*, Zachary Hayes presents and examines some examples of the specific models of Bonaventure's theology of redemption. He refers to Romano Guardini who divided Bonaventure's theology of redemption into the moral-legal theory and the physical-mystical theory, the two main models, as well as the personalist theory, a minor model. The moral-legal theory means that, in line with the Anselmian theory of satisfaction, Christ's redemptive action is meant to make satisfaction for humanity's sin; the physical-mystical

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Institute Publications, 2017), 220-21.

<sup>32</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.2, c.8, n.2 (WSB IX, 82-83). However, the God-like intellect and immutability of the angels presupposes that they have freely chosen to unite their will with God's. That is, such characteristics are not proper to them per se.

theory highlights that, following the view of the Greek Fathers, Christ's redemption, as a New Creation, aims to overcome the disorder in the human soul and its relationship to reality caused by sin and to lead the individual to union with his mystical body; the personalist theory sees the redemption as the restoration of the personal relationship with God. Hayes also refers to two thinkers who oppose Guardini's division. Rufinus Silic views the incarnation in Bonaventure's theology mostly as the presupposition for satisfaction by crucifixion. Alexander Gerken interprets Bonaventure's soteriology with the reparation theory and the completion theory. While the former is meant to integrate the satisfaction theory with the physical-mystical theory with reference to sin and its effect, the latter seems to dismiss the reality of sin.<sup>33</sup>

Hayes argues that Bonaventure's thoughts of redemption can be integrated into and examined in one broad concept, rather than divided into several separate theories. He proposes the concept of "redemptive-completion."<sup>34</sup> As I will discuss below, creation's completion and humanity's redemption, as a twofold reason for the incarnation, are not conflicting but complementary views in this concept. I believe that this perspective in the concept of redemptive-completion is consistent, as well, with Benson's analysis of Bonaventure's thought on the reasons for the incarnation which shows that creation's completion and humanity's redemption are linked to each other in the incarnation. I will adopt this concept of redemptive-completion in my exploration of seeking positive indications concerning the eschatological fate of non-human creatures.

### **3.3.1 Christ Incarnate as the Consummation of Creation**

That Christ took human nature in the incarnation indicates that he possessed the characteristics of humanity as well as those of divine nature. As Ewert Cousins points out, the incarnation is the coincidence of *maximum* and *minimum* – in other words, the divinity and matter. Through the hypostatic union, the divinity, the highest nature, is intimately united with material nature which humanity holds and which is the lowest creaturely nature. In addition, given that humanity is the microcosm containing the spiritual and material levels of the macrocosm, the coincidence of microcosm and macrocosm is also found in the incarnation.

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<sup>33</sup> Hayes, *The Hidden Center*, 152-55; *What Manner of Man? Sermons on Christ by St. Bonaventure* (Chicago, IL: Franciscan Herald Press, 1989), 86-87.

<sup>34</sup> Hayes, *The Hidden Center*, 182; "Incarnation and Creation in the Theology of St. Bonaventure," 327.

The human nature of Christ incarnate, as a microcosm, embodies and joins the spirit and matter of macrocosm, thus reflecting the entire created order of spiritual and material beings. The combination of these two types of coincidence results in the coincidence of Alpha and Omega, where Christ incarnate is not only the beginning of all things by virtue of his divinity, but also the end of all things in such a way that he microcosmically “recapitulates all things in his humanity and brings them into a new and more intimate union with the divinity.”<sup>35</sup>

This last point is made clearer in light of humanity’s potential to be transformed to God-likeness, which potential Bonaventure expresses as follows:

The ability of human nature to be united in a unity of person with the divine – which is the most noble of all the receptive potencies implanted in human nature – is reduced to act so that it would not be a mere empty potency. And since it is reduced to act, the perfection of the entire created order is realized, for in that one being the unity of all reality is brought to consummation.<sup>36</sup>

Christ in his human nature represents its potential and its full actuality. Since he is the perfect likeness of God the Father, the potential of humanity’s conformity to God is totally accomplished by his taking on of human nature. The whole of creation, as Bonaventure remarks above, reaches its fulfilment through the actualisation of this potential of humanity in Christ.

Bonaventure’s view of the perfection of creation is elaborated through the symbol of a circle. Just as the circle is closed at its beginning and thereby being the perfect figure, creation reaches its consummation only when the first meets the last. In this regard, Bonaventure states, “It [the incarnation] was suitable because of *the excellent completion* of the divine work which indeed happened when the last was linked to the first.”<sup>37</sup> While the “first” refers to divine nature as the origin of all things, the “last” refers to human nature, for Bonaventure particularly sees a human being as the last work of God’s creation in accordance

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<sup>35</sup> Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, 150-52; “Bonaventure’s Christology: A Resource for the Third Millennium,” in *That Others May Know and Love: Essays in Honor of Zachary Hayes*, ed. Michael F. Cusato and F. Edward Coughlin (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1997), 218.

<sup>36</sup> Bonaventure, *Sermon II on the Nativity of the Lord*, in *What Manner of Man?: Sermons on Christ by St. Bonaventure*, ed. Zachary Hayes (Chicago, IL: Franciscan Herald Press, 1989), 74.

<sup>37</sup> Bonaventure, *3 Sent.*, d.1, a.2, q.1, conc. (III, 20): “Congruum etiam fuit propter divinorum operum excellentem consummationem, quae quidem facta est, cum ultimum coniunctum est primo.”

with the first creation account of Genesis. By the union of these two natures, which is equivalent to the coincidence of Alpha and Omega, Christ brings creation to its consummation.<sup>38</sup>

As I have mentioned in the previous chapter, Christ, as the second person of the Trinity, is at the centre of the circular movement not only of *egressus* but also of *regressus*, the movement which is represented by the figure of the circle. God the Trinity's creative action is compared to the aspect of *egressus*. The divine fecundity produces the whole of creation as the self-expression *ad extra* of the Trinity. In particular, among the Trinitarian persons, the second person is the Word in whom are all the ideas of all created things, and so is the eternal Exemplar after whom all things come into being. Creatures are associated with the Trinity through the Word, their Exemplar. Thus, the second person, as *Verbum increatum*, is the centre between the Godhead and the created world in *egressus*. Similarly, the second person is so in *regressus*, yet as *Verbum incarnatum*. All things return to God from whom they are produced through Christ the mediator. Bonaventure emphasises the human nature of Christ incarnate in terms of a returning movement to God:

It is also necessary to posit an intermediary in the *going forth* and in the *return* of things: in the *going forth*, a medium which will be closer to the productive principle; in the *return*, a medium which will be closer to the one returning. Therefore, as creatures went forth from God by the Word of God, so for a perfect return, it was necessary that the Mediator *between God and humanity* be not only God but also human so that this mediator might lead humanity back to God.<sup>39</sup>

The incarnation of Christ is the event in which the creaturely nature, which is produced from the divine fecundity, is united with the divinity. At which event, the first meets with the last; the circular movement of *egressus* and *regressus* is completed; and the work of creation is brought to perfection.<sup>40</sup> As a result, it can be said that, in Bonaventure's thought, creation and consummation, which comprise the circle, are closely linked by Christ the centre. To put it another way, in the words of Hayes, "The order of creation does not stand as a reality that can

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<sup>38</sup> Bonaventure, *Sermon II on the Nativity of the Lord*, 74.

<sup>39</sup> Bonaventure, *On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology*, trans. Zachary Hayes, Works of St. Bonaventure I (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1996), n.23 (WSB I, 59).

<sup>40</sup> Bonaventure, *Sermon II on the Nativity of the Lord*, 74; Hayes, *What Manner of Man?*, 94, note 47.



be understood simply in itself, but may be understood only in terms of its end, that is grace and consummation.”<sup>41</sup> In accordance with the circular movement of *egressus* and *regressus* – a movement which is completed by Christ who is at the centre of both *egressus* and *regressus* – creation is essentially directed to its consummation only through the incarnate Word, just as God creates all things through the uncreated Word.

### 3.3.2 The Redemptive Work of Christ Incarnate

Although Christ’s incarnation is related to bringing the whole of creation to its completion, it cannot be fully explained without considering how the work of completion is disturbed by sin and how Christ incarnate redeems creation from such a disturbing effect. As the microcosm which recapitulates the spiritual and corporeal aspects of the created world, humanity has the potential for being transformed into God-likeness, and the completion of creation depends on the actualisation of this potential. At the same time, however, it is also Bonaventure’s perspective that the Word of God was incarnated to correct humanity’s sinfulness and fallen nature. Accordingly, the incarnation has to be viewed in relation to this latter dimension as well.

In Bonaventure, sin is considered in terms of the spiritual-rational creatures’ relation to God. Sin is caused when the will retreats from God even though it ought to act according to and with God. Sin is a disorder of the will. And this disorder mars the order of justice by preferring or loving excessively a changeable good, an advantageous good, self-will and sensual desire.<sup>42</sup> Every sin is fundamentally seen as the damage to this original justice by movement towards a changeable and perishable good, rather than towards an immutable good.

The implications of the disorder caused by sin are elaborated with reference to pride and its distorting effect on humanity’s relationship with the Trinity. Bonaventure sees that, when humanity decisively prefers creaturely good and value to God, it destroys the order of justice and commits a mortal sin. This sin is more severe than a venial sin which is committed by humanity’s undue love of creaturely good and value though without the actual preference

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<sup>41</sup> Hayes, *What Manner of Man?*, 81-82, note 21.

<sup>42</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.3, c.8, n.2-3 (WSB IX, 118-20). Bonaventure defines the order of justice as “that the immutable good is to be preferred to a changeable good, the good in itself to an advantageous good, the will of God to one’s own, and the judgment of right reason over sensual desire.”

of those things.<sup>43</sup> The source of every mortal sin is pride which is contempt for God because, as withdrawal of the will from God, all actual sin is caused by contempt for God or God's commands.<sup>44</sup> Bonaventure's discussion on the nature of Lucifer's sin clarifies what pride means, as Hayes's analysis shows.<sup>45</sup> Pride is fundamentally related to pursuing similitude to God. However, in this regard, similitude has to be understood in two different but interrelated ways: the similitude of imitation and the similitude of equality. The former seeks a God-likeness but retaining one's own character. This meaning of similitude is not related to Lucifer's sin. Rather, Lucifer's sin is involved with the similitude of equality which seeks parity with God, denying creaturely nature which is absolutely dependent on the divine. It refuses to accept the ontological gap between the divine Being and the created being. In Bonaventure's thought on the Trinity, the similitude of equality can only be applied to the Son as he is the perfect Image of God the Father.<sup>46</sup> That human creatures desire this aspect of similitude disregards the unique character of the Son. All actual sin results from this pride – that is, placing the creatures at the absolute level of the Son as Being like God. Accordingly, sin is expressly against the Son, violating the relationship of equality of the Son with the Father and distorting the relationship of inequality and dependence of creatures to God.<sup>47</sup>

Furthermore, Bonaventure sees sin as fundamentally causing discord at all levels of being:

Men were dispersed because of the discord between the Creator and the creature, between angels and man, between will and conscience, between sensuality and reason, between flesh and spirit, between man and his neighbor, between the sinner and the entire world.

Because of sin, there was discord between the Creator and the creature, and for this reason the angels were in opposition to man. There was discord between the will and the conscience because the will tends toward one thing and the conscience toward another. There was discord between reason and sensuality because reason dictates one thing and sensuality something else. ... Between each man and his neighbor there was discord; for men should love each other, but one hardly loves

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p.3, c.9, n.1-2 (WSB IX, 121-22).

<sup>45</sup> Bonaventure, 2 *Sent.*, d.5, a.1, q.2, conc. (II, 149); Hayes, *The Hidden Center*, 165-66.

<sup>46</sup> Bonaventure, 3 *Sent.*, d.1, a.2, q.3, conc. (III, 29-30).

<sup>47</sup> Hayes, *The Hidden Center*, 165-66.

something he has abandoned. Indeed, brother hates his brother. And finally, the entire world stood against man.<sup>48</sup>

This quotation shows that, for Bonaventure, the reality of sin affects the fundamental relations between beings, beyond violating a moral code. It brings about a disruption between realities and thereby damages the harmonious relations between them. Sin is fundamentally understood as having both moral and cosmic dimensions, disrupting the proper order of being as well as opposing the moral order.<sup>49</sup>

The aim of Christ's redemptive work, then, can be said to be the restoration of all such disturbed relationships caused by humanity's sin. Bonaventure holds that the way of conducting this work has been by means of negating human sin and its effect through what is contrary to sin and its effect. In the *Breviloquium*, this point is first shown in Bonaventure's idea of satisfaction influenced by Anselm: "For satisfaction means the repayment of the honor due to God."<sup>50</sup> Because humankind dishonoured God through pride and disobedience, Christ's satisfaction, in contrast to pride and disobedience, revealed his humiliation and loving obedience to the Father even unto his incarnation, passion and crucifixion, so that it restored God's honour.<sup>51</sup> This way of nullification was also fitting, as Bonaventure insists, with reference to the orderly functioning of the universe, that "contraries be healed through their contraries."<sup>52</sup> Christ's redemptive suffering, passion and death, as being contrary to humanity's universal falling, lust, pride and resultant death caused by Adam's sin, became the remedy to these things.<sup>53</sup> Its effect is also directly associated with the restoration of the damaged relationship with God brought about by Adam's sin. Bonaventure writes:

By placing too great a value on his association with the woman and the comfort of their relationship, he shrank from reproving the woman or restraining his own pleasures. Since he did not rebuke her when he should have, the woman's sin was

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<sup>48</sup> Bonaventure, *Sermon II on the Third Sunday of Advent*, in *What Manner of Man?: Sermons on Christ by St. Bonaventure*, ed. Zachary Hayes (Chicago, IL: Franciscan Herald Press, 1989), 103-04. Cf. Hayes, *The Hidden Center*, 166-67.

<sup>49</sup> Hayes, *The Hidden Center*, 167.

<sup>50</sup> Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, 1.11 and 20., quoted in Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.4, c.9, n.3 (WSB IX, 161-62).

<sup>51</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.4, c.9, n.3 (WSB IX, 162).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4, c.9, n.4 (WSB IX, 162).

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* (WSB IX, 162-63).

imputed to him. Because he was unwilling to curb his own pleasures by driving the woman away, he began to love himself too much, and thus fell away from the divine friendship into his own greed and disobedience.<sup>54</sup>

Adam violated his relationship with God by putting more value on his relationship with a creature, Eve, and thus creation's relationship with God was distorted.<sup>55</sup> Given that Christ's redemptive work nullifies human sin and its effect by what is contrary to sin and its effect, it can be understood that Christ brings healing to the broken relationship between humanity and God through his passion of satisfaction characterised by humility and obedience in his relationship with God the Father.

Bonaventure's concept of *medium mathematicum* in the *Collations on the Hexaemeron* emphasises particularly the humility revealed in the crucifixion of Christ incarnate: "The Son of God, the very small and poor and humble One, assuming our earth, and made of earth, not only came upon the surface of the earth, but indeed to the depth of its center, that is, *He has wrought salvation in the midst of the earth*, for after His crucifixion, His soul went down into hell and re-established the heavenly thrones."<sup>56</sup> In the medieval mind, the earth, being at the lowest tier of the universe, is the recipient of the heavenly bodies' influences and the producer of manifold earthly beings. The idea of *medium mathematicum* relates Christ's crucifixion to the medieval analogy of a mathematician who measures the earth and investigates the influence of the heavenly bodies on the earth. Not only did Christ assume the form of earthly existence in the incarnation, but he experienced its extreme dimension in his crucifixion and brought salvation to the world. That is to say, Christ's incarnation and crucifixion affirm that he did not just become one with humankind but intended to participate in the most profound dimension of material existence by dying on the cross and descending into the underworld.<sup>57</sup> It is a saving power in this humility of the cross that brought salvation to humanity, as Bonaventure says:

Anyone who draws away from it [Christ the Center in His crucifixion] is condemned,

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p.3, c.3, n.3 (WSB IX, 105-06).

<sup>55</sup> Timothy Johnson, "Part III: 'On the Corruption of Sin'," in *Bonaventure Revisited: Companion to the Breviloquium*, ed. Dominic V. Monti and Katherine Wrisley Shelby (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2017), 178.

<sup>56</sup> Bonaventure, *Hex.*, c.1, n.22 (WB V, 12).

<sup>57</sup> Delio, *Crucified Love*, 114-15.

as drawing away from the means of humility. And the Saviour proves it: “*I am in your midst as He who serves*”; and in Matthew: “*Unless you turn and become like little children, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*” In such a center *He has wrought salvation*, that is, in the humility of the cross.<sup>58</sup>

Bonaventure’s principle of human sin, its effect and Christ’s redemptive work, can be understood in conjunction with the figure of the circle which is the symbol of creation’s movement towards its completion in God. Due to their sin and resultant fall, represented by Adam, human beings move away from God towards whom their *regressus* ought to be directed for consummation, and bend to the distorted relationship with other creatures which must not be their goal. Given that the created world is open to God-intended completion through humanity, who epitomises the capability of creation to conform to God-likeness, and that humanity’s sin consequentially violates the actualisation of this potential of creation, the created world itself also strays out of its *regressus* because of the reality of sin. Christ, whose passion is opposed to human pride and disobedience, humbly experiences the most profound dimension of material creatures in his crucifixion and bends creation’s strayed movement back to God by his satisfactory passion in humility and obedience. In doing so, he re-establishes the proper circular movement of creation. By virtue of this redemptive work, humanity is directed again to its fulfilment in God and, likewise, the whole of creation is directed to completion through humanity; the disrupted order and relationship between God and creation is restored; the figure of the circle is completed.<sup>59</sup>

In this way, the work of completion cannot be essentially separated from the work of redemption. To put it another way, in the words of Hayes, “Completion refers to the process of bringing creation to its God-intended end which is anticipated already in the destiny of Christ. Redemption refers to the necessary process of dealing with all the obstacles that stand in the way.”<sup>60</sup> Humanity’s sin is ultimately an impediment to the actualisation of creation’s potential. As a result, overcoming this impediment cannot be isolated from compensating for humanity’s sin and its impact, which is accomplished by satisfaction of Christ incarnate. Through this process – that is, God’s redemptive work for humans – all creation is concomitantly led to perfection. Thus, God’s work of creation’s completion is formed by

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<sup>58</sup> Bonaventure, *Hex.*, c.1, n.23 (WB V, 12).

<sup>59</sup> Hayes, *The Hidden Center*, 182.

<sup>60</sup> Hayes, “Christ, Word of God and Exemplar of Humanity,” 16.

God's redemptive work for humans and, as two complementary facets, both are encompassed in the one broad process of redemptive-completion.<sup>61</sup>

In conclusion, the theory of redemptive-completion in Bonaventure ultimately implies that the redemption and concomitant completion of humanity are necessarily related to the fate of non-human creatures in some way. I believe that, by this theory, humanity's association with other creatures is firmly underpinned from the eschatological perspective. On the basis of this understanding, in what follows, I will determine positive implications for the consummation of non-human creatures.

### **3.4 The Ecological Implications for the Fate of Non-Human Creatures**

Regarding the fate of non-human creatures, I will draw attention to two ecologically-meaningful implications: the view of humanity's redemptive-completion involving concern for other creatures; the view of the consummation of materiality in a general sense. I believe that these points will help us go beyond what Bonaventure explicitly says about the theme.

#### **3.4.1 Humanity's Redemptive-Completion Involving Concern for Other Creatures**

In Bonaventure's thought, humanity holds the mediatory position in cosmic completion through Christ incarnate. That is to say, the completion of the universe is mediated by the completion of humanity. As I have already discussed, this positioning of humanity is because it has commonality with material creatures by virtue of its bodily aspect and possesses the potential to conform to God by virtue of its spiritual aspect. Bonaventure states:

Indeed, as St. Gregory says, since a human being is composed of a corporal and spiritual nature, he or she shares (something) with every creature in this way; hence, when human nature is assumed and deified, all nature is exalted in it in this way, as long as (human nature) is united to the Deity in its similarity.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Hayes, "Incarnation and Creation in the Theology of St. Bonaventure," 327.

<sup>62</sup> Bonaventure, *3 Sent.*, d.2, a.1, q.2, conc. (III, 40): "Quia enim homo compositus est ex natura corporali et spirituali, et quodam modo communicat cum omni creatura, sicut dicit Gregorius; hinc est, quod cum humana natura assumitur et deificatur, quodam modo omnis natura in ea exaltatur, dum in suo simili Deitati unitur."

As has been pointed out in Chapter 1, this way of conceiving non-human creatures' fulfilment – a microcosmic consummation – is often criticised today because it is believed that those creatures lose their own material existence at the end. Nevertheless, I see that, at least, this way of thinking in Bonaventure implies that the final destiny of all other material creatures is, somehow, involved in and dependent on the deification of human nature.

I argue that, in spite of the limitation in Bonaventure's view of microcosmic consummation, his concept of redemptive-completion can leave room for humans to have concern for non-human creatures and their material existence. As I have explored, in that concept, humanity's perfection and creation's consequent perfection are not separated from humanity's redemption which is the process of overcoming an impediment to creation's circular movement towards God-intended completion. From the cosmic viewpoint, the impediment is the broken relationships between realities as well as between God and creation, caused by human sin. The crucifixion of Christ incarnate is understood as the cosmic event aimed at repairing disturbed relationships by means of his humility and obedience and thereby bringing creation, which strayed from its track, to completion. In this context, human beings will not reach their perfection unless they restore their relation to other creatures too.

To elaborate this point, the concepts of grace and hierarchy in Bonaventure could be helpful. As I have previously cited the relevant passage of his *Commentary on the Second Book of Sentences*, humanity's potential to be transformed to a God-conformed existence is achieved by God's gift of grace.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, in the *Breviloquium*, Bonaventure sees grace as "a gift that purifies, illumines, and perfects the soul; that vivifies, reforms, and strengthens it; that elevates it, likens it, and joins it to God, and thereby makes it acceptable to God."<sup>64</sup> In other words, grace is the divine influence which fashions the soul in the likeness of God. As Hayes notes, this function of grace is viewed in reference to the circular movement of *egressus* and *regressus*.<sup>65</sup> Grace, emanating from God, pours into the soul, conforms it to God and leads it to God who is the source of grace and the goal of the soul.<sup>66</sup> In light of the theory of redemptive-completion, this action of grace is understood as directing humanity to its God-

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<sup>63</sup> Bonaventure, *2 Sent.*, d.26, a.1, q.2 (II, 636).

<sup>64</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.5, c.1, n.2 (WSB IX, 170). Bonaventure particularly calls this kind of gift "the grace that makes one pleasing (*gratia gratum faciens*)."

<sup>65</sup> Hayes, "Bonaventure: Mystery of the Triune God," 99.

<sup>66</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.5, c.1, n.3 (WSB IX, 171).

intended completion by means of bending humanity, strayed by sin from the direction towards God, back to God.<sup>67</sup>

As Katherine Wrisley Shelby states, Bonaventure expresses the action of grace and the resultant transformation of the human soul through the concept of hierarchy.<sup>68</sup> An example of his use of this concept is found in the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*: “When ... our spirit has been brought into conformity with the heavenly Jerusalem, it is ordered hierarchically so that it can ascend upward. For no one enters into that city unless that city has first descended into the person’s heart by means of grace, as John sees in his *Apocalypse*.”<sup>69</sup> The Bonaventurian concept of hierarchy, influenced by that of Pseudo-Dionysius, fundamentally concerns spiritual creatures’ deification through Christ, for “the goal of hierarchy ... is to enable beings to be as like as possible to God and to be at one with him.”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Concerning the redemptive function of grace, Bonaventure states, “For it is the role of ‘grace given gratuitously’ to turn a person’s free will away from evil and prompt it toward good, and it is the role of free will to consent to this grace or to reject it. When it consents, it receives ‘the grace that makes pleasing’; having received it, it cooperates with that grace so that it might arrive at salvation.” See Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.5, c.3, n.1 (WSB IX, 179). As this quotation shows, Bonaventure upholds human free will’s cooperation with grace for salvation, even though he maintains the predominance of God’s grace over human will or merits. According to him, human justification and salvation need the infusion of “the grace that makes one pleasing.” In order to obtain this grace, human will is first to be aroused by “gratuitously given grace” to be inclined to “the grace that makes one pleasing.” When human will consents to such an inclination, it prepares itself to obtain that grace. Then, by possessing “the grace that makes one pleasing,” human will may cooperate with that grace and, as a result, obtains merit and finally attains eternal salvation. Cf. Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.5, c.3, n.5-6 (WSB IX, 181-82).

<sup>68</sup> Wrisley Shelby, “Part V: ‘On the Grace of the Holy Spirit’,” 221-22.

<sup>69</sup> Bonaventure, *Itin.*, c.4, n.4 (WSB II, 101).

<sup>70</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius, “The Celestial Hierarchy,” in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid and Paul Rorem (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1987), 154. As Wrisley Shelby remarks, the perception of hierarchy by Pseudo-Dionysius and Bonaventure is basically different from that of contemporary theologians, especially those in feminist and liberation theologies. For these theologians, hierarchy has been considered a “repressive top-down system” of power, and thus it has been criticised as the ground for the oppressive power of those in a higher status over the marginalised such as poor people and women. However, in Pseudo-Dionysian and Bonaventurian concepts, hierarchy concerns how God and spiritual creatures are related to each other, so that these creatures become more like God. In this concept of hierarchy, power is regarded not as the oppressive one of a higher being, but as the one which leads a lower being up to a higher being. Cf. Katherine Wrisley Shelby, “Bonaventure on Grace, Hierarchy, and the Symbol of Jacob’s Ladder,” in *Ordo et Sanctitas: The Franciscan Spiritual Journey in Theology and Hagiography; Essays in Honor of J. A. Wayne Hellmann, O.F.M. Conv.*, ed. Michael F. Cusato, Timothy J. Johnson, and Steven J. McMichael, *Medieval Franciscans* 15 (Leiden;



This concept is elaborated in the *Commentary on the Second Book of Sentences* where Bonaventure comments on three definitions of hierarchy drawn from Pseudo-Dionysius. These definitions are as follows:

Hierarchy is sacred beauty as it is simple, best, consummated or even consummating. ... Hierarchy is a sacred order, knowledge and action assimilated as much as possible to the deiform, and ascending towards the lights divinely given to it proportionately in the likeness of God. ... Hierarchy is, as much as it is possible, likeness and unity with God, holding God as the guide of holy knowledge and action and immutably guiding his worshippers to his most sacred beauty and transforming them as much as it is truly possible.<sup>71</sup>

The first definition refers to the Triune God who is an uncreated and perfect hierarchy. This is predicated on the plurality and equality of the divine persons. In the Godhead, there are the three distinct persons, yet they are not graded on nature but possess equal divinity in unity. The plurality of the divine persons is not contradictory to their unity and vice versa. Both equality and plurality, in close association, contribute to the supreme beauty, perfection and goodness of God. The second and third definitions respectively concern both angelic and human hierarchy's *egressus* from God and *regressus* to God. With regard to the second definition, *egressus*, these hierarchies, with the faculties of memory, intellect and will, come out of God and are ordered to the actualisation of their potential to be more deeply assimilated to God-likeness by the act of divine grace. Regarding the third definition, *regressus*, these hierarchies fulfil this potential by means of divine power and return to God; this is the deification or, in other words, the hierarchized state of the spiritual creature.<sup>72</sup> In this way, Bonaventure's concept of hierarchy is focused on the three beings – divine, angelic and human – and, accordingly, it is applied only to beings with a spiritual dimension. Angelic and

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Boston, MA: Brill, 2017), 209-11.

<sup>71</sup> Bonaventure, *2 Sent.*, d.9, prae. (II, 237-38): "Hierarchia est divina pulcritudo ut simpla, ut optima, ut consummata vel consummativa. ... Hierarchia est ordo divinus, scientia et actio, deiforme quantum possibile similans, et ad inditas ei divinitus illuminationes proportionaliter in Dei similitudinem ascendens. ... Hierarchia est ad Deum, quantum possibile est, similitudo et unitas, ipsum habens scientiae sanctae et actionis ducem, et ad suum divinissimum decorem immutabiliter definiens; quantum vero possibile est, reformat suos laudatores."

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., d.9, prae. (II, 238); Hayes, *The Hidden Center*, 159-60.

human beings – that is, the created hierarchies – are ordered to ascending towards God, the uncreated and foremost hierarchy, through the inflow of grace.

What is striking is that, in Bonaventure's thinking, ascent to union with God through divine grace involves descent to one's neighbour. As I will suggest at the later part of this section, this descent also includes the love of and concern for non-human creatures.

Bonaventure's vision of descent is inferred from his view that one experiences union with Christ insofar as one receives divinely given grace and trains oneself for such union through meritorious exercises.<sup>73</sup> These exercises include the acts of faith, love, prayer and compliance with the commandments.<sup>74</sup> It is the act of love that particularly shows the dimension of descent. Bonaventure presents God, our soul, our neighbour and our body as what is to be loved. The love of God, who is the supreme good, is the foremost love, and because of this, the other three things – i.e., our soul, neighbour and body – are to be loved but in an orderly way; the love of our soul has precedence over the love of our neighbour, and the love of our neighbour over that of our body.<sup>75</sup> Although there is an order in this act of love, it is notable that neighbour is also included as one of the objects of that love.

Bonaventure sees divine grace as the condition of meritorious exercises. This is further explained as the actions of "gratuitously given" grace and the "grace that makes one pleasing." The former inspires a human person to practise moral acts, and the latter makes his or her act meritorious for eternal salvation by making him or her pleasing in the sight of God.<sup>76</sup> Here, we see grace's movement of descending and ascending which is also viewed as the circular movement. As the condition of good and meritorious acts, grace descends from God to human persons, boosts them to perform the works of love, makes them meritorious in the sight of God and finally lifts them up to union with God by making their acts merited for such union. In a similar way, a hierarchized human being, imbued with grace, is not only to ascend towards God but also to descend to his or her neighbours and practise love for them. In this way, ascent through grace is fundamentally associated with descent to perform good and meritorious deeds through grace.

A similar insight is found in the 22<sup>nd</sup> collation of the *Hexaemeron*. In this collation, Bonaventure delineates the hierarchical levels of the hierarchized soul, through which the soul

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<sup>73</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.5, c.6, n.8 (WSB IX, 196).

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5, c.7-10 (WSB IX, 196-210).

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5, c.8, n.1-3 (WSB IX, 200-02).

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5, c.2, n.3 (WSB IX, 176-77).

experiences the angelic hierarchy.<sup>77</sup> It is notable that these levels include the order of descent as well as that of ascent and of return to God. In this order, the soul receiving divine illuminations is called to execute God's will to neighbours. Such execution in descent requires, according to Bonaventure, "clarity of example, truth of expression, and humility of service," each of which corresponds, respectively, to the following grades of the angelic hierarchy: the Principalities, the Archangels and the Angels.<sup>78</sup> In Bonaventure's view of the soul's hierarchization, the mode of descending is linked with that of ascending. In this regard, he mentions Christ's humble service for humans and cites the passage of St. John's Gospel:

And so, in the descending way, there is consummation in humility and beginning in love, while the opposite is true of the ascending way. Hence, in descending, we begin with the liveliness of desire [and go] to the humility of service. Wherefore Christ came to the humility of serving us. Wherefore also as the soul has Angels going up, so must it have them going down. Hence: *No one has ascended into heaven except Him who has descended from heaven.*<sup>79</sup>

This point can be considered in association with Bonaventure's concept of *medium mathematicum*. As I have explored before, this concept envisages Christ leading humanity to salvation by his assumption of the form of earthly existence and his crucifixion in humility. In this concept, his incarnation and crucifixion are seen as the mode of descending, and his leading to salvation as the mode of ascending. In light of this understanding, Christ can be regarded as the pattern of the hierarchized soul's movement of descent and ascent. As long as the soul humbly goes down to and serves fellow human beings, it is lifted up to salvation by divine grace.

When considering Bonaventure's *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* and *Legenda Major*, we find St. Francis as a similar exemplar of this movement of ascent and descent towards consummation. The *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* describes humanity's movement towards consummation as the human soul's journey to God, using the language of mystical theology. In the first and second chapters, one speculates about God through and in the external created world. In the third and fourth chapters, one focuses on the human mind itself which is the

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<sup>77</sup> Bonaventure, *Hex.*, c.22, n.24-39 (WB V, 352-61).

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, c.22, n.33 (WB V, 356-57).

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, c.22, n.33 (WB V, 357).

locus of the human contemplation of God. In particular, the fourth chapter illustrates how the human soul contemplates God dwelling within itself, restoring its spiritual senses and being reformed through the three virtues of faith, hope and love, and displays how the reformed soul is led to conformity with the celestial hierarchy. In the fifth and sixth chapters, Bonaventure further describes that the human soul, putting its focus on God's being and the Trinity of the persons, contemplates God through metaphysical speculation transcending the scope of the sensible world and the soul itself. Finally, in the seventh chapter, going beyond all intellectual activities, in affection for God, the human soul is drawn into mystical union with God through Christ crucified, the union which is the end of the soul's journey to God. It is this chapter in which Bonaventure affirms St. Francis as an exemplary model of this union:

All this was shown also to blessed Francis when, in a rapture of contemplation on the top of the mountain where I reflected on the things I have written here, a six-winged Seraph fastened to a cross appeared to him. ... Here he was carried out of himself in contemplation and passed over into God. And he has been set forth as the example of perfect contemplation just as he had earlier been known as the example of action, like another Jacob transformed into Israel.<sup>80</sup>

Bonaventure's *Legenda Major*, when it is read as a commentary on his *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, explicitly portrays that the dimensions of ascent and descent, concurrently, were demonstrated in the life of St. Francis.<sup>81</sup> Wrisley Shelby cites the relevant passage of the *Legenda Major*:

It was a custom for the angelic man Francis never to rest from the good, rather, like the heavenly spirits *on Jacob's ladder*, he either *ascended* into God or *descended* to his neighbor. For he had so prudently learned to divide the time given to him for

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<sup>80</sup> Bonaventure, *Itin.*, c.7, n.3 (WSB II, 135).

<sup>81</sup> As E. R. Daniel and Ilia Delio note, the *Legenda Major* was written soon after the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* had been penned, and it depicts Francis as the exemplary model who lived the life of mysticism represented in the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*. From this point of view, it is claimed that the *Legenda Major* is not just an ordinary biography of Francis, but rather, is permeated by Bonaventure's thought on Christ mysticism. Cf. Delio, *Crucified Love*, 79-80.

merit, that he spent some of it working for his neighbor's benefit and dedicated the rest to the tranquil excesses of contemplation.<sup>82</sup>

Wrisley Shelby comments that St. Francis becomes the exemplar to show the need of a hierarchical human person's descent on the spiritual journey towards union with God:

St. Francis can be called a "hierarchical man" because he both ascends to God in contemplation while also taking the time to descend to his neighbor in perfect virtue: ... The soul that has been hierarchized through the *influentia* of grace *in via*, before she can reach her *final* contemplative rest in God ... must – like St. Francis – descend to the created world around her through meritorious actions, as well.<sup>83</sup>

As we have seen in Chapter 1, the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* is cited as Bonaventure's exemplary work promoting an otherworldly spirituality which emphasises transcending the earthly world and the realities within it for mystical union with God.<sup>84</sup> However, given the example of St. Francis as a model of that union portrayed in the *Legenda Major*, as well as the implications of a hierarchical state through the action of grace in Bonaventure's thinking, it can be said that mystical union with God does not require contempt for or isolation from the created world. The ascending and descending movement of hierarchy implies that, for the union, which the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* proffers, descent to the earthly world through charitable works is needed as well as ascent to God through contemplation.

Wrisley Shelby suggests that Bonaventure's thought of the significance of a hierarchical human being's descent affected by grace could contribute to theologies emphasising the preservation of the environment as a key concern in today's world.<sup>85</sup> What I

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<sup>82</sup> Bonaventure, "The Major Legend of St. Francis," 630. Wrisley Shelby highlights the image of Jacob's Ladder as an important symbol to underline the hierarchical movement of ascent and descent in Bonaventure's thinking. According to her, Bonaventure uses this symbol in his other works as well, such as the *Breviloquium*, the *Hexameron* and the sermon *De sanctis angelis* (*Sermo* 54). Wrisley Shelby's recent writings are useful for the further exploration of the symbol of Jacob's Ladder in Bonaventure's concept of hierarchy. See Wrisley Shelby, "Part V: 'On the Grace of the Holy Spirit'," 238-40; "Bonaventure on Grace, Hierarchy, and the Symbol of Jacob's Ladder," 219-28.

<sup>83</sup> Wrisley Shelby, "Part V: 'On the Grace of the Holy Spirit'," 239-40.

<sup>84</sup> See above section 1.2. Cf. Bonaventure, *Itin.*, c.7, n.5 (WSB II, 137; 139).

<sup>85</sup> Wrisley Shelby, "Part V: 'On the Grace of the Holy Spirit'," 243.

would add, as a supplement to her suggestion, is that given the *Legenda Major*'s illustrations of St. Francis's relationship with creatures, Bonaventure is already certain that such descent should obviously apply to other-than-human creatures as well. He writes:

True *piety*, which according to the Apostle *gives power to all things*, had so filled Francis's heart and penetrated its depths that it seemed to have claimed the man of God completely into its dominion. This is what, through devotion, lifted him up into God; through compassion, transformed him into Christ; through self-emptying, turned him to his neighbor; through universal reconciliation with each thing, refashioned him to the state of innocence.<sup>86</sup>

This passage indicates that, in his spiritual journey, not only did St. Francis experience conformity to Christ (*ascending*) but he also participated in the universal reconciliation with each creature (*descending*). To put it another way, St. Francis's relationship with Christ was such that he experienced a renewal of the state of innocence in his right relationship with other creatures.<sup>87</sup> According to Bonaventure, the state of innocence is that in which humanity, holding God-likeness through grace, was able to perceive God through the book of creation before the fall.<sup>88</sup> The *Legenda Major* recounts various stories of St. Francis's cordial relationship to creation, highlighting that he perceived God as the common source of all creatures, and thus he accepted creatures as his brothers and sisters in the one family of God.<sup>89</sup> Ultimately, creation is not that which has to be disregarded in the human journey towards union with God. Rather, human beings are called to embrace and have concern for creation with a renewed vision and relationship as demonstrated by St. Francis's example.

In this regard, there is a need to clarify what Bonaventure means by his negative language concerning creatures in the human spiritual journey towards God. Hayes argues that what Bonaventure censures is not creatures themselves as the works of God's creative action, but the improper relation of humans to them. That is to say, it is problematic that creatures and their goodness replace God and divine goodness. In other words, greater goodness and truth

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<sup>86</sup> Bonaventure, "The Major Legend of St. Francis," 586.

<sup>87</sup> Delio, *Crucified Love*, 131-33.

<sup>88</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.2, c.12, n.4 (WSB IX, 97).

<sup>89</sup> Bonaventure, "The Major Legend of St. Francis," 590-95.

cannot be attributed to creatures other than what is inherent to them. Compared to the infinite goodness of God, creation is just a limited and finite goodness.<sup>90</sup> Bonaventure states:

Lord, now I understand, but am ashamed to confess it. The *beauty and grace of creatures deceived my eyes* and I did not realize it. After all, you are more beautiful than all creatures, to whom you have given but a little drop of your inestimable beauty. ... Likewise, *the sweetness of creatures has deceived my sense of taste*, and I did not realize that you are sweeter than honey. You have adapted your sweetness to honey and every creature. Sweetness and every delight in creatures is nothing else but your sweetness ... Hence, the sweetness of all creatures, if a person truly thinks about it, does no more than tickle the palate for your eternal sweetness.<sup>91</sup>

Due to the incompatible beauty and goodness of God, the proper love of creation is not to replace the love of God, but obviously, to stem from that love and to be subservient to it. Bonaventure writes:

It is a certainty that if you love something, but not in God or because of God, then you do not love God with all your heart. ... Or again, if you love something and because of this love you do not progress in the love of God, then you do not love God with all your heart. Or if you love something and neglect something which you ought to hold dear for the love of Christ, then you do not love with all your heart.<sup>92</sup>

In his *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, Bonaventure makes clear the true meaning of human love for creation with the metaphor of a bride's ring given by a bridegroom:

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<sup>90</sup> Hayes, *Bonaventure: Mystical Writings*, 72-75.

<sup>91</sup> Bonaventure, *Solil.*, in *Writings on the Spiritual Life*, ed. F. Edward Coughlin, trans. Girard Etzkorn, Works of St. Bonaventure X (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2006), 1.3.12-13 (WSB X, 236-37). For the other texts of Bonaventure concerning Hayes's above argument, see Bonaventure, *Hex.*, c.3, n.8 (WB V, 46); *Solil.*, 1.2.6; 2.1.2 (WSB X, 229-30; 272). Cf. Hayes, *Bonaventure: Mystical Writings*, 72-75.

<sup>92</sup> Bonaventure, *On the Perfection of Life*, in *Writings on the Spiritual Life*, ed. F. Edward Coughlin, trans. Girard Etzkorn, Works of St. Bonaventure X (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2006), c.7, n.2 (WSB X, 188).

This world is like a ring given by the bridegroom to the soul itself. Now the bride can love the ring given her by her husband in two ways, namely, with a *chaste* or an *adulterous* love. The love is *chaste* when she loves the ring as a memento of her husband and on account of her love for her husband. The love is *adulterous* when the ring is loved more than the husband, and the husband cannot regard such love as good. For just as there is a twofold love, so too there is a twofold hatred or contempt, because “as soon as one of two things that are opposites is mentioned, the other is implied.” Contempt for a ring by treating it as a poor and ugly gift reflects on the husband, but contempt of a ring by regarding it as almost nothing compared to the love of a husband, gives glory to the husband.<sup>93</sup>

In this way, the core of Bonaventure’s thinking on human love for creatures is that love for God must be ever-greater than love for creatures, and that that creaturely love should be in God or because of God. Creatures as such are not worthless yet God should be desired and loved more than them. When humanity has proper love and concern for creatures in its spiritual journey towards God, it is brought to perfect conformity with God.

To sum up, in Bonaventure’s thought, humanity’s redemptive-completion requires humans to have right relationships not only with fellow humans but also with other-than-human creatures. The consummation of these creatures is dependent on humanity’s attaining its completion not just through union with God (*ascending*) but also through the restoration of relationships with them (*descending*). Thus, it can be claimed that, even though, according to Bonaventure’s explicit teaching, non-human creatures are considered to be subsumed as ideas in the human soul, humanity is called not to disregard their material existence but to be concerned about it and to establish harmonious relationships with them for their consummation. Based on this logic, elicited from Bonaventure’s thought, it is possible to propose that non-human creatures will be consummated with their material existence which is intertwined with human existence in right relationships.

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<sup>93</sup> Bonaventure, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, trans. Campion Murray and Robert J. Karris, Works of St. Bonaventure VII (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2005), 77-78.



### 3.4.2 The Positive View of the Consummation of Materiality in General

As with the ecologically-meaningful implication described above, note has to be taken of Bonaventure's view that, although conditionally, materiality itself is not excluded from consummation in a broad sense. In a way similar to the preceding section, this view is reached by reading St. Francis, portrayed in the *Legenda Major*, as a model of union with God described in the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*. Bonaventure points out that when St. Francis reached the highest union with God, his body also participated in this union as is demonstrated by the stigmata imprinted on it, the mark of perfect conformity to Christ crucified.<sup>94</sup> To put it another way, union with God is not the monopoly of the soul separated from the body. Instead, the soul and the body, together, are involved in this union.<sup>95</sup> For Bonaventure, the body is regarded as the indispensable part of the human person, and the reason why humankind, as the final and most noble work of God's creation, manifests divine power in such an exceptional manner is that two distinct substances – that is, the body as a material substance and the soul as a spiritual substance – are united in its nature.<sup>96</sup> Without the body, humanity cannot fully express the magnificence of divine power in the act of creating. Following Augustine, Bonaventure further asserts that “the holy soul desires its [the body's] resumption and waits to be reunited to it, because without it happiness cannot be consummated or joy be complete.”<sup>97</sup> Yet, at the same time, he is certain that, for this fulfilment, the relationship between the body and the soul ought to be proper and well-ordered. Having a natural inclination to be united with the body, the soul has superiority over it. The body is to be subject to the soul and to be placed under its government.<sup>98</sup> What Bonaventure means by the body in consummation is the obedient and spiritual body restored by the soul's government.<sup>99</sup> Thus, in Bonaventure's thought, the body – in other words, materiality – is not regarded as being excluded from consummation if it holds the proper relation to the soul and conforms to it.

Technically, materiality which Bonaventure sees as participating directly in consummation, is the human spiritual body reformed in the proper subordinate relation to the

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<sup>94</sup> Bonaventure, “The Major Legend of St. Francis,” 630-39.

<sup>95</sup> Delio, *Crucified Love*, 80-81.

<sup>96</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.2, c.10, n.2-3; p.7, c.7, n.2 (WSB IX, 90; 292-93).

<sup>97</sup> Bonaventure, *Solil.*, 4.4.21 (WSB X, 333).

<sup>98</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.7, c.7, n.4 (WSB IX, 294).

<sup>99</sup> Bonaventure, *Solil.*, 4.4.21 (WSB X, 333).

soul. However, given humanity's property as the microcosm reflecting not just the spiritual dimension but also the material dimension of the created world, materiality itself is fundamentally the common aspect pertaining to humanity and other material creatures. Bonaventure remarks that material beings, such as minerals, vegetative life, sentient beings and the human body, are produced from the common four elements – fire, air, water and earth – by the influence of the heavenly bodies. In the order of these corporeal beings, the human body ranks the highest, for the contrary properties of matter – hot, cold, moist and dry – are balanced equally in that body. Moreover, only the human body is designed to be united with the rational soul which brings all material nature to fulfilment.<sup>100</sup> Since purely material creatures, ranking lower than the human body in the order of corporeal beings, lack this design, they are indirectly led to their perfection through the fulfilment of the human body.

The following sermon of Bonaventure clarifies how the materiality of non-human creatures is involved in its consummation by Christ incarnate:

All things are said to be transformed in the transfiguration of Christ, in as far as something of each creature was transfigured in Christ. For as a human being, Christ has something in common with all creatures. With the stone he shares existence; with plants he shares life; with animals he shares sensation; and with the angels he shares intelligence. Therefore, all things are said to be transformed in Christ since – in his human nature – he embraces something of every creature in himself when he is transfigured.<sup>101</sup>

Through the incarnation, Christ came into the created world and, by taking human nature, assumed something of all material creatures. These creatures' consummation is achieved by the consummation of their commonality shared with Christ incarnate. This commonality includes the material aspect because what Christ assumed in the incarnation was the human body which, as with other material creatures, contains this aspect. In the incarnation, Christ unites his divinity with materiality embodied by his human body. Then, to borrow the wording of Bonaventure, when Christ is transfigured, the materiality of all corporeal creatures, which he shares with them, is also transformed. This being so, materiality itself is

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<sup>100</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.2, c.4, n.3 (WSB IX, 70-71).

<sup>101</sup> Bonaventure, *Sermo I, Dom. II*, in Quad. (IX, 218). This translation is quoted from Hayes, "Christ, Word of God and Exemplar of Humanity," 13.

not abandoned. Instead, in a general sense, it participates in God-intended completion through Christ incarnate who finalises creation's returning movement towards God.

In the same sermon, Bonaventure does not directly remark on the preservation and eschatological fulfilment of non-human creatures' own particular existence. However, the limitation of his interpretation of non-human creatures' fulfilment is not about the devaluing of materiality itself, but rather about the manner by which these creatures participate in the fulfilment. I argue that, in today's eco-theological perspective, non-human creatures' own material existence is to be understood as directly taking part in the fulfilment through Christ, rather than indirectly participating in it through humanity. Three elements in Bonaventure's Trinitarian doctrine of creation – the elements which I have discussed in the preceding chapter – are helpful to support this argument: creatures' sacramental dimension, their direct relation to God and their character as receivers of God's love.<sup>102</sup> The material existence of non-human creatures is the external expression of the relational and fecund God. They are directly created through the Word, the Exemplar, not through the materiality of humanity, and so they have a direct relationship with the Word in their materiality. Not as an idea in the human soul but as material reality, non-human creatures receive the love of the Holy Spirit and participate in divine free love; they are given for humanity as gifts from God. On the basis of these elements, the specific materiality of non-human creatures can be regarded as being significant. When this understanding is conjoined with the view of materiality's consummation through Christ, it is possible to propose that non-human creatures may directly participate in God-intended completion with their valuable material existence.

### 3.5 Conclusion

Through the exploration conducted in this chapter, I argue that there are positive clues in Bonaventure's Christocentric theology that can take us beyond what he explicitly says about the fate of non-human creatures. In Bonaventure's view of the *egressus* and *regressus* movement of all things, the whole of creation reaches its fulfilment in God through Christ incarnate. This fulfilment involves not only a spiritual dimension but also a material dimension which Christ incarnate and humanity have in common with other biological creatures. It is acknowledged by scholars that, in Bonaventure's thought, other creatures are regarded as being indirectly consummated through the completion of humanity thereby losing

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<sup>102</sup> See above section 2.4.

their own specific existence. Having said that, according to the concept of redemptive-completion, the redemptive work of Christ for the completion of humanity involves not only human salvation from sin but also the healing of broken relationships with other creatures caused by sin which is an impediment to creation's completion. Overcoming such sin and its effects leads to the completion of all creation through Christ incarnate. In this sense, humans are called not to be in contempt of other creatures and their specific existence but to be concerned about them. Bonaventure describes St. Francis as a prominent exemplar of one who experiences the state of redemptive-completion, united with Christ in his whole body-person and having a renewed harmonious and loving relationship with all God's creatures. I believe that, following the logic of these positions of Bonaventure, it is possible to make a further proposal that takes us beyond Bonaventure's explicit position: when human beings reach their consummation, other creatures, which share materiality with them, will be restored in right relationship with humans in one community of creation; and these other creatures may participate, with their own specific existence, together with human beings, in the final fulfilment of all things in Christ.

I believe that Bonaventure's theology of the created world can be seen as possessing weak anthropocentric senses because, as we have noticed above, his thought implies that humans need to be concerned about the natural world. Over the course of the ensuing two chapters, I will explore how the key points which are determined in this chapter and in Chapter 2 can be understood in relation to the contemporary understanding of the evolutionary world and to the encyclical *Laudato Si'*. I will begin this exploration by considering evolutionary scientific views.

## Chapter 4

### Bonaventure, Evolutionary Science and Deep Incarnation

#### 4.1 Introduction

As I have indicated in the first chapter, recognition that the theme of the natural world has been largely ignored in post-Reformation theology has led to the emergence of ecological theology. Influenced by this recognition, ecological theology places the natural world as a key pillar of theological exploration. In this regard, it is noteworthy that contemporary science brings to theology new discoveries and insights into the natural world. Theology needs to engage with new scientific views as an important partner in dialogue so that it can provide appropriate theological meaning in today's world. This does not mean that theology seeks to merge with science because science and theology are independent academic domains, each with its own approach and sources. The properties of each discipline ought to be maintained. However, the world that scientists explore is, from the theological viewpoint, the same world created by God. Given that people are becoming familiar with scientific knowledge, if theology is to fulfil its role in today's world, it needs to be in creative dialogue with science.<sup>1</sup>

Since evolutionary science is an area of significant scientific study and a representative theme in terms of dialogue between science and theology, I have sketched the concept of evolution in the first chapter. The Darwinian concept of evolution is that an organism evolves from its antecedents by means of inheritable variations that are determined as profitable for its survival and reproduction through the process of natural selection. The theory of evolution has been elaborated to the extent that the mechanisms of variations at the molecular level are explained by genetic theory and molecular biology. It has also been enriched at a cosmic level in the sense that the universe and realities within it, such as basic elements, stars and planets, are seen as being formed in the long process of evolutionary emergence. This evolutionary understanding of the universe and life on Earth has, at least, three notable dimensions: (1) a range of interrelationships – for example, mutual relationships between organisms in ecosystems, such organisms' interconnected relationships at the DNA level and their interrelatedness to the universe and its history; (2) the abundance and diversity

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<sup>1</sup> Johnson, *Ask the Beasts*, 8-11.

of life forms on Earth as an outcome of the process of biological evolution; (3) the occurrence of inherent suffering which is the cost paid for the emergence of new and more developed organisms in the evolutionary process, such as pain and death, including mass extinctions. I believe these scientific views of evolution, unknown in earlier times including Bonaventure's, are important background theories that provide a new perspective for the re-interpretation of Bonaventure's theology of the created world in the present age.

In this chapter, I will propose that key ideas in Bonaventure's theology can have new meaning in the context of evolutionary science. I will first address how his Trinitarian doctrine of creation can be read in reference to the scientific understanding of the variety and relationality of life in the evolutionary world. Then I will focus attention on one particular issue in the recent theological dialogue with evolutionary science – i.e., the costs that are built into an evolutionary universe. I will concentrate on a recent theological attempt to respond to these costs – i.e., the discussion on deep incarnation. I will offer a sketch of the theology of deep incarnation, and then consider it in relationship to Bonaventure's theology.

## **4.2 The Diversity and Interrelatedness of Life in Dialogue with Bonaventure**

The fundamental thesis of Bonaventure's Trinitarian doctrine of creation is that all creatures are the external self-expression of the relational and fecund Trinity. As the Father's fecundity brings forth the other two divine persons *ad intra*, the same divine fecundity overflows into creation *ad extra* through the Word. Accordingly, creatures are the manifestation of the richness and relationality of God. For Bonaventure, then, the universe of creatures has a sacramental relationship to the Triune Creator. In this section, I will explore how this fundamental thesis of Bonaventure can be re-interpreted in relation to the evolutionary scientific view of the diversity and interrelatedness of biological life forms.

### **4.2.1 The Diversity of Life as the Expression of the Fecundity of the Trinity**

It is clear that Bonaventure had nothing like a contemporary understanding of evolutionary history. Having said that, his idea of seminal reasons (*rationes seminales*) gives expression, in some way, to the emergence of novelty and the diversity of creation. The concept of seminal reasons was elaborated by Augustine in his interpretation of the two creation accounts in Genesis. To understand the seemingly contradictory narratives, Augustine claims that the first creation account refers to God's primordial act of creation by which all things are

simultaneously created either in their actuality or, in the case of living creatures, in their potential for existence. This potentiality is, according to Augustine, seed-like ideas – what he calls “seminal reasons” – which God implanted throughout the world in the very moment of his creation and which are activated over the course of time, leading to the emergence of living creatures. It is the second creation account that refers to the “unwrapping” – that is, actualisation – of these seminal reasons and the resultant emergence, in time, of human beings, animals and plants through God’s providence and ongoing creation.<sup>2</sup>

Bonaventure inherits this basic meaning of the Augustinian concept of seminal reasons: “The primal production of the world ought to contain the seeds of all things that would later be accomplished, as a prefiguration of future ages.”<sup>3</sup> Bonaventure understands that, while being inchoate, corporeal forms are contained in matter and are actualised by a secondary agent. These forms are called seminal reasons in the sense that they have potential to develop to a certain corporeal reality. It is God who creates and implants such forms in matter. The secondary agent plays its role in actualising them in time.<sup>4</sup> In light of this concept of seminal reasons, it can be said that the fecund Trinity, as the ultimate source, implanted bountiful potentialities in the natural world and that the realisation of these potentialities has brought the great variety of fauna and flora over evolutionary history. The multiple factors causing evolution, such as natural selection and geographical isolation, can be seen as the secondary agents which have acted in accomplishing such potentialities of diverse beings.

However, note should be taken of the fundamental differences between Bonaventure’s idea of seminal reasons and the scientific understanding of evolution. Seminal reasons are

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<sup>2</sup> Edwards, *Christian Understandings of Creation*, 77-79. Edwards refers to the translations and notes from Edmund Hill and John Hammond Taylor of Augustine’s *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*. See Edmund Hill, *On Genesis: A Refutation of the Manichees; Unfinished Literal Commentary on Genesis; The Literal Meaning of Genesis* (Hyde Park, NY: New York City Press, 2002); John Hammond Taylor, *Saint Augustine: The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, vols. 1 and 2, Ancient Christian Writers Series 41 and 42 (New York, NY: Paulist, 1982).

<sup>3</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.2, c.2, n.5 (WSB IX, 65). Whereas Augustine believes that seminal reasons were created at once, Bonaventure understands that they were done so for six days in accordance with the first creation account in Genesis: “For God made all things then [during the six days of the Genesis account] – either in their prototypes, as is the case with those that propagate themselves, or in a seminal reason, as with other things that come into existence in a different way.” Bonaventure prefers a literal interpretation of that account although he acknowledges Augustine’s view of simultaneous creation as a valid spiritual interpretation. Cf. Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.2, c.2, n.1; notes 17 and 20 (WSB IX, 63; 65-66).

<sup>4</sup> Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 47-48. Christopher Cullen directs us to Bonaventure, *2 Sent.*, d.18, a.1, q.3, conc. (II, 441-42).

latent forms, the potentialities, in matter, different from mechanical or chemical processes; the idea of seminal reasons is not related to the scientific explanation of extinction in the evolutionary process and of competition between species for survival; and seminal reasons are not applicable to the emergence of human beings in a full sense because Bonaventure sees the human soul as being created directly by God.<sup>5</sup> J. A. Sheppard points out that Bonaventure's view of the "potential" would be different from that of a natural scientist. For Bonaventure, the "potential" would be something like a formal cause as a metaphysical principle inserted into matter. For a natural scientist, however, it would be those characteristics of an organism, which can be identified, measured and brought about by the interaction between ecosystems and genetics.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the actualisation of potential forms and the resultant appearance of novel things within the concept of seminal reasons are fundamentally different from variations and speciation in the contemporary concept of evolution. The concept of seminal reasons posits that the form itself does not vary or diverge although it waits for its own realisation. In contrast, the concept of evolution affirms that current existing organisms have undergone a process of gradual change from their ancestors and have diverged from them. Due to these differences, it can hardly be said that the concept of seminal reasons is a type of foresight of the contemporary scientific concept of evolution. Nonetheless, given that, on a fundamental level, the concept of seminal reasons points to the emergence of new beings in God's ongoing creation, evolution can be theologically understood, in a broad sense, as the process of the actualisation of the potentialities built into the world by the fecund God from the very beginning, and the biodiversity of Earth can be seen as the result of this process.

As I have proposed in Chapter 2, the whole of creation can be called a gift of divine love and freedom. As the Holy Spirit is titled the Gift emanating from the mutual love and liberal will of the other two persons, all creatures are the gifts of God produced with a bountiful love of the Spirit and by divine free will. God liberally communicates divine goodness and love to finite creatures *ad extra*, although there is the full and perfect communication of this goodness and love in the inner life of the Trinity.<sup>7</sup> This divine will of liberality and love is also understood by Bonaventure as enabling the so-called concurrent

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<sup>5</sup> Tim Noone and R. E. Houser, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Winter 2014 ed., s.v. "Saint Bonaventure," accessed March 25, 2019, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/bonaventure>.

<sup>6</sup> J. A. Sheppard, "The Conflict over Creation from a Medieval Point of View," *Theology and Science* 5, no. 1 (2007): 42-43.

<sup>7</sup> See above sections 2.3.4; 2.4.3.



causes to perform in the created world, even though that will is absolutely the universal and actual cause of all things. He writes:

In reply to the arguments to the contrary, one should understand that, while God is the immediate cause of all things, of some he is the only cause, as of things which are created, but of other things God is a cause, along with another, particular cause, as of what happens due to nature or due to some particular will. And this other cause is a concurrent cause, not because of some deficiency in the divine will, but because of its great liberality. This cause not only gives things being (*esse*) but also operation and the ability to diffuse their own goodness, due to the order and connection of all things among themselves. Nor does the one cause take away something from the other cause, but the whole effect comes from the created cause *and* the whole effect comes from the uncreated will.<sup>8</sup>

Bonaventure sees the will of God as the first and immediate cause, since it is the cause of the production of all things and brings about the overall effect by preserving them in being and so enabling them to operate.<sup>9</sup> Having said that, in light of the passage quoted above, it can be claimed that, although God can bring all things into being and give them their own operation by God's self alone, God liberally shares such causal work with created causes and thereby enables them to participate in the divine act of ongoing creation. In other words, God's liberal and loving will allows creatures, in cooperation with God, to act as the cause for other beings. Bonaventure further sees that such created causes are in the realm of human knowledge: "But since the divine will is not known, and its own action does not exclude the operation of a created cause, it does not exclude them from our knowledge. Therefore, it is good and useful to try to study created causes, so that in some way we might come 'half-way' to understand that supreme cause, which is the end of all cognition."<sup>10</sup>

When it is said that a world of diverse living things is the expression of the fecundity of God, it means that biological life forms come into being through the will of the fecund God who brings various animals and plants into being in cooperation with created causes in divine freedom and love. Likewise to secondary agents which take part in the actualisation of

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<sup>8</sup> Bonaventure, *1 Sent.*, d.45, a.2, q.2, conc. (WSB XVI, 293).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., d.45, a.2, q.2, a-f (WSB XVI, 290-91).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., d.45, a.2, q.2, ad 4 (WSB XVI, 294).

seminal reasons, these created causes, which effect biodiversity on Earth, can be regarded as the process of natural selection, ancestor species, geography, ecosystems and the like in light of evolutionary science. That is to say, God liberally allows these things to be concurrent causes working with God's self. The evolving natural world and life forms within it, which are studied by natural science, are gifted with being created causes from the theological viewpoint. Therefore, in a sense, the diversity of life forms is a result of the collaboration of the liberal and loving will of the fecund God as the first cause, and the evolutionary process and many factors allied to it as the created causes. Just as God freely shares divine love with created things, God liberally shares the causal work with them in divine love and, by doing so, brings diverse animals and plants into being. In this sense, biodiversity can be read as the expression not only of divine fecundity but also of the fecund God's liberality and love.

Bonaventure's image of light flowing through a stained glass window is an important metaphor for his sacramental vision of various creatures: "As you notice that a ray of light coming in through a window is colored according to the shades of the different panes, so the divine ray shines differently in each creature and in the various properties."<sup>11</sup> In light of the contemporary picture of biodiversity of life on Earth, this metaphor can be viewed as illustrating that the diverse forms of life in ecosystems are the multifarious expressions of the divine wisdom. Just as the beauty of light cannot be appropriately expressed through one pane of a stained glass window, neither can the richness of God through one creature. All creatures and their various properties, as the vestige of the Trinity, reflect their Creator in a distinct manner. Even though being a limited divine manifestation due to the ontological gap from God, the totality of numerous living species on Earth and their life and properties, still beyond current human knowledge, point to the infinite and fecund productivity of the Trinity in some way.

The implications of the analogy of a stained glass window are further elaborated by the concept of exemplarism. The Word, as the divine Idea and the eternal Exemplar, contains all of the divine ideas, which are exemplary, in a unified mode. God knows and expresses everything by these ideas. Every creature is patterned on these ideas in the Word, and thus its variety expresses the multiplicity and fruitfulness of these divine ideas. Bonaventure explains how the divine ideas, which model different created beings, can be considered to be many although they ought to be one as the divine truth:

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<sup>11</sup> Bonaventure, *Hex.*, c.12, n.14 (WB V, 179).

And the expression, considered in itself, is identical with the truth. But, when considered in terms of the object to which it refers, it must be thought of in terms of the beings that are expressed through it. Therefore, the expression of diverse objects in or by the divine truth is not diverse in itself. But it is said to be diverse from the perspective of the object to which it refers ... Therefore, because the exemplary causes designate those expressions of divine truth viewed from the perspective of creatures, they are said to be many not in terms of what they signify but in terms of what they connote; not in terms of what they are in themselves but in terms of that to which they refer or to which they are related.<sup>12</sup>

Even though sunlight flows in different colours through each pane of a stained glass window, it is not many rays of light in itself but the one ray of light shown in many colours to our eyes. In a similar way, although diverse creatures are produced through divine ideas, they fundamentally come into being through one divine Idea – that is, the Word. Like the panes of the different colours of a stained glass window, every creature, whether it is a human being, a palm tree or a kangaroo, as a little word being differently patterned on the divine ideas, is a distinct expression of the Word and is directly related to the Word. The entire world of various living species is a kind of stained glass window comprised of diverse panes likened to different animals and plants.

In Bonaventure's view, the multiple divine ideas are not only of the universal but also of the individual. Accordingly, he states that "since it is a likeness of both, an idea is multiplied not only according to the multiplicity of universals, but also according to the multiplicity of singulars."<sup>13</sup> That is to say, each individual thing, as well as various groups of things, is patterned on the divine ideas. This view indicates that God knows the individual thing and imprints the Trinitarian traces of God's self not only on various things at a collective level but also on each individual thing in its own distinctiveness. Hence, just as the whole of creation is understood as the expression of the Godhead, each individual, too, is regarded as a valued representation bearing the Trinity's footprint in its inner structure. This insight can be read from the perspective of evolution. As I have outlined in Chapter 1, biological evolution is basically built upon genetic variations among individual organisms.<sup>14</sup> Based on these

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<sup>12</sup> Bonaventure, *Scien. Chr.*, q.3, conc. (WSB IV, 106).

<sup>13</sup> Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d.35, a.u., q.4, conc. (WSB XVI, 211).

<sup>14</sup> See above section 1.3.1.

variations, each entity is said to possess its own uniqueness even within the same species. Thus, evolution proceeds through such variations and the process of natural selection, bringing into being different biological species and genetically diverse individuals within the species. From this point of view, each biological entity, as with various collective species, is theologically seen as a little word expressing the Word and as the vestige of the Trinity. The fecundity of God is mirrored not only by the incomprehensible magnitude of fauna and flora species on Earth, but also by the distinctiveness of numerous individual animals and plants.

#### **4.2.2 The Relational Natural World Springing from the Relational Trinity**

As I have outlined in Chapter 1 and have mentioned earlier in this chapter, there is a range of interrelationships in the natural world. Biological evolution takes place in the context of relationships between organisms and between these organisms and their surrounding environment. Molecular biological studies demonstrate that even seemingly very different organisms are linked with one another at a microscopic level. Cosmological and astrophysical developments show that biological life forms on Earth are associated with the wider universe and its history including the birth and death of stars.

According to the Jesuit priest and cosmologist, William Stoeger, not only do these relationships reveal the interconnection between realities, but they also constitute the natural world. He explains this idea, using the term “constitutive relationships”: “Constitutive relationships are ... those inter-connections among components and with the larger context which jointly effect the composition of a given system and establish its functional characteristics within the larger whole of which it is a part, and thereby enable it to manifest the particular properties and behavior it does.”<sup>15</sup> Stoeger affirms that, based on the configuration of elements involved, these constitutive relationships could be of various dimensions such as physical, metaphysical, biological or social. He gives the example of a bodily organ like the liver. The constitutive relationships of the liver involve the relationships between its cells, the relationships of the liver with the vessels and other organs in the body, and the relationships of the liver with the wider physical and metaphysical context which

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<sup>15</sup> William R. Stoeger, “The Mind-Brain Problem, the Laws of Nature, and Constitutive Relationships,” in *Neuroscience and the Person: Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action*, ed. Robert John Russell et al. (Vatican City State: Vatican Observatory Publications; Berkeley, CA: Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, 1999), 137.

sustains all these elements. Another example that Stoeger gives is the human person. The human person is defined by his or her components, such as cells and organs, together with his or her relation with the wider context, such as family and society.<sup>16</sup> Constitutive relationships permeate the world. It is by these relationships that something novel and more complex emerges and evolves. We dare to say, “No relationships, no natural world of complex and diverse life forms!” Relationships constitute and hold the whole universe and realities within it.

As a number of contemporary theologians point out, relationality is essential to the Triune God as well as to the world.<sup>17</sup> Theology emphasises that, as the Triune God is essentially the Trinity of persons in communion, the mutual relations of these persons are central to the Trinity. John Zizioulas argues, “It is communion that makes things be: nothing exists without it, not even God.”<sup>18</sup> Colin Gunton writes, “Of both God and the world it must be said that they have their being in relation.”<sup>19</sup> However, as Denis Edwards justly remarks, it should be affirmed that the Trinity is not just similar to the universe in terms of relational essence but, above all, the Trinitarian persons’ relationality grounds the underlying reality of the universe as relational: “Trinitarian theologians argue that if the Creator’s being is radically relational, then this suggests something about the nature of created reality itself. It suggests a relational ontology. It suggests that the very *being* of things is relational.”<sup>20</sup> The whole universe and realities within it, formed and sustained by various relationships, originate from God in a relationship-of-love. Their relational character is grounded in the relationships of reciprocal love between the Trinitarian persons. The created world, filled with interrelationships, partakes of the life of Trinitarian communion, and the range of relationships manifest the divine communion although in an ontologically limited manner.<sup>21</sup> In line with Edwards, Elizabeth Johnson also holds that “the Trinity provides a symbolic

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Denis Edwards, “A Relational and Evolving Universe Unfolding within the Dynamism of the Divine Communion,” in *In Whom We Live and Move and Have Our Being*, ed. Philip Clayton and Arthur Peacocke (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 203-04.

<sup>18</sup> John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985), 17.

<sup>19</sup> Colin E. Gunton, *The One, the Three, and the Many: God, Creation, and the Culture of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 230.

<sup>20</sup> Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 80.

<sup>21</sup> Edwards, “A Relational and Evolving Universe Unfolding within the Dynamism of the Divine Communion,” 203-05.

picture of totally shared life at the heart of the universe” and that “the Trinity as pure relationality epitomizes the connectedness of all that exists in the universe.”<sup>22</sup>

It is my view that Bonaventure’s thought of the relational Trinity grounds the picture of the relational universe in a theological way. For Bonaventure, God is not lonely and isolated but relational and dynamic. As I have explored in Chapter 2, God possesses communicable and productive characteristics – i.e., beatitude, simplicity, perfection and primacy.<sup>23</sup> Based on these characteristics, there is a plurality of persons who communicate the same divine nature. The three divine persons are identified not by themselves but by each person’s relations to the other(s). The Father is defined as the Father because he begets the Son in his relation of fatherhood to the Son. The Son is defined as the Son because he is begotten by the Father in his relation of sonship to the Father. The Holy Spirit is defined as the Holy Spirit because it proceeds from the Father and the Son in its relation of procession to them. In this way, each person’s relations to the other(s) are the basis by which each is distinguished from the other(s). While maintaining their own distinction at the level of person, the three divine persons are equal at the level of nature, interpenetrating one another and acting together in the full unity of divinity, as Bonaventure’s concept of *circumincessio* indicates: “There must be supreme mutual intimacy by which each is necessarily in the others by reason of their supreme interpenetration (*circumincessionem*), and one acts with the others in a total unity of substance, power, and activity within the most blessed Trinity itself.”<sup>24</sup>

I argue that the relational natural world gives expression to Bonaventure’s view concerning the relational Trinity. As each divine person is defined by its relations to the other person(s), an entity in the natural world is also constituted and characterised by the relationships between its components and between it and its wider context. All entities cannot emerge and maintain their existence outside the web of such relationships.

I also see the interconnection of life forms at the DNA level as an expression of *circumincessio* of the three persons in a limited way. As I refer to the views of two scientists, Peter Schuster and Neil Shubin, in Chapter 1, the DNA of all living organisms, including humans, has been mutated from a primordial DNA sequence over generations. Genes which build the human body and its parts have been modified from genes which have existed in

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<sup>22</sup> Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1992), 22.

<sup>23</sup> See above section 2.3.1.

<sup>24</sup> Bonaventure, *Itin.*, c.6, n.2 (WSB II, 125).

other animals and were responsible for building their body and its parts. In a sense, the traces of other living animals, as well as formerly existing life forms, are imprinted in our DNA. The DNA of other life forms is associated with ours to some degree, in spite of clear differences between them. Thus, all species over evolutionary history are bound to one another, sharing the same creaturely nature on a fundamental level. I believe that this interconnection gives expression to the intimacy of all living organisms, and that, from the viewpoint of Bonaventure, this intimacy is theologically grounded in the supreme intimacy of the Trinitarian persons, *circumincessio*, by which they are in one another, sharing the same divine nature.

Therefore, from Bonaventure's theological perspective, it can be claimed that the relationality of the natural world springs from and reflects the highest relationality of the Trinity. Human relations with other fellow human beings, and relations with animals, plants and the environment can also be said to be grounded in that of the three divine persons because human beings are not an exception to relational webs in the natural world. Accordingly, it can be rightly understood that human beings are called to manifest the relationships of the Trinitarian persons through the relationships they make with other creatures.

So far in this chapter, I have explored how Bonaventure's Trinitarian doctrine of creation – in particular, his sacramental view of creation – can be interpreted in reference to the scientific picture of the diversity and interrelatedness of biological life forms in the natural world. These beautiful realities of nature are allied well to Bonaventure's concept of creation as reflecting the divine fecundity and relationality. However, it should also be noted that these realities of the natural world are intertwined with harsh realities which are inherent in evolutionary history and ecosystems. Although biodiversity on Earth is thought of as a wonderful outcome of the evolutionary process of life and as the expression of the divine fecundity, a huge number of species has become extinct due to natural factors in the course of that process. Similarly, even though the relational natural world is theologically viewed as springing from and reflecting the relationality of the Trinity, there is a substantial gap between them. In the Triune God, there is the perfect communication of love. The three divine persons are closely united in the bond of their reciprocal love. The Trinity is communion in love. On the contrary, in a world of living organisms, there are aspects such as predation and relentless competition for resources which do not reflect divine love and communion. Accordingly, it can scarcely be said that every relationship found in the natural world is grounded in or expresses the relationship of mutual love in God. These realities of inherent suffering in the

evolutionary natural world should not be overlooked if Bonaventure's theology of the created world is to be interpreted in light of the contemporary scientific perspective. This is what I will take into account in the next section.

### **4.3 Bonaventure and Deep Incarnation**

Many theologians, and many others, have asked how the picture of suffering, loss and death in the natural world can be understood in reference to the traditional doctrine of a loving and merciful God. Among them is Niels Henrik Gregersen who coined the term "deep incarnation." Gregersen introduced this term in his article "The Cross of Christ in an Evolutionary World" where he discusses how the significance of Christ's cross can be understood with reference to the costs, sometimes called natural evil, in the evolutionary process.<sup>25</sup> His concept of deep incarnation was originally developed in the course of responding to the matter of evolutionary costs. Scholars, including Gregersen himself, have adopted and developed the concept in various ways.<sup>26</sup> I believe that a discussion of deep incarnation, in relation to Bonaventure's theology of the created world, might begin to point the way towards a theological response to the contemporary scientific view of the harsh aspects of the natural world. I will begin this section by investigating the origin and development of the theology of deep incarnation. Then I will bring deep incarnation into dialogue with Bonaventure's theology. In so doing, I will seek to show how his thought can be re-interpreted in a contemporary way with respect to the ambivalent reality of the natural world.

#### **4.3.1 The Coining of the Term "Deep Incarnation"**

In his article "The Cross of Christ in an Evolutionary World," Gregersen outlines contemporary biology's understanding of death, pain and suffering in the evolutionary process. In Gregersen's view, these can be no longer attributed to human sin, but rather, are to be seen as part of the process of evolutionary emergence. In some organisms, we can trace a

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<sup>25</sup> Niels Henrik Gregersen, "The Cross of Christ in an Evolutionary World," *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 40, no. 3 (2001): 192-207.

<sup>26</sup> For example, see Niels Henrik Gregersen, ed., *Incarnation: On the Scope and Depth of Christology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015).



process of complexification: for example, single cell organisms evolve into multicellular organisms; parthenogenesis gives rise to sexual-reproduction; and a primitive nervous system evolves into a highly organised nervous system. This movement involves hardships, such as extinction, physical pain, and in some cases, mental suffering. These facets are a cost that living organisms pay for their life and evolution. The extinction of preceding species becomes an occasion for the emergence and flourishing of new species. The experience of physical pain is necessarily concomitant to organisms with highly-developed sentience. Such an experience makes it possible for these organisms to perceive dangers which are disadvantageous to their survival; furthermore, this experience becomes an opportunity for them to gain beneficial characteristics aiding their survival and allowing them to flourish. Mental suffering, such as anxiety and depression, is especially relevant to humans who may be psychologically affected by undesirable circumstances due to their highly complex and sophisticated brain which, at the same time, enables humans to consider various possibilities and select the advantageous one. In this way, the evolutionary process involves hardships which are the price paid for the emergence of novel and highly-developed organisms. To put it another way, such hardships necessarily coexist with the joy of a new being's rise in the evolutionary world. This is the so-called view of the "package deal" according to which the hardships are seen as part of God's creation.<sup>27</sup>

However, Gregersen points out the limitations of the package deal view. While this view explains the reason why pain is present in the evolutionary world, it does not respond to the problem of the profusion of pain observed. In addition, it does not provide an appropriate response to the problem of individual suffering. To respond to the existential experience of pain encountered in the natural world, Gregersen alters his focus to take up the viewpoint of Christology and pneumatology.<sup>28</sup>

Gregersen first notes the high Christological insight that Jesus reveals the true identity of God. Jewish monotheism sees the divine Word and Wisdom – being intrinsic to God – as performing God's creating and ruling (e.g. Ps. 33:6, 9; Wis. 7:22; 8:4-6; 9:1), and as characterising God's identity. In the New Testament, Jesus is already confessed as the resurrected and exalted Lord exercising such roles with the same divine authority (e.g. Eph. 1:21-22), and so, is identified with God's own Word and Wisdom (e.g. 1 Cor. 8:6; Rom.

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<sup>27</sup> Gregersen, "The Cross of Christ in an Evolutionary World," 197-201.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 201.

11:36). Thus, Jesus, as the Word/Wisdom of God, is said to characterise the identity of God.<sup>29</sup>

Gregersen, then, explores how this high Christological insight is compatible with the event of Jesus's cross. His answer hinges on the hymn of St. Paul's letter to the Philippians (2:6-11) in which the Suffering Servant from the Second Isaiah is re-interpreted from the viewpoint of Christology. Just as the Servant "poured out himself to death" (Isa. 53:12) and "shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high" (Isa. 52:13), Christ Jesus "emptied himself" (Phil. 2:7) and "became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:8) and, finally, "God also highly exalted him" (Phil. 2:9). Because Jesus truly possesses the identity of God, it can be said that the highest and almighty divine being not only took human form, but descended to the point of biological death, physical pain and mental anguish represented by the crucifixion, and that the cross of Jesus, indeed, revealed God's identity and character. Gregersen asserts that the cross shows God's self-giving nature: "If the cross of Christ belongs to God's eternal character (as the 'Lamb slain in eternity,' as is said in the Revelation of John), God's way of exercising sovereignty over all things in creation will also for ever be characterized by God's self-giving nature ... God is depicted as self-giving in the passivity and endurance on the cross."<sup>30</sup>

The important question is what meaning the cross, which represents God's self-bestowal, has for suffering creation. Gregersen's thesis is as follows: "The cross at once exemplifies and makes real that God bears the cost of suffering with the world. The cross of Christ is like a microcosm in which the sufferings in the macrocosm is both represented and lived out."<sup>31</sup> Jesus experienced bodily death without genetic offspring. He was rejected and scorned although, embracing the needy and those who fell behind in social competition, he repudiated the "us versus them" attitude of societal groups. Gregersen sees all of this as indicating that God accompanies the losers of cosmic evolution and social competition, and that God carries the severe cost of creation's package deal, such as death and harsh competition.<sup>32</sup>

Gregersen takes these ideas a step further, noting the personal dimension of Jesus's death. In his crucifixion, Jesus experienced the radical loneliness and abandonment of God the Father and his fellow creatures. Since this state of extreme abandonment is defined, in a

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 201-02.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 203.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 203-04.

classic sense, as hell, Jesus is said to have undergone the state of hell. But, the Christian faith confesses that Jesus not only experienced that state, but also saved those, who were in the same state, from the suffering of hell. In so doing, the state of radical forsakenness by God was transformed to the state of being with God and with all the redeemed. In this sense, it can be said that, just as Christ's cross becomes not only the locus of terrible suffering but also the springboard from which all pains and adversities begin to be transformed to the glory of resurrection, "God is not only passively enduring suffering, but is also in the process of actively transforming suffering."<sup>33</sup>

Gregersen explores what significance these insights into Christ's cross have for non-human creatures, adopting Martin Luther's concept of "happy exchange." Luther writes, "By the wedding ring of faith he [Christ] shares in the sins, death, and pains of hell which are his bride's. As a matter of fact, he makes them his own and acts as if they were his own and as if he himself had sinned; he suffered, died, and descended into hell that he might overcome them all."<sup>34</sup> Gregersen expands this sharing between Christ and the human soul to the extent of embracing human and animal suffering. Then the happy exchange is applicable to Christ crucified and the creatures who are suffering from evolutionary hardships and personal difficulties. In this exchange, Christ makes creatures' suffering, death and afflictions his own. The incarnation is understood not just as God's taking the human body of Jesus the Nazarene, but, inclusively, as God's taking upon himself the fragility of biological existence, including death. Gregersen summarises it:

In this context, the incarnation of God in Christ can be understood as a radical or "deep" incarnation, that is, an incarnation into the very tissue of biological existence, and system of nature. Understood this way, the death of Christ becomes an icon of God's redemptive co-suffering with all sentient life as well as with the victims of social competition. God bears the costs of evolution, the price involved in the hardship of natural selection.<sup>35</sup>

Gregersen sees the concept of deep incarnation as expressing the redemptive significance of

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 204.

<sup>34</sup> Martin Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian," in *Martin Luther: Selection from his Writings*, ed. John Dillenberger (New York: Doubleday, 1962), 61, quoted in Ibid., 205.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

Christ's cross not only for humans but also for all sentient creatures subject to pain, suffering and death. God, who willingly accepts such creaturely limitations in the incarnation of Christ, above all in his cross, enables all suffering creatures to come to their transformation.

#### **4.3.2 The Development of the Concept "Deep Incarnation"**

It goes beyond the scope of this thesis to cover all developments of the concept of deep incarnation brought to light by recent theologians.<sup>36</sup> Hence, I will focus on several important aspects which are likely to be associated with Bonaventure's theology of Christ incarnate and the created world.

The concept of deep incarnation was initially proposed in relation to the theme of evolutionary suffering and hardship. While maintaining this theme as a key background theory, the theology of deep incarnation has been further developed to the extent that, beyond the consideration of that theme, it can relate the incarnation to all biological life forms in interrelated ecosystems and the whole of evolutionary history. This development is shown in the idea of the extended body of Jesus which is the first aspect of developments that I will address.

From the biblical viewpoint, the body of Jesus is understood as an extended body related to surroundings in his time and beyond it. The gospels show that the bodily life of Jesus is not isolated from his contemporaries nor from God the Father and the Holy Spirit. He lives as a member of his community, fulfilling his mission by preaching the Kingdom of God amongst the people whilst constantly remaining in communion with God the Father and the Holy Spirit.<sup>37</sup> As well, his life's ministry involves dimensions pertaining to the natural world although this was not his immediate focus. In his parables and teachings, Jesus uses metaphors plus references to creatures in nature, such as the vineyard, weeds, sheep and sparrows. The reign of God which is the central theme of his ministry is regarded as bringing salvation not just for sinful humanity but also for all creatures, given that God is the universal Creator.<sup>38</sup> This understanding of Jesus's bodily life reveals that he is not a Saviour who has

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<sup>36</sup> See, for example, the contributors to the aforementioned book, Niels Henrik Gregersen, ed., *Incarnation: On the Scope and Depth of Christology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015).

<sup>37</sup> Niels Henrik Gregersen, "Cur Deus Caro: Jesus and the Cosmos Story," *Theology and Science* 11, no.4 (2013): 379.

<sup>38</sup> Elizabeth A. Johnson, "Jesus and the Cosmos: Soundings in Deep Christology," in *Incarnation: On the Scope and Depth of Christology*, ed. Niels Henrik Gregersen (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 143-44.

nothing to do with his surrounding world. Instead, Jesus is involved and engaged with the world and realities within it during his earthly life.

Analysis of the biblical word “flesh” forms a strong basis for extending Jesus’s corporeal relevance to other beings, going beyond the particular time and space where he lived. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *basar*, which is translated to “flesh,” connotes various meanings: for example, the whole human person, body and soul (e.g. Ps. 65:2; 145:21), the bodily part of the human being (e.g. Job 19:26; Ps. 84:2; Gen. 2:24), every living creature whose destiny is vulnerability, mortality and transience (e.g. Isa. 40:6-7), and human beings and all living non-human creatures in fellowship (e.g. Jer. 25:31).<sup>39</sup> The prologue of St. John’s gospel affirms that this flesh was what the Word became (John 1:14). In the prologue, the flesh, which is translated from the Greek word *sarx*, denotes the particular body and flesh of Jesus. It also points to the sinful way of life opposed to the word of God, refusal and resistance to God (e.g. John 1:11; 3:6). In addition, given that the Hebrew word *basar* can denote living material creatures, as with human beings, and that, in ancient times, *sarx* referred to the whole physical world, excluding celestial objects, “flesh” can take on an extended meaning referring to materiality in a very general way, which is transitory and mortal.<sup>40</sup>

In light of this multifaceted concept of flesh, the incarnation is said to be not just the Word’s becoming Jesus the Nazarene, a specific man, but also the Word’s entry into creaturely and material conditions, in general, such as frailty, vulnerability and finitude. In other words, God assumed in Jesus Christ the flesh which is not only of the individual man Jesus but also of all material creatures. In consideration of a high Christological view that Jesus Christ is the identity of God, Gregersen summarises the meaning of deep incarnation as follows: “*In Christ, God is conjoining all creatures and enters into the biological tissue of creation itself in order to share the fate of biological existence. God becomes Jesus, and in him God becomes human, and (by implication) foxes and sparrows, grass and soil.*”<sup>41</sup> In another article, Gregersen writes, “The most high (the eternal thought and power of God) and the very low

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<sup>39</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, “Is God Incarnate in All That Is?,” in *Incarnation: On the Scope and Depth of Christology*, ed. Niels Henrik Gregersen (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 126-27.

<sup>40</sup> Niels Henrik Gregersen, “The Extended Body of Christ: Three Dimensions of Deep Incarnation,” in *Incarnation: On the Scope and Depth of Christology*, ed. Niels Henrik Gregersen (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 228-33.

<sup>41</sup> Niels Henrik Gregersen, “Deep Incarnation: Why Evolutionary Continuity Matters in Christology,” *Toronto Journal of Theology* 26, no. 2 (2010): 182.

(the flesh that comes into being and decays) are internally related in the process of incarnation. ... the divine Logos and the material *sarx* are co-present in the person of Christ.”<sup>42</sup>

This concept of deep incarnation is understood with reference to the scientific view of the emergence of humans in evolutionary history. Evolutionary studies affirm that humans are not isolated from the other creatures on Earth, those of the past and the present, and from the vast history of the universe. For example, the elements composing the human body and, indeed all living creatures, originate from the Big Bang and from the stars that emerged as the universe expanded. Hydrogen and the first helium were formed in the Big Bang. Other vital elements, such as carbon, oxygen and nitrogen, were produced from the stars which were formed by nuclear fusion reactions in the gas clouds as the universe expanded and cooled. At a fundamental level, human beings, as with other material creatures, are intrinsically related to the vast universe. Similarly, Earth’s history shows that human beings are involved in the biological evolutionary process where numerous species, from single-celled creatures, such as archaea and bacteria, to multicellular creatures, such as amphibians, reptiles and mammals, have appeared, evolved or disappeared. Modern humans are the product of evolution descending from the common ancestors of humans and apes. They share the history of biological evolution with other living creatures from the simplest form of life that emerged 3.5 billion years ago.<sup>43</sup> Not only in past history but also in current life, human existence is ecologically intertwined with and interdependent with other creatures and the surrounding environment. Apart from this connection, human beings cannot sustain their bodily life.<sup>44</sup>

In view of these scientific insights, it can be said that the humanity of Jesus Christ, as with all humankind, is not separated from the history of the universe, biological evolution or from the interrelationship with the natural environment surrounding him. The body and flesh of Jesus were composed of elements which originated from the universe and its stars. His body and flesh, biologically speaking, arose from and were involved in the long evolutionary history of life beginning from bacteria-like organisms. His earthly life was sustained by dependence on interrelated ecosystems. Based on this understanding, Elizabeth Johnson claims that the incarnation is seen as a cosmic event in that the incarnate Word of God, through the flesh of Jesus, is connected not just with the human race but also with the whole

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<sup>42</sup> Gregersen, “Cur Deus Caro,” 383.

<sup>43</sup> Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 8-14.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 60.

world of fauna and flora and the cosmic dust of which they are composed.<sup>45</sup> In a similar way, Denis Edwards observes that, in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, God enters the entire history of the evolution and interconnection of life on Earth, and enfolds into God's self the finite creaturely existence. In this view of deep incarnation, as Edwards proposes, the Christian belief of *God-with-us* can be thought of as the sense of *God-with-all-living-things*.<sup>46</sup>

Even though deep incarnation is about God's conjoining with material creatures in the extended body of Christ, it should be noted that the concept of deep incarnation is unequivocally different from the view that God is incarnated in all that is. Gregersen insists that the absolute uniqueness of the specific incarnation of God in Jesus of Nazareth, as the Christian doctrine of the incarnation fundamentally sees it, is a unique revelatory event of God's identity and character. He does not see God as revealed in the material events like natural disasters and human tragedy, although the idea of deep incarnation highlights the loving co-presence of God in such circumstances. Hence, Gregersen poses the need to distinguish the modes of the incarnation.<sup>47</sup> He discusses three modes of the incarnation. The first mode is that God was incarnated as the historical and particular body of Jesus (*strict sense*). This sense contains cosmic implications beyond the historical mode of Jesus's earthly life, as has been shown in the idea of the extended body of Jesus Christ universally relating to the whole creation, including humanity. This first mode is also said to have soteriological implications as well, due to the wider meaning of the resurrection in the theology of deep incarnation. The resurrection of Jesus reveals that this extended body of Jesus Christ was transformed and raised into the life of God through the resurrection.<sup>48</sup> Gregersen says that "just as God 'in the beginning' wanted, accepted and enjoyed the full gamut of the material world of creation (Gen. 1:31), so God will also 'in the end' (that is, forever) be united with this world of creation in the incarnate God through the Holy Spirit."<sup>49</sup>

The second mode emphasises Jesus Christ sharing the totality of the social and geographical conditions of the universe (*broad sense*). Christ is present in such circumstances through the cosmic dimension of his incarnation. However, Christ cannot be said to be revealed in or identified with those aspects in the world that do not properly reveal God's

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<sup>45</sup> Johnson, *Ask the Beasts*, 196-97.

<sup>46</sup> Edwards, *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*, 60.

<sup>47</sup> Gregersen, "Cur Deus Caro," 383-84.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 384-85.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 385.

nature and character – for example, those caused by evolutionary suffering and human sin.<sup>50</sup> Gregersen writes, “The living Christ is always co-present *in* such relationships, calling for transformation, but exactly not present *as* enacting these self-same relationships.”<sup>51</sup>

The third mode of the incarnation is related to the soteriological implication that Christ is incarnated for those suffering (*soteriological sense*). According to Gregersen, the two aforementioned senses of the incarnation are joined in this sense. Jesus Christ, in whom God is specifically incarnated (*strict sense*), assumes and participates in the totality of material conditions including suffering and fragility (*broad sense*) and, therefore he sympathetically suffers with all suffering creatures, under the same conditions, and works for their salvation through the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>52</sup>

Johnson develops a similar insight, using the term “deep cross.”<sup>53</sup> Contemporary theologians, notably those dedicated to liberation theology, often see Jesus’s death on the cross as representing the character of divine love in solidarity with the suffering, connecting the implications of his death to the situation of those oppressed by evil and injustice in today’s world.<sup>54</sup> In this sense, Jesus’s cross is regarded as a sign of God’s taking into God’s self all human suffering, from despair to death, as well as God’s solidarity with all those who are under such trials.<sup>55</sup> Johnson argues that, given the meaning of deep incarnation, this divine solidarity with suffering humanity is extended to include all other-than-human creatures which have also been subjected to pain, hardship and death in the evolutionary process. In deep incarnation, God enters the world of all biological life forms, not just of humans, and shares their material conditions by assuming Jesus’s flesh which is part of evolutionary history and which is intertwined with its surrounding environment. Through this lens of deep incarnation, it can be claimed that God who conjoins such conditions of all material creatures in the incarnate Christ is present with these creatures in Jesus’s crucifixion when they undergo suffering in the context of evolution.<sup>56</sup> Johnson draws on Arthur Peacocke’s insight as well,

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 385-86.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 386.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Johnson, “Jesus and the Cosmos,” 145-50; *Creation and the Cross: The Mercy of God for a Planet in Peril* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2018), 187-94.

<sup>54</sup> Johnson, “Jesus and the Cosmos,” 145-46.

<sup>55</sup> Johnson, *Creation and the Cross*, 187.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 183-89.



in order to affirm this idea of God's solidarity with all creatures.<sup>57</sup> As I have cited in Chapter 1, Peacocke sees biological evolution as inevitably containing aspects of pain and death. Experiencing pain is advantageous for the survival of an organism because it thus gains vital information for its survival and avoids potential dangers. In consideration of finite resources, new life forms can only appear and flourish if old life forms give way for them.<sup>58</sup> In light of this view, Peacocke proposes that God has to be conceived as being "deeply involved in, with, and under the very evolutionary process of creation."<sup>59</sup> In other words, "*God* suffers in, with, and under the creative processes of the world with their costly unfolding in time."<sup>60</sup> This idea of a co-suffering God in evolution is related to the notion of God's self-limitation, self-emptying (*kenosis*). God willingly involves God's self with suffering creatures in order to bring about the God-intended-purpose for creatures. To put it another way, for such purposes, God willingly takes the risky and costly process of limiting and emptying God's self.<sup>61</sup> As Jesus's cross is an icon of God's self-emptying for suffering humanity and God's solidarity with it, the same cross, in accordance with Peacocke's insight, can be rightly regarded as an icon of God's co-suffering and solidarity with all biological life forms experiencing the harsh realities of the evolutionary process. The meaning of Jesus's cross is extended to the deep cross as an icon of God's self-emptying for all suffering creatures, bringing salvation to them.

What is striking in Johnson's thinking is that, in addition to the idea of God's redemptive co-suffering through deep understanding of the cross, she expounds on how God's promise of redemption for such suffering can be understood as including other-than-human creatures based on the logic of deep incarnation. In this regard, Johnson proposes the concept of "deep resurrection," which I bring up as the second aspect of the developments of the theology of deep incarnation.<sup>62</sup> Johnson notes that what rises in Jesus's resurrection is not just his soul but his whole bodily person. Although one cannot imagine what the resurrected biological body looks like in everlasting life with God, the resurrection of Jesus promises that, as his resurrection was the transformation of his whole body-person, so will be the

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<sup>57</sup> Johnson, "Jesus and the Cosmos," 146. For Arthur Peacocke's own writing, see Arthur Peacocke, "The Cost of New Life," in *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*, ed. John Polkinghorne (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 21-42.

<sup>58</sup> See above section 1.3.1.

<sup>59</sup> Peacocke, "The Cost of New Life," 37.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 37-39.

<sup>62</sup> Johnson, *Ask the Beasts*, 207-10; *Creation and the Cosmos*, 187-94; "Jesus and the Cosmos," 145-50.

resurrection of other humans. That is to say, his resurrection is a warrant for the transformation of the whole human body-person. This warrant, in her view, includes all material creatures throughout the whole history of evolution.<sup>63</sup> She argues:

If this person Jesus of Nazareth – composed of star stuff and earth stuff, whose life was a genuine part of the historical and biological community of Earth, whose body existed in a network of relationships extending to the whole physical universe – ... at death surrendered his life in love to the living God and is now forever with God in glory, then this signals the coming redemption not just of other human beings but of all flesh, the whole creation. The whole natural world, all of matter in its endless permutations, will not be left behind or rejected but will likewise be transfigured by the resurrecting action of the Creator Spirit.<sup>64</sup>

Johnson's thesis is that the whole of creation, including non-human biological creatures, will participate in the final transformation by the Holy Spirit of all things in God. This proposition is made because Jesus conjoined the same history and interrelated community of the physical world with them by assuming materiality in the incarnation and, after his resurrection, was raised into divine glory with transformed materiality – that is, his transformed body. To put it briefly in another way, "Christ took flesh, something from the material order, and so his resurrection has opened the door to the redemptive metamorphosis of all creation."<sup>65</sup> By God's sharing the common material conditions through the incarnation, divine solidarity with the suffering in Jesus's crucifixion is extended to other creatures undergoing the harsh realities that are inherent in the evolutionary process. Similarly, God's promise of final transformation in Jesus's resurrection is widened to include these same creatures by the same implication of the incarnation. As Johnson acknowledges, this deep understanding of resurrection accords with the ancient truth about cosmic redemption exemplified in the Christological hymn of St. Paul's letter to the Colossians (1:20). Although, as with the resurrection of humans, one cannot imagine what cosmic redemption looks like, the concept of deep resurrection expands the traditional Christian hope of salvation for human beings to

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<sup>63</sup> Johnson, "Jesus and the Cosmos," 146-49.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 148-49.

<sup>65</sup> Johnson, *Creation and the Cross*, 192.

the extent of being applicable to the whole creation.<sup>66</sup> In her recent work, Johnson expresses this view as follows: “The transformation to come escapes our imagination. It is true to say, though, that deep resurrection encourages us to include every creature of flesh in the hoped-for future. Each will be blessed according to its own nature as part of the whole creation that will be made new.”<sup>67</sup>

As the logic of deep resurrection implies, cosmic and universal consummation postulates a close bond between the incarnate and exalted Christ and all creatures. As the third aspect of the developments of the theology of deep incarnation, I will deal with how Richard Bauckham and Gregersen understand this bond. Bauckham argues against the traditional view which considers humanity as microcosm to be such a bond. He also critiques emergence theory which sees evolution as the hierarchical and sequential development of beings. The bottom line of his criticism is that these two ideas are not compatible with the complex picture of evolution informed by contemporary evolutionary science. According to emergence theory, a higher organism emerges with novel functions and properties from a lower being while including those of a lower being as well. However, as is shown in the example of the development of photosynthesis which is the key defining characteristic of the vegetable kingdom, not all properties of a lower level are subsumed to a higher level in a single sequence of evolution. Instead, evolution contains a “branching” development; life forms have been evolved in multiple directions, not in a single direction aiming at the emergence of humankind. Thus, Bauckham rejects the view that humanity, as microcosm, recapitulates all material beings. Even if it is said that “branching” is just about a distinct characteristic of a lower level and does not contribute to the appearance of a higher level, he points out that the commonality between these two levels – for example, humanity and vegetation – is insignificant and too general. For Bauckham, the incarnate Christ does not possess the features that make trees distinctly trees, and vice versa. Although humanity and vegetation share the same starting point of evolution, their connection is a remote one, since they have experienced different processes in their development from the common point. Bauckham indicates that, from this critical viewpoint, it can hardly be claimed that God genuinely shares the material conditions of biological life forms through the incarnation.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Johnson, “Jesus and the Cosmos,” 149-50.

<sup>67</sup> Johnson, *Creation and the Cross*, 192.

<sup>68</sup> Richard Bauckham, “The Incarnation and the Cosmic Christ,” in *Incarnation: On the Scope and Depth of Christology*, ed. Niels Henrik Gregersen (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 37-45.

Bauckham sees the concept of ecological interrelatedness as a meaningful way to express the bond between Christ and creation. He points out that the way of thinking based upon the view of microcosm and emergence theory overlooks a variety of interrelationships in ecosystems because “it conceives the natural world too exclusively in terms of the development of kingdoms and species across time.”<sup>69</sup> Evolution involves the history of the interrelationships between organisms, and between organisms and the environment. Throughout that history, while some species have become extinct, other species have survived and evolved in various forms by finding fitness for their survival and their flourishing in the environment to which they are related. That is to say, evolution has brought out the diverse forms of life, “both diachronically across the aeons of developments and extinctions, and synchronically in the existing ecological web of creation.”<sup>70</sup> In a sense, evolution has a tendency not towards complexity but towards diversity.<sup>71</sup> Then human beings are rightly said to have appeared, shared and participated continually in the history of the interrelationships of various life forms.

In Bauckham’s view, God is also said to have participated physically in the interrelationships with diverse creatures through the incarnation in Jesus. That Jesus conjoined the materiality of all living creatures in the deep incarnation does not mean that he was an isolated human being from the interconnected web of life on Earth that brought out and sustained his bodily life and that of his fellow creatures. Rather, he entered and participated in such a web, as do other material creatures. The resurrection and exaltation of Jesus made this relatedness of God to creation universal. Jesus Christ was raised into the divine life of God and participated in God’s universal presence throughout creation through his resurrection and ascension, retaining his corporeality. His resurrection and ascension include not just his body itself but also his ecological interrelatedness to other creatures, the interrelatedness in which he participated through his body. By virtue of the divine capacity to be present universally in the whole of creation, this ecological interrelatedness is extended to God’s relationships with all creatures.<sup>72</sup> In other words, through the deep incarnation, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, God participates universally in the dynamic interrelationships of ecosystems.

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 46-48.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 45-46; 49-50.

Gregersen acknowledges Bauckham's concept of the ecological relatedness of Jesus to creation as a significant way to express the connection between them, but holds the effectiveness of the idea of microcosm, too, as the internal bond. He argues:

The incarnate Christ cannot at all be the incarnate Logos, *unless* he is internally related to the cosmos at large; one cannot make a division between Christ and the cosmos, once they have obtained their internal relations. ... Just as a message cannot be a gospel, unless it is actually good news for people, so the body of Christ cannot be genuinely incarnate apart from the entire nexus of the world of Energy, Matter, and Information.<sup>73</sup>

Unless Jesus has internal association with the material world, it cannot be said that God genuinely conjoins the whole material conditions by taking the body of Jesus. The human body consists of elements which originate from the stars. Evolutionary genetics shows that humans are part of the ecological community and of the same history of evolution along with other creatures.<sup>74</sup> Based on such internal connections, it can be said that "Jesus was not only communing with men and women, friend and foes, sparrows and foxes, but that he was also *sharing* the basic creaturely conditions with them, simply by being enrolled in the whole warp and woof of creaturely reality."<sup>75</sup> Gregersen affirms that the model of microcosm still accords with the concept of deep incarnation where God fundamentally assumed the full-scale of materiality, not simply the individual body of Jesus.<sup>76</sup>

Throughout this and the previous section, I have discussed the concept of deep incarnation proposed by Gregersen and its development in three aspects. The key thesis of the discussion on deep incarnation is that, through the incarnation in a particular human being, Jesus, God became present in a new way in the material world comprising human beings, animals, plants and inanimate objects. The initial proposal of deep incarnation emphasises that, as living creatures in the evolutionary natural world experience the conditions of suffering, fragility and vulnerability in their materiality, God, through the incarnation, adopted and shared such conditions as well, as exemplified by the crucifixion of Jesus. Upholding this

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<sup>73</sup> Gregersen, "Cur Deus Caro," 389.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 387-89.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 389.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

point, recent theologians consider the implications of the incarnation in reference to the entire evolutionary history of the universe and life on Earth as well as to global ecosystems. From this reflection, God is understood as entering such history and the interrelated communities of life, co-presenting in them and assuming the material conditions of creaturely existence in God's self, through the incarnation of Jesus. Johnson's concept of deep resurrection affirms that, as Jesus, who experienced these dimensions in his bodily life, rose into the divine glory with his resurrected body, all material creatures which share the same bodily aspects with him are promised to be raised into the final fulfilment of their existence. The bond of this association between Jesus Christ and the rest of creation is explained by Bauckham and Gregersen. Bauckham puts forward the ecological interrelatedness between Christ and creation, in which Christ's bodily life externally took part and which was universalised by his resurrection and exaltation. Gregersen maintains that Christ is internally related to other life forms by way of his humanity as a microcosm because human existence is linked with the material universe and realities within it on the foundational level despite many existential distinctions between human existence and other life forms.

It is evident that the discussion on deep incarnation cannot fully answer the question as to the reason for natural evil in the realm of the material world. However, deep incarnation underlies the promise of the consummation of fragile creatures, the promise which is based on God's universal conjoining with and for them. In the next section, I will investigate how Bonaventure's theology is associated with the key points of the concept of deep incarnation, and whereby what meaning his theology offers to the realities of evolutionary suffering.

#### **4.3.3 Bonaventure's Connection to Deep Incarnation**

Gregersen and Bauckham have recently brought Bonaventure's theology into their exploration of deep incarnation.<sup>77</sup> I will refer to the arguments of these two theologians and will unearth what I will add to the discussion on Bonaventure's connection to deep incarnation.

Gregersen notes the two elements of Bonaventure's theology that can have a meaning within the contemporary theology of deep incarnation: his notion of exemplarism and of microcosm. Bonaventure's notion of exemplarism relates particularly to the idea of God's universal presence to creation. As I have explored in Chapter 2, according to exemplarism, all

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<sup>77</sup> Niels Henrik Gregersen, "The Emotional Christ: Bonaventure and Deep Incarnation," *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 55, no. 3 (2016): 247-61; Bauckham, "The Incarnation and the Cosmic Christ," 25-57.

creatures, whether they are rational or not, have the Word as the Exemplar through whom they are patterned and thus through whom they are equally and directly associated with God.<sup>78</sup> Based on this character of the Word, Gregersen sees Christ, the divine Word, as being present to each and every creature. By reason of this universal presence of the Word, God is not irrelevant to creatures but is intimately related to them.<sup>79</sup> Gregersen states, “The idea of exemplarism thus can be seen as a pathway for articulating the view that the embodied divine Logos is not confined to the particular body of Jesus, but is present (as creative *and* restorative) at the very core of material existence – a pivotal point also of ‘deep incarnation.’”<sup>80</sup> I agree, along with Gregersen, that Bonaventure’s idea of exemplarism and a direct relationship between God and creation can be a step towards insight into the transcendent God’s universal conjoining with material beings and their conditions although, as will be indicated below, there is a key difference between Bonaventure’s thinking and the theology of deep incarnation.

According to Gregersen, God’s universal association with creation can be understood with reference to the idea of Christ incarnate taking human nature as a microcosm.<sup>81</sup> As I have explored in Chapter 3, Bonaventure sees humanity as the microcosm encapsulating the spiritual and material nature of the entire created order.<sup>82</sup> By becoming a human being, Christ shares something in common with all material beings: “With the stone he shares existence; with plants he shares life; with animals he shares sensation; and with the angels he shares intelligence. Therefore, all things are said to be transformed in Christ since – in his human nature – he embraces something of every creature in himself when he is transfigured.”<sup>83</sup> As has already been described, Gregersen views the concept of microcosm as the principle of the bond between Christ and creation. From the evolutionary scientific viewpoint, humanity fundamentally contains the elements originating from the universe in its physical existence and also shares basic material conditions with other creatures in itself. Through the lens of this scientifically-reconstructed idea of microcosm, God is considered to be related to all material beings through Jesus’s human body which is the microcosm and which participates

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<sup>78</sup> See above section 2.4.2.

<sup>79</sup> Gregersen, “The Emotional Christ,” 249-50.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

<sup>82</sup> See above section 3.2.2.

<sup>83</sup> Bonaventure, *Sermo I, Dom. II*, in *Quad.* (IX, 218), quoted in Hayes, “Christ, Word of God and Exemplar of Humanity,” 13.

in the same material conditions in itself. Furthermore, since, as with humanity, other living material creatures are subject to suffering, fragility and vulnerability under these conditions, God might be thought to embrace such common aspects of material beings in the human nature of Christ incarnate. I see that Bonaventure's concept of *medium mathematicum* also has relevance to the idea of God's embracing of material conditions. With regard to this concept, Bonaventure emphasises that not only did the Son of God, the divine Word, take up earthly existence through his incarnation in humility, but he also conjoined the deepest dimension of that existence – that is, physical suffering and death – through his crucifixion in the same humility.<sup>84</sup>

In Bonaventure's writings, there are passages which are particularly plausible in supporting the view of God's conjoining with suffering creatures in the incarnate Christ.<sup>85</sup> In his interpretation of the story of the widow of Nain in the *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, Bonaventure states, "With regard to *the affection of compassion in the heart* it is said: *When the Lord saw her, he was moved with compassion*, namely to an affectation of the heart, so that he could say what Job 30:25 has: 'I once wept for him that was afflicted.'"<sup>86</sup> This commentary shows Christ sympathising with the sadness of the widow with compassion in his heart. Beyond sympathy, Bonaventure remarks that Christ himself, indeed, experienced severe suffering:

He suffered a passion that was most bitter, for besides enduring the agony of his wounds he bore the added anguish of grieving for our sins. He suffered a passion that was most punitive, because the gibbet of the cross was reserved for the worst criminals and because he was placed in the company of *evildoers*, namely of thieves, with whom *he was numbered*. Finally, he suffered a passion that was destructive, for it separated his soul from his body, although both remained united with his Godhead.<sup>87</sup>

Bonaventure comments that, because of this aspect of being capable of suffering, the Evangelist of St. John's Gospel uses the word "flesh," rather than "soul," in his description of

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<sup>84</sup> See above section 3.3.2. Cf. Bonaventure, *Hex.*, c.1, n.22 (WB V, 12); Delio, *Crucified Love*, 114-15.

<sup>85</sup> Gregersen, "The Emotional Christ," 256-57.

<sup>86</sup> Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, [on 7:13] (WSB VIII/1, 587), quoted in Gregersen, "The Emotional Christ," 256.

<sup>87</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.4, c.9, n.1 (WSB IX, 160).



the Word's becoming human, although the latter is more noble than the former.<sup>88</sup> Since the incarnation of Christ was for the salvation of humanity, God chose to take "the full gamut of human existence."<sup>89</sup> By taking human flesh, God was able to participate in suffering in solidarity with fellow human beings and to bring final completion to them.

However, Gregersen points out that Bonaventure does not fully recognise the concept of a co-suffering God with creation due to his understanding of the traditional notion of a communication of attributes (*communicatio idiomatum*) in Jesus Christ.<sup>90</sup> According to this notion, "His [Jesus's] human characteristics are predicated of His Person under the title of God, and His Divine characteristics predicated of His Person designated according to His human nature."<sup>91</sup> Bonaventure acknowledges this traditional notion about the communication between the divine and human characteristics within the hypostatic person of Christ, as long as the communication does not negate divine attributes.<sup>92</sup> Basically, in Bonaventure's thought, suffering does not apply to divine nature. He affirms in his *Breviloquium* that Christ experienced suffering only in his human nature: "All these sufferings did not affect Christ's divine nature, as it was incapable of suffering, but only his human nature."<sup>93</sup> From this point of view, it can hardly be said that God wholly entered into the very tissue of biological existence in the incarnation nor did God embrace the fragile and messy dimensions from within in order to transform the material world. At this point, Bonaventure's theology separates from the theology of deep incarnation.

For this reason, Gregersen complements Bonaventure's view, saying that "Christ not only is a microcosm of the ordered and harmonious cosmos, but also shares, in his humble story from crib to cross, the fragile conditions of physical, biological, and mental creatures."<sup>94</sup> As Gregersen insists, this type of conjoining is a genuine union between God and creation, the union in which God takes on the material and imperfect dimension of creation in order to

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<sup>88</sup> Bonaventure, *Comm. Io.*, c.1, p.2, n.34 (WSB XI, 84-85).

<sup>89</sup> Gregersen, "The Emotional Christ," 252.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 257-58.

<sup>91</sup> Ludwig Ott and James Canon Bastible, eds., *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (Cork: The Mercier Press, 1962), 145.

<sup>92</sup> Gregersen, "The Emotional Christ," 257. Cf. Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.4, c.2, n.2 (WSB IX, 136): "This union is so total that whatever is said of the Son of God may be said of the Son of Man, and conversely; excepting however, such matters as designate the union itself or contain some negation."

<sup>93</sup> Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.4, c.9, n.8 (WSB IX, 163-64).

<sup>94</sup> Gregersen, "The Emotional Christ," 258.

transform creatures which experience the same dimension.<sup>95</sup> In this way, Gregersen's concept of God's co-suffering with creatures in deep incarnation goes well beyond Bonaventure's thought.<sup>96</sup>

As I have mentioned at the beginning of this section, Bauckham also explores connection between Bonaventure's theology and deep incarnation. I have pointed out in the previous section that Bauckham is critical of the concept of microcosm in the contemporary theology of deep incarnation, the concept held by Bonaventure in his medieval thinking. But he makes positive use of Bonaventure's concept of Christ as centre in his exploration of deep incarnation. He incorporates this concept into his idea of ecological interrelatedness as the bond between Christ and creatures. As Bonaventure's image of a circle shows, Christ, as the *Verbum increatum*, is the centre in God's creative action, through whom all creatures are produced, and, as the *Verbum incarnatum*, is the centre in God's action of redemptive-completion, through whom all creatures are led to consummation in union with God. Christ's mediatory role in creation's completion is based on his human nature since, for Bonaventure, humanity, as the microcosm, is the centre of the entire created order and thus, material creatures are indirectly consummated through the fulfilment of humanity. Bauckham replaces the concept of microcosm with his idea of ecological interrelatedness. He argues that Christ holds the mediatory role in creation's completion since, through his human body in the incarnation, he has participated in interrelationships with other creatures and these relationships have become universal through the resurrection and exaltation of his body. Creatures, which were, are and will be interconnected with Christ in these universal interrelationships, are directly led to their own completion by virtue of this interconnection to the same Christ. Bauckham insists, "It is all creatures, not just individually but in their ecological interdependence and interconnectedness, that the exalted Christ brings into the relationship to God that has always been their created goal."<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 259.

<sup>96</sup> The issue of God's co-suffering is a complex one in contemporary theology and I cannot do justice to it in this context. Several proponents of deep incarnation take this issue up in some detail, including Elizabeth Johnson, Denis Edwards and Christopher Southgate. For references, see Johnson, *Ask the Beasts*, 181-210; Denis Edwards, *Partaking of God: Trinity, Evolution, and Ecology* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), 88-103; *Deep Incarnation: God's Redemptive Suffering with Creatures* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2019), 113-23; Christopher Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation: God, Evolution, and the Problem of Evil* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 50-54.

<sup>97</sup> Bauckham, "The Incarnation and the Cosmic Christ," 52.

I see that Bauckham's idea of ecological interrelatedness in association with deep incarnation and his adoption of Bonaventure's concept of Christ as centre complement Bonaventure's thought concerning creation's completion. As the concept of deep incarnation is linked to that of deep resurrection, it is said that not only does God assume the temporal and finite aspects of the biological world from within, in the incarnate Christ, but God also directly leads creatures, having those same aspects, to their final fulfilment in the resurrected Christ. Because of his position about the indirect completion of non-human creatures through humanity, Bonaventure's thought is not fully in line with the concept of deep resurrection. Having said that, Bauckham's argument shows that, beyond his explicit position, Bonaventure's concept of Christocentricity can open space to affirm the direct completion of all material creatures on the basis of their interrelationships with Christ, the centre through whom they are brought to God-intended completion.

To sum up, based on Gregersen's and Bauckham's explorations, I argue that, although there are differences between Bonaventure's theology and the contemporary theology of deep incarnation, his theology has elements which can become building blocks to establish a theology of God who co-suffers fully with other creatures and brings them to final fulfilment. Bonaventure's notions of exemplarism, microcosm and *medium mathematicum* imply God's universal presence to, and conjoining with, all material beings and God's experiencing their conditions, albeit in a limited sense. The reconstructed idea of Christ as the centre of all things in their ecological interrelationships is understood as a basis for the final fulfilment of all material beings. It is clear that these elements of Bonaventure's theology cannot provide an answer for the reason for evolutionary suffering. However, I argue that they would still be meaningful in that they can be a step towards the vision of God's presence with all suffering creatures and God's promise of hope for them in the incarnate and resurrected Christ.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have considered Bonaventure's theology of the created world in relation to evolutionary scientific views that offer relevant background theories. Bonaventure's sacramental view of creatures based on his Trinitarian theology provides theological meaning for the diverse and relational reality of the natural world, which is beyond current human knowledge and understanding, for such realities are seen as revealing the divine fecundity and springing from the divine relationality. While science says that the current natural world is the outcome of the long process of evolution, and that realities within it are continually evolving

in multiple relationships with one another, theology insists that that natural world and realities within it flow from and are grounded in the Trinitarian life. Thus, the natural world, and realities within it, are a form of divine self-revelation. In this way, theology seeks meaning beyond the “what” and “how” of scientific discourse about the evolutionary natural world. I believe that, while respecting such areas of scientific exploration, Bonaventure’s Trinitarian doctrine of creation can contribute to the theological task. His theology affirms the view that the natural world is not just an object for the accumulation of scientific knowledge, but is also a reality with deeper meaning in the Triune God.

At the same time, however, it is noteworthy that the same natural world involves harsh aspects which do not seem to reflect the Trinitarian life. With respect to these aspects, the contemporary theology of deep incarnation proposes the concept of a God who is present and suffers with creatures in anguish and offers a vision of their fulfilment. Bonaventure’s theology has some limits in terms of this view. However, Gregersen’s and Bauckham’s explorations show that Bonaventure’s thought can have a real meaning within the contemporary theology of deep incarnation, particularly in his idea of exemplarism, microcosm and Christ as unifying centre. In addition to these notions, I have seen Bonaventure’s concept of *medium mathematicum* as having relevance to the idea of God’s entering and experiencing the earthly dimension in the incarnation and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Hence, it can be said that Bonaventure’s theology of the created world has elements which can be assumed, re-interpreted and developed in the discussion of God’s deep incarnation into the natural world filled with pain as well as beauty.

As I have mentioned in Chapter 1, besides a contemporary scientific picture of nature, today’s massive environmental destruction caused by human action is an important context for ecological theology to consider. Pope Francis’s encyclical *Laudato Si’* is typical of recent theological, ethical and practical answers to this issue from the Catholic Church which is a community of discourse. In the next chapter, I will investigate how Bonaventure’s theology of the created world can support and engage with the insights of the encyclical *Laudato Si’*.

## Chapter 5

### Bonaventure, the Ecological Crisis and *Laudato Si'*

#### 5.1 Introduction

As many scientists warn, global environmental issues are steadily getting worse, notwithstanding some significant efforts to solve them. Pope Francis's *Laudato Si'* takes these issues seriously, and devotes a chapter to outline "what is happening to our common home" before delivering the Catholic Church's reflection on them. Referring to this outline from the encyclical, I have introduced, in the first chapter, some crucial issues in the current ecological crisis. Pollution, which occurs due to many causes, including the generation of industrial waste and the overuse of finite natural resources, threatens various aspects of human life. The increase in greenhouse gas emissions generated by human activities leads to climate change which brings about local and global disasters such as droughts, floods and the rise of sea level in a catastrophic way. Some regions or nations continue to suffer from the shortage of safe drinkable water which is caused by factors, like water contamination and privatisation. The decline of biodiversity happens rapidly, due to human exploitation and indifference, to the extent that it exceeds the speed of previous mass extinctions in the evolutionary history of Earth. Poor people and countries are more vulnerable to the effects of these disastrous problems than others who are rich. The eco-theological reflection of *Laudato Si'* is based on the Church's recognition of the reality of an ecological crisis. Thus, the encyclical intends to deliver not just speculative theology, but a grounded theology and practical teaching.

What I attempt in this chapter is to consider Bonaventure's theology of the created world in relation to the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, so that his theology can be reconstructed as being meaningful and relevant in the context of the current ecological crisis. As a community of discourse for hermeneutical reconstruction, the Church reconstructs her traditions when encountering new and various contexts, and thereby continually reformulates her vision and identity. Then, *Laudato Si'* can be regarded as a discourse showing how the Church re-interprets and reconstructs her diverse intellectual traditions in facing today's ecological degradation, and how the Church redefines her ecological commitment and her identity with reference to the natural world. In what follows, I will explore how Bonaventure's theological insights into the created world can contribute to this discourse. For this project, I will first

spell out the key theological ideas of *Laudato Si'*. Then I will examine how Bonaventure's works are quoted in the encyclical, and how his theology enriches the theological vision of the encyclical. Lastly, I will determine what his theology might add to the work of the encyclical in its response to the current ecological issues.

## **5.2 The Theology of *Laudato Si'***

I will focus on three key theological insights of the encyclical concerning God and non-human creatures: the intrinsic value of creatures; creatures as revelatory of God; and the sublime communion of creation.<sup>1</sup>

### **5.2.1 The Intrinsic Value of Creatures**

For a long time, Christianity's basic position on the natural world has substantially had an instrumental tone, notwithstanding one exception exemplified by St. Francis of Assisi's sense of kinship with other creatures.<sup>2</sup> Nature was regarded as the stage on which human life unfolds, and as to be used to meet human needs and wants. Although the Catholic Church came to have concern for conserving nature by the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, an initial reason for this concern was that nature was thought to be necessary to meet human needs. An awareness was developing that nature ought to be conserved, not only for humanity's needs, but also for the life and survival of other creatures. However, these creatures were often still considered to exist to serve humankind, providing what it needs.<sup>3</sup> Even *Gaudium et Spes* of the Second Vatican Council did not overcome this instrumental viewpoint.<sup>4</sup> An awareness of the intrinsic value of earth and creatures, regardless of their usefulness to humankind, did not grow until

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<sup>1</sup> My exploration of the key theologies of *Laudato Si'* follows Denis Edwards's outline of the theology of the encyclical in his following articles: Denis Edwards, "'Sublime Communion': The Theology of the Natural World in *Laudato Si'*," in *The Natural World and God: Theological Explorations*, ed. Denis Edwards (Hindmarsh, SA: ATF Press, 2017), 99-117; "'Everything Is Interconnected': The Trinity and the Natural World in *Laudato Si'*," in *The Natural World and God: Theological Explorations*, ed. Denis Edwards (Hindmarsh, SA: ATF Press, 2017), 119-33.

<sup>2</sup> John Hart, "Catholicism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology*, ed. Roger S. Gottlieb (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 69-71, accessed April 17, 2016, Oxford Handbooks Online.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 65-66.

<sup>4</sup> For example, see *GS*, 12.

theologians, ethicists and other scholars, mostly outside the church hierarchy, noted scientific studies alerting them to a worsening environmental crisis and began to respond to that warning.<sup>5</sup> Given this past trend, *Laudato Si'* can be said to be significant in that the Apostolic See is here promulgating the Catholic Church's conviction in a magisterial papal pastoral document that non-human creatures have value in themselves. Even though the encyclical is not the first to express this view of creatures' intrinsic value in Christian thought, what is new is that such a view is integrated into Catholic Social Teaching by this document of the church hierarchy. It is now the universal and official position of the Church, rather than just the personal view of an eco-conscious theologian or ethicist.<sup>6</sup>

Before exploring the encyclical's view of creatures' intrinsic value, it should be noted that *Laudato Si'* also concedes their instrumental value as vital and useful resources for humans. For example, when talking about harmful effects brought about by the loss of ecosystems and species, Pope Francis indicates, "The loss of forests and woodlands entails the loss of species which may constitute extremely important resources in the future, not only for food but also for curing disease and other uses. Different species contain genes which could be key resources in years ahead for meeting human needs and regulating environmental problems."<sup>7</sup> However, Pope Francis strongly opposes the ruthless and exploitative human use of nature, as he points out in paragraph 106: "Now, by contrast, we are the ones to lay our hands on things, attempting to extract everything possible from them while frequently ignoring or forgetting the reality in front of us. Human beings and material objects no longer extend a friendly hand to one another; the relationship has become confrontational."<sup>8</sup> In this regard, the first creation account of Genesis is a key text that has often been understood as justification for exploitation. Pope Francis reminds believers that the passage about human "dominion" over the earth (cf. Gen. 1:28) has been used as a biblical basis to justify the unbridled human exploitation of nature, portraying human beings as granted the right to use creatures carelessly and tyrannically. But, he emphasises that there is the second creation account in Genesis 2, which affirms that humans should "till and keep" the created world of God (cf. Gen. 2:15). He teaches that this passage supports not only the human action of working a field but also the human protection and preservation of the world, and thus points

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<sup>5</sup> Hart, "Catholicism," 66.

<sup>6</sup> Edwards, "'Sublime Communion'," 102-03; Sean McDonagh, *On Care for Our Common Home Laudato Si': The Encyclical of Pope Francis on the Environment* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2016), 57.

<sup>7</sup> *LS*, 32.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

to “a relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature.”<sup>9</sup> Accordingly, from the biblical viewpoint, human beings are said to be called to care for and protect nature while obtaining what they need from it.<sup>10</sup> In this way, concerning the instrumental value of creatures, the encyclical asserts that, although it is justifiable for humans to use the natural world, it has to be done in a moderate and responsible way so as to consider other creatures and, further, the future generations.

The encyclical’s position on creatures’ instrumental value, Edwards remarks, is included within a theology that sees other creatures as having their own meaning and value given by God.<sup>11</sup> Following Pope Francis’s indication concerning the seriousness of the loss of biodiversity from the viewpoint of seeing species as resources for humans, he writes of their intrinsic value:

It is not enough, however, to think of different species merely as potential “resources” to be exploited, while overlooking the fact that they have value in themselves. Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which we will never know, which our children will never see, because they have been lost for ever. ... Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us.<sup>12</sup>

Pope Francis clearly remarks that other creatures have their own inherent value beyond their potential usefulness for humans. Even following the explanation of the correct understanding of human use of creatures based on biblical passages, he affirms unequivocally:

Together with our obligation to use the earth’s goods responsibly, we are called to recognise that other living beings have a value of their own in God’s eyes. ... In our time, the Church does not simply state that other creatures are completely subordinated to the good of human beings, as if they have no worth in themselves and can be treated as we wish.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Edwards, “‘Sublime Communion’,” 104.

<sup>12</sup> *LS*, 33.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 69.



As Pope Francis states when referring to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, an animal's own existence itself is delight and glory to God, regardless of what they provide for humans.<sup>14</sup> In another place, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* declares with more inclusive language that each different creature is the reflection of God's infinite wisdom and goodness in its own proper being and way.<sup>15</sup> Pope Francis also notes and adopts the statement of the German bishops that "where other creatures are concerned, 'we can speak of the priority of *being* over that of *being useful*.'"<sup>16</sup>

This insight into the inherent value of creatures in their existence is also applied to ecosystems as an organised whole. The ecosystems in which various creatures coexist in a harmonious and interdependent way are the good and marvellous work of God in and of itself, whether they are accessible and useful resources or not:

Ongoing research should also give us a better understanding of how different creatures relate to one another in making up the larger units which today we term "ecosystems". We take these systems into account not only to determine how best to use them, but also because they have an intrinsic value independent of their usefulness. Each organism, as a creature of God, is good and admirable in itself; the same is true of the harmonious ensemble of organisms existing in a defined space and functioning as a system.<sup>17</sup>

In this way, Pope Francis affirms that creatures have their own value with their own goodness, existence and interrelationships in God's eyes.

Edwards finds in the encyclical three reasons underpinning the idea of creatures' intrinsic value.<sup>18</sup> The first reason is because God is always present to them and in them as their Creator. Pope Francis declares, "God is intimately present to each being, without impinging on the autonomy of his creature, and this gives rise to the rightful autonomy of earthly affairs. His divine presence, which ensures the subsistence and growth of each being,

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.; Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Homebush, NSW: St Pauls, 1994), 2416. The *Catechism* will be referred to hereinafter by the initials CCC.

<sup>15</sup> CCC, 339.

<sup>16</sup> LS, 69.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>18</sup> Edwards, "'Sublime Communion'," 104-06.

‘continues the work of creation’.”<sup>19</sup> This understanding of God’s presence in creation is often addressed in the theologies of divine action which take modern cosmology and evolutionary biology into account. God, as the primary cause, is the source of the existence of creatures emerging in the process of ongoing creation, and enables them, with their own autonomy and integrity, to be secondary causes within the created world.<sup>20</sup> Thus, God’s presence in creatures enables them to have value as causes in the unfolding of an interconnected universe of creatures. In addition, the same presence of God invites humans into the relationship with God: “The bishops of Brazil have pointed out that nature as a whole not only manifests God but is also a locus of his presence. The Spirit of life dwells in every living creature and calls us to enter into relationship with him. Discovering this presence leads us to cultivate the ‘ecological virtues’.”<sup>21</sup> Creatures are the venue for humans to discover God, because of divine presence in them. Humans do not need to keep creatures away for the mystical contemplation of God.<sup>22</sup>

The second reason for intrinsic value is that God loves each creature. Pope Francis asserts that God’s creative action has divine love as its source, and that all creatures are sustained in this love. Edwards points out that this view of God’s love for other-than-human creatures is specific to Pope Francis as this theme is poorly represented in theology or church teaching.<sup>23</sup> However, as Pope Francis quotes the passage of the Book of Wisdom, this view completely accords with the biblical perspective: “For you love all things that exist, and detest none of the things that you have made; for you would not have made anything if you had hated it.”<sup>24</sup> To spell this vision out, Pope Francis adds to the quotation: “Every creature is

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<sup>19</sup> *LS*, 80.

<sup>20</sup> For example, see Tracy, “Evolutionary Theologies and Divine Action,” 109-10; Edwards, “A Relational and Evolving Universe Unfolding within the Dynamism of the Divine Communion,” 201; *How God Acts*, 62-64; 80-84; Stephen Happel, “Divine Providence and Instrumentality: Metaphors for Time in Self-Organizing Systems and Divine Action,” in *Chaos and Complexity: Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action*, ed. Robert John Russell, Nancey Murphy and Arthur R. Peacocke (Vatican City State: Vatican Observatory; Berkeley, CA: Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, 1995), 187-99; William R. Stoeger, “Describing God’s Action in the World in Light of Scientific Knowledge of Reality,” in *Chaos and Complexity: Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action*, ed. Robert John Russell, Nancey Murphy and Arthur R. Peacocke (Vatican City State: Vatican Observatory; Berkeley, CA: Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, 1995), 246-50.

<sup>21</sup> *LS*, 88.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

<sup>23</sup> Edwards, “‘Sublime Communion’,” 105.

<sup>24</sup> Wis. 11:24, quoted in *LS*, 77.

thus the object of the Father's tenderness, who gives it its place in the world. Even the fleeting life of the least of beings is the object of his love, and in its few seconds of existence, God enfolds it with his affection."<sup>25</sup>

The third reason has to do with eschatological hope. Pope Francis claims that, as with human beings, every creature is promised to enjoy the final fulfilment in God. The whole of creation shares with humanity the eschatological hope for attaining the life of God; it is not abandoned at the End.<sup>26</sup> What is noteworthy is that the encyclical surpasses the medieval viewpoint of creation's eschatological fate by implying that non-human creatures will also be transfigured in their own way.<sup>27</sup> Pope Francis affirms that "eternal life will be a shared experience of awe, in which each creature, resplendently transfigured, will take its rightful place and have something to give those poor men and women who will have been liberated once and for all."<sup>28</sup> Edwards understands that this statement points to the actual fulfilment not only of the universe as a whole but also of biological life, including plants and animals, besides humans.<sup>29</sup> In this respect, *Laudato Si'* goes beyond the medieval concept of non-human creatures' indirect consummation through the fulfilment of human beings. Edwards insists, however, that a real picture of the final fulfilment of other creatures, not only of humans, is beyond our imagination and understanding. He sees that the encyclical's insight into hope for universal fulfilment is based on the promise of God given in the resurrection of Jesus.<sup>30</sup> This promise calls humans to care for all other creatures which have the same hope: "In the meantime, we come together to take charge of this home which has been entrusted to us, knowing that all the good which exists here will be taken up into the heavenly feast."<sup>31</sup>

### 5.2.2 Creatures as Revelatory of God

The second key theological idea of *Laudato Si'* is that other creatures can be a kind of revelation of God for humans. The material world is the place where God's love for human beings is manifested, as Pope Francis states in paragraph 84: "The entire material universe

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<sup>25</sup> *LS*, 77.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 83; 100.

<sup>27</sup> Edwards, "'Sublime Communion'," 106.

<sup>28</sup> *LS*, 243.

<sup>29</sup> Edwards, "'Everything Is Interconnected'," 123.

<sup>30</sup> Edwards, "'Sublime Communion'," 106.

<sup>31</sup> *LS*, 244.

speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God."<sup>32</sup> This understanding has a thread of connections with the view from the previous section that creatures have the inherent value in themselves since humanity can discover and experience God in them by virtue of divine presence to them.

According to Edwards, the insight of the encyclical into creation as revelatory of God is a reminder of the traditional theological concept of the book of creation, the concept which concerns human perception of God through creatures.<sup>33</sup> Quoting Pope John Paul II, Pope Francis underlines this concept more clearly: "God has written a precious book, 'whose letters are the multitude of created things present in the universe'."<sup>34</sup> The statement of Canadian bishops supplements these words of Pope John Paul II and emphasises that every creature is the letter of God's revelatory book in nature, regardless of its size or feature: "From panoramic vistas to the tiniest living form, nature is a constant source of wonder and awe. It is also a continuing revelation of the divine."<sup>35</sup> In this vision, human beings are called to recognise God's message and teaching which is conveyed to them through various created things as well as through the biblical revelation.<sup>36</sup>

The revelatory role of creation, as Pope Francis notes the insight of Thomas Aquinas, demands the world of living creatures to be filled with diversity. It is not a single creature but various forms of life in nature that properly represent God's richness and goodness. Because any one individual creature is an inadequate manifestation of God, the insufficiency of each one is supplemented by diversity of other creatures. Each creature exists in interdependent relationships with the others.<sup>37</sup> Pope Francis's quotation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* excellently expresses this point:

God wills the interdependence of creatures. The sun and the moon, the cedar and the little flower, the eagle and the sparrow: the spectacle of their countless diversities and inequalities tells us that no creature is self-sufficient. Creatures exist only in dependence on each other, to complete each other, in the service of each other.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>33</sup> Edwards, "'Sublime Communion'," 106.

<sup>34</sup> *LS*, 85.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.; *CCC*, 340.

In the same vein, St. Francis's *Canticle of Creatures* can be defined as the hymn that a human being, who is aware of this reality of interdependent and multiple creatures as the revelation of the divine, offers to God.

As Edwards notes, the encyclical emphasises the recovery of inner peace for perceiving God's words through creation.<sup>39</sup> Pope Francis says, "Nature is filled with words of love, but how can we listen to them amid constant noise, interminable and nerve-wracking distractions, or the cult of appearances?"<sup>40</sup> These things damage the inner peace of humans and prevent them from catching God's message for them, delivered through nature, by affecting their attitude to nature. Hence, in order for us to recover harmony with creation, the encyclical advises us to seek a more balanced lifestyle and to contemplate God speaking to us through various creatures through reflecting on our current mode of life which leads us to busily pursue constant achievement.<sup>41</sup>

### **5.2.3 The Sublime Communion of Creation**

The third theme is the theology of the sublime communion of creation. This theme is closely related to the foundational view that everything is interconnected, the view which is repeatedly expressed throughout the encyclical. For example, Pope Francis already makes this view clear in the early part of the encyclical where he urges human action and responsibility to cope with the crisis of the destruction of important ecosystems and the extinction of many species: "Because all creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us as living creatures are dependent on one another. Each area is responsible for the care of this family."<sup>42</sup> Pope Francis sees the interconnection of creation in two ways: as both compatible with the reality of diverse ecosystems explored by science, and as providing a foundation for awakening a change of human attitudes towards the natural world.

According to this view, humans are also not an exception to the interrelation of the natural world. Pope Francis affirms, "Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it."<sup>43</sup> Edwards indicates that humans are a part of the history of

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<sup>39</sup> Edwards, "'Sublime Communion'," 108-09.

<sup>40</sup> *LS*, 225.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

the universe and evolution on Earth, and that they continue to exist in dependence on other life forms as well as on the surrounding natural environment.<sup>44</sup> Hence, from the scientific viewpoint, humans are also rightly said to take part in the interconnected natural world.

The concept of the universal communion of creation supports theologically the view of the interconnection of the natural world explored by science.<sup>45</sup> All creatures, theologically speaking, are called to have communion with one another, as they are interconnected to one another in their biological lives. Pope Francis introduces the word communion with reference to creatures when he distinguishes the theological concept of creation from the scientific concept of nature: “Nature is usually seen as a system which can be studied, understood and controlled, whereas creation can only be understood as a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father of all, and as a reality illuminated by the love which calls us together into universal communion.”<sup>46</sup> Christian theology already uses the word communion in reference to the themes of the divine Trinity and the church. With regard to the Trinity, it expresses the mutual love and intimacy of the relational Trinitarian persons. Concerning the church, it means that she is a community where believers participate in the Eucharist and are united with one another in Christ. What is striking is that the scope of the word is expanded by Pope Francis to include the whole of creation loved by God. Thus, the entire natural world, in all its relationships from the smallest particles through to organisms, ecosystems on Earth and the whole universe, participates in the divine communion.<sup>47</sup> Pope Francis states:

This is the basis of our conviction that, as part of the universe, called into being by one Father, all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect. Here I would reiterate that “God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement.”<sup>48</sup>

In this way, Pope Francis emphasises that all interconnected creatures, as the members of universal creation family in one God, form a sublime communion. This vision evokes the

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<sup>44</sup> Edwards, “‘Sublime Communion’,” 110.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> *LS*, 76.

<sup>47</sup> Edwards, “‘Sublime Communion’,” 110; “‘Everything Is Interconnected’,” 124.

<sup>48</sup> *LS*, 89.

cosmic spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi who embraced other creatures as his brother and sister in God's family due to his perception of God as the loving Creator of them all and to his experience of God through them.

According to Edwards, the two theological insights of the encyclical, discussed earlier, become theological grounds for the sublime communion of all creation. Since other-than-human creatures have value in themselves and play a role as God's revelation for humans, they deserve to be involved in communion with humans in God. In addition to these grounds, Edwards points out the Christological and Trinitarian grounds for this communion.<sup>49</sup> As the encyclical emphasises, by citing the relevant passages from the Gospels, Jesus did not estrange himself from his surrounding environment, but rather paid attention to the meaning of the natural world, taught its importance to his disciples and delivered God's message by means of metaphors relating to it. Jesus Christ's earthly life, beginning from his incarnation, unfolded in relation to the created world. Even after his resurrection, his involvement with creation did not cease. As Colossians 1:19-20 and 1 Corinthians 15:28 indicate, the resurrected Christ is present throughout all creation and leads all creation to universal reconciliation and final fulfilment in God.<sup>50</sup> From the Trinitarian viewpoint, the interrelated natural world is said to be modelled on the relational Trinity. Various relationships found in the created world reflect the dynamic relationships of the three persons in the fullness of their mutual love. Humans ought not to be the exception in these relationships of the created world. The encyclical insists that the more they enter into relationships with God, fellow human beings and other creatures, and have communion with them, the more they become mature and sanctified and make their own the Trinitarian dynamism imprinted on them.<sup>51</sup>

Pope Francis develops his insight into the sublime communion of creation in his concept of integral ecology in which love and respect for the natural world is indivisibly related to love and respect for fellow human beings. He notes that the vision of the sublime communion does not mean that all living beings are equal nor deny that human beings possess a unique dignity.<sup>52</sup> Pope Francis's ecological vision offers no justification for ignoring suffering human beings. He writes:

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<sup>49</sup> Denis Edwards, "Sublime Communion and the Costs of Evolution," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 84, no.1 (2018): 24-27.

<sup>50</sup> *LS*, 96-100.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings. It is clearly inconsistent to combat trafficking in endangered species while remaining completely indifferent to human trafficking, unconcerned about the poor, or undertaking to destroy another human being deemed unwanted.<sup>53</sup>

Pope Francis maintains the same point in paragraph 139, saying that “we are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental.”<sup>54</sup> This point is based on his fundamental insight into the indivisibility of nature and humans: “When we speak of the ‘environment’, what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it.”<sup>55</sup> Hence, the strategies to counteract the crisis that is both social and environmental “demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.”<sup>56</sup> In Pope Francis’s vision of integral ecology, then, the Christian ecological commitment is not restricted to what are usually called ecological issues but also involves commitment to social issues as well, such as overcoming poverty, advocating for a just economic system, the protection of culture and improvement in the quality of human life. The concern about the natural world is to be related to love for fellow human beings and to endeavour to cope with social issues because everything is interconnected.

### 5.3 Bonaventure’s Theology in *Laudato Si’*

Pope Francis cites Bonaventure’s works four times in *Laudato Si’*. Among them, two quotations are taken from the *Legenda Major* (LS, 11; 66), one from the *Commentary on the Second Book of Sentences* (LS, 233), and the other from the *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity* (LS, 239). In this section, I will examine these quotations in the context

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.



of Bonaventure's relevant theological thoughts and by doing so will determine how they contribute to the key theological points of the encyclical.

### 5.3.1 God as the Fecund and Common Source (LS, 11)

St. Francis is a key figure cited throughout *Laudato Si'*. Over ten times, the encyclical mentions his name, or quotes his own writing – *The Canticle of Creatures* – or biographies about him.<sup>57</sup> These citations demonstrate that St. Francis is the prime model of having a renewed relationship to creation, praising and contemplating God through creatures and living in communion with other creatures and fellow human beings.

The encyclical's first reference to Bonaventure appears when Pope Francis quotes the passage of the *Legenda Major* which describes St. Francis's attitude to other creatures:

His [St. Francis's] response to the world around him was so much more than intellectual appreciation or economic calculus, for to him each and every creature was a sister united to him by bonds of affection. This is why he felt called to care for all that exists. His disciple Saint Bonaventure tells us that, "from a reflection on the primary source of all things, filled with even more abundant piety, he would call creatures, no matter how small, by the name of 'brother' or 'sister'."<sup>58</sup>

As I have emphasised in Chapter 2, St. Francis's vision of creatures is closely related to his perception of God as the single and common source of all things.<sup>59</sup> By reason of this perception, St. Francis embraces other creatures not as the objects to be exploited to meet his needs, but as his brothers and sisters which, like St. Francis himself, have God as their heavenly Father.

The idea of God as the primary source of all things is theologically expressed as the concept of the Godhead as the fecund source in Bonaventure's Trinitarian doctrine of creation. The Triune God, as the first being without anything anterior to God's self, is the fontal and common source from whom all creatures, including human beings, are brought forth. Among the Trinitarian persons, the Father is particularly understood as the Fountain Fullness (*fontalis*

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<sup>57</sup> See LS, 1; 10-12; 66; 87; 91; 125; 218; 221.

<sup>58</sup> LS, 11. Cf. Bonaventure, "The Major Legend of St. Francis," 590.

<sup>59</sup> See above section 2.2.1.

*plenitudo*), the ultimate origin, of the whole of creation in an appropriate sense because the fontality of the Son and the Holy Spirit originates from that of the Father even though the three persons are jointly the fecund source of all things.<sup>60</sup> Paul Santmire points out that, unlike St. Francis, Bonaventure does not use the wording of kinship with respect to other creatures.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, Bonaventure's view of the Father as the Fountain Fullness can be regarded as a theological basis for St. Francis's vision of both the kinship of creatures in one and the same God, and of our intimate union with them – i.e., the encyclical's vision of the sublime communion of all creatures in God.

I believe that, in association with his view of the Godhead as the fecund source, Bonaventure's insight into creatures' direct relationship with the Trinity through the Word can enrich St. Francis's vision and the encyclical's call for communion with God's creation. As has been explored in Chapter 2, the Neo-Platonic worldview envisages all beings emanating from the transcendent One according to the hierarchical structure downwards, and that the production of a material being located in the lowest grade of the hierarchy is mediated through the influence of what precedes it in that order. On the other hand, Bonaventure sees that, as with spiritual beings, material creatures are also created directly through the Word who is equal to God the Father and who possesses all divine ideas of what is produced. All created beings, whether angel, human, or beast, are vestiges or footprints of God, in spite of the differences and mode in which they manifest God. They are equally related to the Word and, through the Word, to the Trinity.<sup>62</sup> Along with having the Godhead as their ultimate origin – particularly the Father – this direct relationship with the Trinity is common to both human and non-human creatures. In light of these points drawn from Bonaventure's theology, it can be said that, since all creatures come from the same fecund source, equally associated with God through the Word and allied to one another as vestiges of the Trinity, all of them belong to one creation community of God and are called together to form a communion in God.

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<sup>60</sup> See above section 2.3.2. Cf. Bonaventure, *Myst. Trin.*, q.8, ad 7 (WSB III, 266).

<sup>61</sup> Santmire, *The Travail of Nature*, 103.

<sup>62</sup> See above section 2.3.3.

### 5.3.2 Human Sin and the Restoration of Human Relationships with Creation (LS, 66)

Pope Francis cites Bonaventure's *Legenda Major* for the second time in paragraph 66 where he renders St. Francis's universal reconciliation with all creatures as the significant model for the restoration of human relationships with the natural world. Before addressing this point, it is worth noting Pope Francis's discussion of the biblical understanding of human sin in the same paragraph because, although he does not directly refer to Bonaventure in this regard, his comment is consistent with Bonaventure's view of sin.

From the viewpoint of the creation accounts in the Book of Genesis, human sin is considered to have resulted in the rupture of human relationships with God, with fellow human beings and with the earth. The fundamental cause of this disruption was "our presuming to take the place of God and refusing to acknowledge our creaturely limitations."<sup>63</sup> This presumption is regarded, in Bonaventure's theology, as pride which points to seeking parity with God, refusing the ontological difference between God and created beings. It is only the Son who possesses the proper relationship of equality with the Father. However, by placing humans at an equal level with God, pride and the resultant actual sin distort the human relationship with God.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, sin occasions discord at all levels of being, including between the created world and human beings, as I have already noted in referring to Bonaventure's sermon on the third Sunday of Advent:

Because of sin, there was discord between the Creator and the creature, and for this reason the angels were in opposition to man. There was discord between the will and the conscience because the will tends toward one thing and the conscience toward another. There was discord between reason and sensuality because reason dictates one thing and sensuality something else. ... Between each man and his neighbor there was discord; for men should love each other, but one hardly loves something he has abandoned. Indeed, brother hates his brother. And finally, the entire world stood against man.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> LS, 66.

<sup>64</sup> Hayes, *The Hidden Center*, 165-66.

<sup>65</sup> Bonaventure, *Sermon II on the Third Sunday of Advent*, in *What Manner of Man?*, 103-04.

Drawing on Bonaventure's description of St. Francis in the *Legenda Major*, Pope Francis writes that the saint experienced a harmonious relationship between himself and all creatures, whereas the rupture caused by human sin lasts to the present day in various modes:

It is significant that the harmony which Saint Francis of Assisi experienced with all creatures was seen as a healing of that rupture. Saint Bonaventure held that, through universal reconciliation with every creature, Saint Francis in some way returned to the state of original innocence. This is a far cry from our situation today, where sin is manifest in all its destructive power in wars, the various forms of violence and abuse, the abandonment of the most vulnerable, and attacks on nature.<sup>66</sup>

As I have described in the earlier chapter, according to Bonaventure's *Breviloquium*, human beings were able to perceive God through the book of creation in the state of original innocence before the Fall.<sup>67</sup> St. Francis is depicted as demonstrating this state in his earthly life by recognising God through other creatures and praising God with them. By doing so, St. Francis experienced mutually cordial relationships with other creatures. He embraced them as his brothers and sisters, leading them to obey him. In accordance with the implication of the state of innocence, the encyclical urges us to see creation not simply as the object for our use but as the conduit for God's revelation and message so that we are led to reflect on our disturbed relationship with creation caused by our exploitation.

A similar implication of the state of original innocence in reference to the relationship between humans and the rest of creation is found in the section of the *Commentary on the Second Book of Sentences*, one concerning whether all sensible creatures have been created on account of a human being.<sup>68</sup> In addressing this question, Bonaventure explains how animals are beneficial for a human being in either the state of innocence or fallen nature. Regarding their benefit in the state of fallen nature, Bonaventure writes:

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<sup>66</sup> *LS*, 66. Cf. Bonaventure, "The Major Legend of St. Francis," 586: "True *piety*, which according to the Apostle gives power to all things, had so filled Francis's heart and penetrated its depths that it seemed to have claimed the man of God completely into its dominion. This is what ... through universal reconciliation with each thing, refashioned him to the state of innocence."

<sup>67</sup> See above section 3.4.1. Cf. Bonaventure, *Brev.*, p.2, c.12, n.4 (WSB IX, 97).

<sup>68</sup> Bonaventure, *2 Sent.*, d.15, a.2, q.1 (II, 382-84).

For *herds* and *flocks* are ordained to relieve the needs of humans for *food* and for *clothing*, and for *service* such as horses, asses, etc., and for *enjoyment* such as certain birds, young animals and the like. And thus they are made for humans for four reasons. Similarly, *wild beasts* or dangerous animals are ordained for humans according to four reasons and utility.<sup>69</sup>

Whereas the benefit of animals for a human being in the state of fallen nature is principally related to his or her physical needs, the benefit of animals for a human being in the state of innocence is concerned primarily with the aesthetic and spiritual value for him or her:

Regarding the state of *innocence*, they [animals] are ordained for humans for four reasons. The first reason is in order to *manifest human control* which animals reveal when they obey humans in all things. The second reason is in order to *make the dwelling place of humans more attractive*; for it was a very beautiful thing that the habitation of humans should be decorated by the multiplication of animals, not only (by the multiplication) of trees. The third reason is in order to *arouse the sense of humans*, so that in the varied natures of animals, they might see the multiplicity of the Creator's wisdom. The fourth reason is in order to *move their affectivity*, so that when humans would see that animals are moving according to the rectitude of their own nature and are loving humans for whom they have been created by nature, from this they themselves would be moved to love God.<sup>70</sup>

The thesis of Bonaventure in this section is that human beings benefit from animals and, by implication, from all creatures in any state. Hence, he does not criticise, in itself, human

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., d.15, a.2, q.1, conc. (II, 383): "*Iumenta enim et pecora ordinantur ad relevandam hominis indigentiam quantum ad cibum et quantum ad vestimentum et quantum ad obsequium, sicut sunt equi et asini etc., et quantum ad solatium, sicut sunt quaedam aves et catuli et similia: et sic facta sunt propter hominem ratione quadruplici. Similiter bestiae sive animalia noxia ordinantur ad hominem secundum quadruplicem rationem et utilitatem, ...*"

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.: "*Secundum statum innocentiae ordinantur ad hominem secundum rationem quadruplicem. Prima ratio est ad manifestandum eius imperium, quod manifestarent, dum ei per omnia obedirent. Secundo, ad decorandum hominis habitaculum; perpulcrum enim erat, habitationem hominis animalium multiplicatione, non solum arborum decorari. Tertio, ad excitandum hominis sensum, ut in ipsorum animalium naturis diversis videret homo multiformitatem sapientiae Conditoris. Quarto, ad movendum eius affectum, ut, dum homo videret, animalia secundum rectitudinem suae naturae currere et amare illud ad quod naturaliter facta sunt, ex hoc excitaretur ad amandum Deum.*"

beings fulfilling their physical needs by using creatures. However, at the same time, Bonaventure points to the aesthetic and spiritual benefit from creatures in the state of innocence. *Laudato Si'* acknowledges that St. Francis, in his experience of the state of innocence, appreciated such aesthetic and spiritual significance of creation, and established a harmonious relationship with it. This example of St. Francis is proffered as the model of the restoration of a right relationship between humans and the natural world. Therefore, according to both the encyclical's proposal and the implication of Bonaventure's idea of the state of innocence, we are urged to expand and transform our view of other creatures so that we can renew our relationship with and attitude to them, in appreciating their aesthetic and spiritual significance.

### 5.3.3 The Revelational Dimension of Creation (*LS*, 233)

Pope Francis's third reference to Bonaventure is drawn from the *Commentary on the Second Book of Sentences*. This reference is related particularly to the encyclical's insight into creation as a revelational book of God whereby human beings are called to recognise God's presence and message. Pope Francis emphasises that this manner of knowing God is part of the Christian vision of contemplation, which should shape our perception of and attitude to other creatures:

The ideal is not only to pass from the exterior to the interior to discover the action of God in the soul, but also to discover God in all things. Saint Bonaventure teaches us that "contemplation deepens the more we feel the working of God's grace within our hearts, and the better we learn to encounter God in creatures outside ourselves."<sup>71</sup>

In the *Commentary on the Second Book of Sentences*, the quotation of Bonaventure in the above paragraph is placed where he discusses the manner by which Adam knew God in the state of innocence.<sup>72</sup> Bonaventure discusses four ways of recognising God – through faith, through contemplation, through apparition and through an open vision. For him, the clearest way is through an open vision by which humanity, in the state of glory, recognises God face-to-face. This way, he sees, is promised as a reward to humanity. The way of contemplation is a

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<sup>71</sup> *LS*, 233. Cf. Bonaventure, *2 Sent.*, d.23, a.2, q.3, conc. (II, 545).

<sup>72</sup> Bonaventure, *2 Sent.*, d.23, a.2, q.3 (II, 542-47).

less clear way of recognising God. However, it is applied to the state of innocence in which Adam knew God through clear mediums without the effect of sin. From this view, external creatures have meaning as mediums contributing to humanity's finding and contemplating God.<sup>73</sup> As discussed in the previous section, Bonaventure's idea of the state of innocence implies that, like St. Francis who experienced that state, human beings need to change their view of creation by recognising its revelational meaning and thereby restoring their relationship with it, as intended by God. To achieve this transformation, we are called to read the book of creation properly and, accordingly, to contemplate God more deeply.

The revelational dimension of creation is explicitly illustrated in the chapters 1 and 2 of the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* which correspond, respectively, to the first and second of a series of seven steps concerning a soul's ascending to God. Using the image of a mirror, Bonaventure writes in the first chapter, "Now since we must ascend before we can descend on Jacob's ladder, let us place the first step of our ascent at the bottom, putting the whole world of sense-objects before us as a mirror through which we may pass to God, the highest creative Artist."<sup>74</sup> The first step concerns how external creatures reflect the supreme power, wisdom and benevolence of God and how the knowledge of these creatures leads the human soul to the knowledge of God.<sup>75</sup> That is to say, in this step, the human soul is called not to be content with the knowledge of creatures but, by means of that knowledge, to reach the knowledge of God. As I have explored in Chapter 2, creatures' general properties such as their greatness, multitude and activities reflect the immensity of God's power, wisdom and goodness. Measure, number and weight in creatures are the vestige of the Triune God, by which humans attain the knowledge of each divine person.<sup>76</sup> Human beings need to be receptive to this sacramental dimension of creatures and to discipline their senses so as to recognise God's self-revelation through the existence and attributes of creatures.<sup>77</sup> Bonaventure emphasises this point as follows:

Therefore, any person who is not illumined by such great splendors in created things is blind. Anyone who is not awakened by such great outcries is deaf. Anyone who is

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., d.23, a.2, q.3, conc. (II, 544-45).

<sup>74</sup> Bonaventure, *Itin.*, c.1, n.9 (WSB II, 53).

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., c.1, n.9-15 (WSB II, 53-61).

<sup>76</sup> See above section 2.4.2.

<sup>77</sup> Jame Schaefer, *Theological Foundations for Environmental Ethics - Reconstructing Patristic and Medieval Concepts* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2009), 78.

not led from such effects to give praise to God is mute. Anyone who does not turn to the First Principle as a result of such signs is a fool. Therefore open your eyes, alert your spiritual ears, unlock your lips, and apply your heart so that in all creation you may see, hear, praise, love and adore, magnify and honor your God lest the entire world rise up against you.<sup>78</sup>

The second step focuses on the way God is known in creatures which enter the human soul through the bodily senses.<sup>79</sup> This includes the three processes of apprehension, pleasure and judgment. A sensible object generates its likeness in the medium, and this likeness becomes known in the human soul by its faculty of awareness through external and internal organs. This process of apprehension points to the generation of the Word who is the perfect likeness of the Father. The known likeness of the object gives pleasure to the human soul, insofar as it is equal to its original object and, proportionately, affects the recipient. This aspect reflects the co-authority, co-equality and consubstantiality of the Word with the Father. Lastly, in judgment, the human soul abstracts the universal concept from the likeness of the object by means of reason that is immutable, unlimited and unending. Technically speaking, these three characteristics of reason correspond only with God, and so judgment of human reason is made in light of God or in light of the eternal Art in God by which God produces, distinguishes and rules all beings. In these processes of cognising creatures, a human person understands the vestige of God who is present in them by essence, power and presence.<sup>80</sup>

Therefore, as the starting point of the spiritual ladder to God, creatures have a role leading humans to the contemplation of God. Their significance should not be ignored even though there are higher and nobler steps on that spiritual ladder. It is clear that Bonaventure stresses that external creatures should be transcended, at last, for the soul's mystical union

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<sup>78</sup> Bonaventure, *Itin.*, c.1, n.15 (WSB II, 61).

<sup>79</sup> In this step, Bonaventure views a human being as a microcosm in the sense that his or her soul knows and receives the wider sensible world and realities within it. Denys Turner relates this view to the influence of Aristotle concerning human cognition. Although a human being does not change into the material existence of the object known, the human soul becomes immaterially that object by knowing it in the sense that it appears in and is referred to by the human mind. Since the human mind can know fundamentally all things in the entire created world which is the macrocosm, a human being is regarded as the microcosm in an intentional sense. Cf. Bonaventure, *Itin.*, c.2, n.2-3 (WSB II, 63-67); Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 120.

<sup>80</sup> Bonaventure, *Itin.*, c.2, n.4-9 (WSB II, 67-75).



with God. However, as I have emphasised in Chapter 3, such negative language is not directed against creatures themselves but rather against placing more significance on them than God. Creatures are the limited reflection of divine goodness and wisdom in comparison with God's infinitude.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, Jame Schaefer remarks that human spiritual ascent towards God commences from the world of external creatures at any rate. Without this world, there could not be such an ascent.<sup>82</sup> Hence, the significance of creatures as a sign of and a stepping stone towards God has to be upheld. Concluding the first and second steps, Bonaventure affirms this point again:

From these first two steps by which we are led to behold God in vestiges like the two wings hanging down over the feet (of the Seraph), we can conclude that all creatures in this world of sensible realities lead the spirit of the contemplative and wise person to the eternal God. For creatures are shadows, echoes, and pictures of that first, most powerful, most wise, and most perfect Principle, of that eternal source, light, and fullness; of that efficient, exemplary, and ordering Art. They are vestiges, images, and spectacles proposed to us for the *contuition* of God. They are divinely given signs. These creatures are copies or rather illustrations proposed to the souls of those who are uneducated and immersed in sensible things, so that through sensible things which they do see they may be lifted to the intelligible things which they do not see, moving from signs to that which is signified.<sup>83</sup>

As this quotation indicates, Bonaventure's concept of *contuition* is related to humanity's recognition of God through material creatures. Leonard Bowman explains this concept as follows:

In its specific sense, *contuition* implies an indirect knowledge of God in his effects. In the context of exemplary causality, it implies the awareness of simultaneity of form in the created thing and in the Eternal Exemplar. And in general it implies a sense of the presence of God together with the consciousness of the created being.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> See above section 3.4.1.

<sup>82</sup> Schaefer, *Theological Foundations for Environmental Ethics*, 98, note 89.

<sup>83</sup> Bonaventure, *Itin.*, c.2, n.11 (WSB II, 77). The italic is my own.

<sup>84</sup> Bowman, "The Cosmic Exemplarism of Bonaventure," 189.

To spell out Bonaventure's concept of *contuitio*, it is helpful to look into his epistemology of certain knowledge elucidated in the fourth Question of his *Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ*. Here, Bonaventure sees that, when the human intellect knows things with certitude, the eternal reason, referred to as the eternal art, truth and the like, operates as the ground of that knowledge. To give an example, he writes, "No defective being is known in itself except through a perfect being. But every created truth is, in itself, dark and defective. Therefore, nothing enters the intellect except by means of the supreme truth."<sup>85</sup> As is shown in this passage, from the epistemological perspective, the concept of imperfection is understood through the concept of perfection. Accordingly, since all created things are imperfect in themselves, the human intellect knows them by means of the knowledge of God who is the perfect and eternal truth. When the human intellect is aware of created things in such a way, it is noteworthy that it intuits concurrently (*contuits*), but indirectly, the eternal reason which regulates and motivates human cognitive processes.<sup>86</sup> As Zachary Hayes comments, this eternal reason is indeed the eternal model – that is, the Exemplar – after which all created things are patterned. Hence, knowing a thing with certitude means knowing it in its relation to this eternal Exemplar because it is the limited expression of the Exemplar in time and space.<sup>87</sup> In this way, the human knowledge of creatures involves that of the divine although it is only partly and obscurely grasped by the human soul in the state of fallen nature.<sup>88</sup>

In his description of the Bonaventurian concept of *contuitio*, Edwards gives the example of seeing a giant sequoia tree. When someone sees a giant sequoia tree, he or she can sense the divine presence through the tree. *Contuitio* means to be aware of a specific giant sequoia tree together with the recognition of the divine presence. It is to apprehend the eternal Exemplar, beyond the tree, not limited to the tree itself, while sensing the specific existence of the tree. Thus, from the viewpoint of *contuitio*, it can be claimed that creatures function as signs which mirror the eternal Exemplar, the divine presence.<sup>89</sup> They provide the path which leads to God, going beyond their own diversity and beauty, so that human beings can realise

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<sup>85</sup> Bonaventure, *Scien. Chr.*, q.4, n.25 (WSB IV, 123).

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., q.4, conc. (WSB IV, 134). To put it simply, using Bonaventure's words, "Along with the created reason, it [the eternal reason] is *contuit*ed by us in part as is fitting in this life."

<sup>87</sup> Zachary Hayes, Introduction to *Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ*, ed. Zachary Hayes, Works of St. Bonaventure IV (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2005), 58.

<sup>88</sup> Bonaventure, *Scien. Chr.*, q.4, conc. (WSB IV, 136).

<sup>89</sup> Edwards, *Jesus the Wisdom of God*, 107-08.

the power, wisdom, and perfection of God in them.

#### 5.3.4 A Trinitarian Trace in Creation (LS, 239)

The encyclical's fourth citation of Bonaventure emphasises that reading the book of creation can lead to recognising a Trinitarian trace in creatures:

For Christians, believing in one God who is trinitarian communion suggests that the Trinity has left its mark on all creation. Saint Bonaventure went so far as to say that human beings, before sin, were able to see how each creature “testifies that God is three”. The reflection of the Trinity was there to be recognised in nature “when that book was open to man and our eyes had not yet become darkened”. The Franciscan saint teaches us that *each creature bears in itself a specifically Trinitarian structure*, so real that it could be readily contemplated if only the human gaze were not so partial, dark and fragile.<sup>90</sup>

As Bonaventure's concept of exemplarism shows, all creatures mirror the Triune God through the triple causality – efficient, exemplary and final causes – and through a triad of essential characteristics – unity, truth and goodness; measure, number and weight; mode, species and order. These are the footprints which God implants in each and every creature. To put it another way, each creature is a locus of divine footprints. This understanding of creatures based on exemplarism points to the encyclical's affirmation of creation's intrinsic value. For Pope Francis insists that creatures have intrinsic value in themselves because of God's presence in them.

Although *Laudato Si'* does not further quote Bonaventure directly in reference to the Trinity and creation, the encyclical contains some significant insights which are closely related to his Trinitarian theology of creation. Concerning God's creative act, paragraph 238 emphasises that the three divine persons, holding the proper character of each of them in terms of creating, become one single principle:

The Father is the ultimate source of everything ... The Son, his reflection, through whom all things were created, united himself to this earth ... The Spirit, infinite bond

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<sup>90</sup> LS, 239. Cf. Bonaventure, *Myst. Trin.*, q.1, a.2, conc. (WSB III, 128-29).

of love, is intimately present at the very heart of the universe ... The world was created by the three Persons acting as a single divine principle, but each one of them performed this common work in accordance with his own personal property.<sup>91</sup>

This quotation is the reminder of Bonaventure's understanding of each divine person's position in terms of God's creative act: the Father as the fecund source, the Fountain Fullness; the Word as the eternal Exemplar; the Holy Spirit as the bond of mutual love; and God the Father through the Word with the Holy Spirit as the principle of all created things. In particular, Bonaventure's idea of the Father as the Fountain Fullness leads to the view of abundant life forms on Earth as the expression of the Father's fecundity. Pope Francis writes at paragraph 86, "The universe as a whole, in all its manifold relationships, shows forth the inexhaustible riches of God."<sup>92</sup> Even though Pope Francis quotes Thomas Aquinas in reference to the diversity of creation as the manifestation of divine goodness, this insight accords with Bonaventure's understanding of creation as a kind of sacrament of the fecund Trinity. Moreover, his idea of the Holy Spirit as the bond of mutual love supports the encyclical's insight into creation's intrinsic value based on God's love for creatures. Because God the Father creates all things with the Holy Spirit who is divine Love and in whom the Father and the Son share their mutual love, every creature is a gift of the Love and a receiver of divine love, although in a limited way.

Lastly, citing Aquinas, paragraph 240 emphasises that the relational Trinity imprints the dynamic relationality in the created world:

The divine Persons are subsistent relations, and the world, created according to the divine model, is a web of relationships. Creatures tend towards God, and in turn it is proper to every living being to tend towards other things, so that throughout the universe we can find any number of constant and secretly interwoven relationships.<sup>93</sup>

The interrelated and interdependent creatures are the expression of the relational Trinity. As I have indicated in Chapter 4, Bonaventure's thought on the relational Trinity can become the

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 238.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 240.

theological ground of the relational universe and natural world.<sup>94</sup> The encyclical urges us to recognise the interrelationships between all things which originate from the relational Trinity and to have the vision of universal communion. Bonaventure's concept of the relational Trinity and creation might support the same vision.

#### **5.4 The Further Contribution of Bonaventure's Theology to *Laudato Si'***

Although *Laudato Si'* is a significant and timely document for eco-theological studies today, it has been criticised for limitations, both theoretical and practical. It goes beyond the scope of this chapter to analyse all such weaknesses. I will restrict my focus to two theological limitations indicated by Edwards: the lack of a systematic theology of the incarnation, and the lack of theological consideration of evolutionary suffering. I focus on these two themes because, besides focussing on the theological meaning of the natural world, they are prior issues about which today's ecological theology needs to be concerned, as Edwards proposes.<sup>95</sup> With regard to the theme of the theological meaning of the natural world, *Laudato Si'* provides telling resources for ecological theology. It highlights meaningful insights into the natural world which have been explored in this chapter: creatures' intrinsic value; creatures as revelatory of God; and the sublime communion of creation. On the other hand, its contribution in relation to the other two themes seems relatively poor. In this section, I will explore how Bonaventure's theology can make up for these limitations in *Laudato Si'* and thus further contribute to the significance of the encyclical.

##### **5.4.1 A Systematic Theology of the Incarnation**

As I have outlined in Chapter 1, until very recently the theme of the natural world has been almost absent from both Catholic and Protestant theology with strong emphasis having been placed on the theme of human sinfulness and salvation since the Reformation.<sup>96</sup> Edwards points out that, in response to this situation, the initial focus of ecological theology was on the

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<sup>94</sup> See above section 4.2.2.

<sup>95</sup> Denis Edwards, "Key Issues in Ecological Theology: Incarnation, Evolution, Communion," in *Theology and Ecology across the Disciplines: On Care for Our Common Home*, ed. Celia Deane-Drummond and Rebecca Artinian-Kaiser, Religion and the University Series 5 (London: T&T Clark, 2018), 65-76. Strictly speaking, the issue of evolutionary suffering is included in the wider theme of evolution.

<sup>96</sup> See above section 1.1.

theology of creation. However, ecological theology is broader than creation theology. As Edwards insists, while ecological theology explores the theme of creation as a central topic, it must not neglect other traditional theological themes, including salvation in Christ. In addition, it must extend the understanding of salvation to encompass the whole of creation, beyond the human.<sup>97</sup> Incarnational theology is a key theme for ecological theology to achieve these goals.

There are some brief references to the incarnation in *Laudato Si'*. For example, paragraphs 235 and 236 mention the incarnation in the context of a theology of the sacraments and the Eucharist. In the incarnation, “the Son of God has incorporated in his person part of the material world, planting in it a seed of definitive transformation.”<sup>98</sup> The elements of this material world mediate the supernatural grace of God in the sacraments. The zenith of these sacraments is the Eucharist in which the incarnate Son continues to give himself for us through the form of bread yielded from the earth.<sup>99</sup>

Notable reference to the incarnation in relation to a theology of creation is found in paragraph 99 which quotes the Prologue to St. John’s Gospel: “The prologue of the Gospel of John (1:1-18) reveals Christ’s creative work as the Divine Word (*Logos*). But then, unexpectedly, the prologue goes on to say that this same Word ‘became flesh’ (*Jn* 1:14). One Person of the Trinity entered into the created cosmos, throwing in his lot with it, even to the cross.”<sup>100</sup> Referring to the passage of St. Paul’s letter to the Colossians (*Col* 1:19-20), the subsequent paragraph (100) affirms that this incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, has risen and is now universally present in all creatures, “holding them to himself and directing them towards fullness as their end.”<sup>101</sup> Based on the biblical passages, these two paragraphs show the connection between creation and salvation in the incarnate and risen Christ who is the Word of God. I believe that this link is not just to be noted by the biblical passages, as *Laudato Si'* does, but also to be corroborated by systematic theological insights which are lacking in the encyclical. It is here that Bonaventure’s theology can make a further contribution to the encyclical in some way.

I believe that Bonaventure’s concept of Christ as the centre substantiates the link between creation and salvation. As I have explored in the earlier chapter, creation and

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<sup>97</sup> Edwards, “Key Issues in Ecological Theology,” 65-66.

<sup>98</sup> *LS*, 235.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 235-36.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

salvation are symbolised by the circular movement of *egressus* and *regressus* in Bonaventure's metaphysical thought.<sup>102</sup> The figure of the circle is closed when a line starts from its beginning point and returns to the same point; otherwise, the circle can never be closed. In a similar way, creatures are brought forth (*egressus*) from God, who is their source, and then are ordered to return (*regressus*) to the same God, who is their goal, whereby they attain their completion. Thus, as I have emphasised by quoting the words of Zachary Hayes, "The order of creation does not stand as a reality that can be understood simply in itself, but may be understood only in terms of its end, that is grace and consummation."<sup>103</sup> As the uncreated Word (*Verbum increatum*), Christ is at the centre between God and creatures brought into being through him. At the same time, the incarnation of Christ is the pinnacle of creation because, in him, creaturely nature represented by his humanity is united with divine nature which is supreme. The completion of the circular movement is fully actualised in the incarnation of Christ. This incarnate Christ – called the incarnate Word (*Verbum incarnatum*) – directs all creatures to their consummation in God, thereby completing their circular movement of *egressus* and *regressus*. In this way, both aspects of creation and salvation are linked by Christ.

I have explored Bonaventure's thought concerning the return of all creation through Christ incarnate based on Hayes's analysis of his concept of redemptive-completion.<sup>104</sup> Although, in Bonaventure's explicit teaching, this return is nothing other than the consummation of human beings, I have proposed ecologically-meaningful implications of his thought that promote a positive view of non-human creatures' fate.<sup>105</sup> Humanity is called not to estrange itself from other creatures but to have concern for and restore a right relationship with them, for its God-intended completion. Hence, it can be claimed that, when humanity reaches its completion with a renewed relationship with these creatures, they will also participate in the final fulfilment through Christ with their own existence, intertwined with humanity. In addition, materiality itself, shared by human and non-human creatures, is consummated through Christ incarnate; the material existence of non-human creatures is significant because it is the external expression of God, has a direct relationship to God and participates in divine love. Therefore, it can be claimed that their material existence may not

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<sup>102</sup> See above section 3.3.1.

<sup>103</sup> Hayes, *What Manner of Man?*, 81-82, note 21.

<sup>104</sup> See above section 3.3.2.

<sup>105</sup> See above section 3.4.

be excluded in the final fulfilment of all things.

It is my contention that these aspects in Bonaventure's theology can supplement theologically the encyclical's insight into creation and salvation in Christ. Thus, I argue that, in light of these aspects, the following statement could be added after paragraph 100 in *Laudato Si'*:

Inspired by Saint Bonaventure's thought, the testimony of the New Testament concerning the mystery of Christ and creatures, is depicted by the figure of the circle which symbolises creatures' journey towards God. All creatures come into being from God through the divine Word and are led back again to God in whom they find fullness as their end. Similar to other creatures, the divine Word came to earth from God by becoming flesh. However, since this Word, while assuming creaturely nature, did not lose his divinity, this creaturely nature was fully united with divine nature in him. This union of creation with God, which we find in the incarnate Word, is the goal of our returning journey towards God. We are directed to be united with God through the incarnate and resurrected Jesus Christ who is at the centre of this journey. Together with us, the rest of creation participates in this journey. In his incarnation and resurrection, Jesus embraced and perfected the material dimension of earthly creatures. These creatures share with us the same hope of the final fulfilment of their existence. Following Jesus, we are called to embrace, in our journey towards that end, this natural world and our fellow creatures within it, all of them related to and loved by God and revealing God to us.

#### **5.4.2 Theological Consideration of Evolutionary Suffering**

For today's ecological theology, evolutionary science provides key background theories by presenting a new and realistic outlook on the natural world. *Laudato Si'* alludes to its recognition of the evolutionary view of life, especially in paragraph 80 where it describes God's act of ongoing creation:

God is intimately present to each being, without impinging on the autonomy of his creature, and this gives rise to the rightful autonomy of earthly affairs. His divine presence, which ensures the subsistence and growth of each being, "continues the work of creation". The Spirit of God has filled the universe with possibilities and



therefore, from the very heart of things, something new can always emerge: “Nature is nothing other than a certain kind of art, namely God’s art, impressed upon things, whereby those things are moved to a determinate end. It is as if a shipbuilder were able to give timbers the wherewithal to move themselves to take the form of a ship”.<sup>106</sup>

Despite this example, it may be claimed that, overall, *Laudato Si’* does not take evolutionary scientific insights far enough into its theological account, compared to the weight given them in the eco-theological field. What Edwards particularly notes is the lack of consideration given to the issue of evolutionary suffering. Since this dark dimension is inherent in the evolutionary history of the universe and life on Earth, some contemporary theologians, when addressing the theme of the natural world, re-interpret the concepts of God and creation through the theology of deep incarnation. Yet, the encyclical does not make such an attempt because it basically views God’s creation as a harmonious and pleasant reality without commenting on evolutionary suffering.<sup>107</sup> As Celia Deane-Drummond understands, it may be because evolutionary suffering is not brought about by human activities, unlike environmental deterioration, and thus is not the main concern of the encyclical.<sup>108</sup> Nevertheless, I think that the encyclical should have addressed, even briefly, this issue in its recognition of evolution because evolutionary suffering is, at any rate, a real aspect of the natural world, which is our common home.

With regard to the issue of evolutionary suffering, I have explored the theology of deep incarnation in Chapter 4 and have considered how it can be associated with Bonaventure’s theology.<sup>109</sup> While the contemporary theologies of deep incarnation suggest the idea of a God who co-suffers with creatures, Bonaventure’s theology, in a full sense, does not do so because of his emphasis on the transcendent divine nature, which is not affected by suffering. However, as I have argued, with particular reference to the work of Niels Henrik Gregersen and Richard Bauckham, Bonaventure’s theology contains elements which can become stepping stones towards the meaning of deep incarnation, beyond his explicit idea of insusceptible divine nature. Bonaventure’s theology of the Word as the Exemplar indicates

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<sup>106</sup> *LS*, 80.

<sup>107</sup> Edwards, “‘Sublime Communion’,” 101-02.

<sup>108</sup> Deane-Drummond, *A Primer in Ecotheology*, 67.

<sup>109</sup> See above section 4.3.

that the Word is not just embodied in the human body of Jesus but also present to all material creatures since they are patterned on this Word and are related to God through this Word. By taking on humanity, the microcosm, in his incarnation, Christ embraces material conditions and experiences suffering arising from the same conditions, at least in terms of his human nature. Furthermore, through his human body in the incarnation, Christ is not only internally related to his surrounding material world and its history but also externally participates in interrelationships with other creatures. Accordingly, Christ is thought of as leading all material creatures to their own consummation, interconnected to himself. I believe that these ideas from Bonaventure, in conjunction with the contemporary theological concept of a co-suffering God, can become building blocks for understanding the redemptive God who has been present throughout the evolutionary history of our common home and who is compassionate towards this home that is maltreated by us. Therefore, I argue that the following statement could be added to *Laudato Si'*:

It is evident that the evolutionary process, which points to God's ongoing creation, has brought into being the current species of animals and plants at the expense of great costs such as natural selection and mass extinctions. Such costs do not seem compatible with the divine presence in the natural world. However, God, who is present and related to all creatures through the divine Word, has conjoined this evolutionary process, and suffering creatures within it, through the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Likewise, with other organisms, the body of Jesus has borne the history of the evolutionary process in which the price of the emergence of new entities has been paid. Through this body, God has experienced and embraced the evolutionary world where there are not only the relationships of mutual interdependence and harmony but also cruel competition and death. In the mystery of the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, God the Father promises the final fulfilment to this relational world of evolution which is interrelated to his incarnate Son. Now, God, who has accepted the harsh dimensions of the evolutionary world in divine love and humility, sympathises with fellow humans and other creatures who suffer from ecological crises brought about by humanity's destructive activities, and promises to them the ultimate transformation and liberation.

## 5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored what theological insights into the natural world the encyclical *Laudato Si'* presents in order to support its value and importance and to promote ecological conversion in today's context of ecological crisis. *Laudato Si'* insists that creatures brought into being by God have their own value in themselves, regardless of their usefulness for us. It reminds us of the traditional theological concept concerning the revelational dimension of creatures which is represented by the term "the book of creation." It also emphasises the sublime communion of humans and other creatures in the one creation community in God, based on the interconnectedness of all things. These theological insights of *Laudato Si'*, when they are reconstructed and reconceived by the Catholic Church, a community of discourse, urge believers to form a renewed view of biological species driven to extinction, of Earth deteriorated by climate change, and of the poor being the most vulnerable to global environmental deterioration, and consequently to adopt solidarity with all of them.

Based on the encyclical's references to Bonaventure's works, I have explored how Bonaventure's theology engages with the insights of the encyclical. His theology of the Father and the Word underpins a sense of communion with other creatures which are brought forth from the common Fountain Fullness through the common Exemplar. Following the example of St. Francis, Bonaventure's theology underscores the restoration of a right relationship with creatures, which is associated with recognising their revelational role leading us to the perception of God. This perception comes true when we apprehend a Trinitarian trace in creatures by reading the book of creation properly. In addition to this exploration, I have also discussed how Bonaventure's theology can further contribute to the theologies of *Laudato Si'*. I have proposed that his theology of Christ the centre can make up for the lack of a systematic theological development of the incarnation and that, in conjunction with the theology of deep incarnation, his theology can provide the clues of understanding a compassionate God who co-suffers with creatures both throughout evolutionary history and in the current natural world being destroyed. Based on these theological insights, I argue that, along with the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Bonaventure's theology proposes a renewed vision of God and creatures, and enlightens us on the importance of both restoring God-intended relationships between humanity and other creatures, and making God's compassion for the natural world our own.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

So far in this thesis, I have discussed Bonaventure's theology of the created world, bearing in mind the following main research question: how Bonaventure's understanding of the created world can help Christians reflect theologically on the meaning and worth of nature so that it can promote the ecological conversion that is needed during this time of ecological crisis. In exploring this question, I have considered three further sub-questions: (1) whether and how Bonaventure's theology of the created world can be understood as having weak anthropocentric senses, and thus still capable of upholding, in some way, the value of creatures and awakening a human concern for the natural world; (2) how Bonaventure's theology of the created world can be re-interpreted in light of our understanding of the natural world informed by evolutionary science; and (3) how Bonaventure's theology of the created world can engage with the theological insights of the encyclical *Laudato Si'* in terms of responding to contemporary ecological degradation. The second and third chapters of this thesis have intended to answer the first sub-question; the fourth chapter has addressed the second sub-question; while the fifth chapter has been concerned with the third sub-question. In conducting this exploration, I have employed Francis Schüssler Fiorenza's theory of a reconstructive hermeneutics as a helpful methodology because this thesis aims to determine the elements of Bonaventure's theology that are to be hermeneutically retrieved and reconstructed in the light of effective Christian praxis for today.

In this final chapter, I conclude by summarising the ecological meaning of Bonaventure's theology of the created world by answering the main research question. I will first review what elements of his theology have been retrieved and reconstructed in earlier chapters and how they have contributed to answering the three sub-questions. Then I will briefly address the theme of ecological conversion, since the main research question in this thesis ultimately asks how Bonaventure's theology can promote this conversion to today's Christians. Finally, in light of the theme of ecological conversion, as well as the key insights gleaned from the previous chapters, I will determine how Bonaventure's thought regarding the created world, hermeneutically reconstructed, brings transformative effect to the human understanding of the natural world and humanity's action in relationship with it. By doing so, my eco-theological study of Bonaventure will argue that, despite its limitations, his theology

of the created world can still be used to guide praxis that leads us to ecological conversion and commitment in this present time.

## **6.1 Key Arguments from Previous Chapters**

I began my eco-theological exploration of Bonaventure with his Trinitarian doctrine of creation, since Trinitarian theology is a foundation of his whole theological thought. Bonaventure sees that the Trinitarian persons, communicating the same divine nature, interpenetrate one another in the dynamic relationships and act together as the fountal source of all creation. Each of the three persons has a specific position, respectively, as the Fountain Fullness (the Father), the Exemplar (the Word) and the bond and Gift of divine love (the Holy Spirit). The whole of creation is the sacramental expression of the fecund Trinity, as it flows from the Fountain Fullness through the Word. By being patterned after the Exemplar, all creatures are imprinted with Trinitarian structures in their inner structure and are directly associated with the Word and, through the Word, with the Trinity. In addition, creatures are a gift given by the bountiful love of the Holy Spirit, and they participate in divine love because God freely creates them and shares that love with them. It is my view that these concepts of creation in Bonaventure can support the value of creatures in an intrinsic sense as well as an instrumental sense. While creatures can be regarded as a spiritual instrument through which humanity recognises God in the world, they also can be thought of as being valuable in themselves in that, as with humanity, they have a direct relationship with God and are receivers of divine love.

Bonaventure's medieval approach to eschatology may challenge this view because he believes that non-human creatures will lose their own existence and so will not be directly consummated, but only indirectly, as ideas in humanity. Nevertheless, Bonaventure's Christocentric theology and his concept of redemptive-completion provide positive implications for a proposal beyond his explicit stance. In a broad sense, creation's consummation through Christ incarnate includes the materiality of all corporeal creatures because materiality, which they all share with Christ incarnate, is united with the divinity in him. Since Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology of creation implies the significance of the specific existence of non-human creatures, it can be proposed that these creatures are also thought of as being directly consummated with their own material existence through Christ incarnate. In addition, according to the concept of redemptive-completion, it can be claimed that these creatures will be restored in right relationship with humans because, for God-

intended completion, humans are called to be concerned about other creatures and to restore broken relationships with them caused by sin.

These reconstructed points in Bonaventure's theology provide answers for the first sub-question. Weak anthropocentrism acknowledges that other-than-human creatures have value insofar as they are instrumental to humans, and that humans should have concern for other creatures because a harmonious relationship with them is a human ideal. My exploration of Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology of creation affirms that these creatures should be regarded not as objects to be exploited by humans but, in their own right, as little words and gifts of the Trinity or, at least, as revelatory for humans. In addition, my exploration of Bonaventure's Christocentric theology and eschatology claims that these creatures can be thought of as directly participating in consummation, and that humans should have a renewed relationship with them for God-intended completion. Therefore, I argue that Bonaventure's theology of the created world can be understood as having weak anthropocentric senses by upholding the value of creatures and awakening human concern and responsibility for other creatures.

The second sub-question asks how the reconstructed points in Bonaventure's theology can be re-interpreted in dialogue with evolutionary scientific views that offer relevant background theories. I am arguing that Bonaventure's theological vision of creation is compatible with the realities of biodiversity and relational nature in the evolutionary natural world. Various species of fauna and flora in the current world are the expression of the divine fecundity and the actualisation of bountiful potentialities implanted by the fruitful God. Relationships in the natural world, which constitute and sustain all entities within it, are grounded in the relationality of the Trinity. As part of such relational webs, humans are called to manifest the relationship of the mutual love and communion of the Trinitarian persons by their relationships with other biological life forms as well as fellow humans. Along with these realities, an evolutionary scientific view highlights the inherent suffering in evolutionary history. A recent theological response to this issue, the theology of deep incarnation, offers the view of God who, through the incarnation of Jesus Christ, enters the whole history and realm of the physical world, enfolds creaturely conditions such as suffering, fragility and vulnerability into God's self, and leads all creatures to final fulfilment. Bonaventure's theology is not fully in line with the concept of a co-suffering God in the theology of deep incarnation. Having said that, his thought contains elements which can become building blocks for a theology of God's co-presenting in and redemptive co-suffering with creatures: God's presence to all creatures and direct relationship with them through the Word; Christ's

assuming of materiality and, concomitantly, undergoing the dimension of suffering and death in his humanity as a microcosm; and Christ as the universal centre who leads to completion all creatures which, together with him, participate in ecological interrelationships in the world. Although these elements of Bonaventure's thought do not provide an answer to the question of inherent suffering in the evolutionary world, I believe that they can offer the theological basis of hope for suffering creatures.

The third sub-question reminds us that these creatures are groaning, not just in the evolutionary process, but also in the ecological deterioration caused by human activities. Faced with this crisis, the encyclical *Laudato Si'* emphasises the intrinsic value of all creatures, their significance as God's revelation for humans and the call for a sublime communion with them. Bonaventure's theology can make contributions to these insights of the encyclical. His theology of the Father as the common fecund source and of the Word is related to the encyclical's vision of the interconnection of all things and their communion in one God. His view of human sin and the need for the restoration of human relationships with other creatures theologically supports the encyclical's reference to St. Francis as the model of universal reconciliation with all creation, towards which contemporary human beings are also called. As with *Laudato Si'*, Bonaventure's concept of creation clearly affirms the revelatory role of other-than-human creatures, the book of creation, through which human beings recognise God's message in this world. These creatures, as the encyclical and Bonaventure insist, are imprinted with a Trinitarian trace, and thus express the fecund and relational Trinity to humans. In addition to these contributions, I believe that Bonaventure's theology can supplement the encyclical through a systematic theological understanding of creation and salvation in the incarnate Christ with the clues of the concept of a compassionate God in solidarity with suffering creatures in conjunction with the theology of deep incarnation.

Based on the arguments summarised so far, Bonaventure's theology can help Christians reflect theologically on the meaning and worth of creatures. Now, I will determine how his thought can guide praxis that leads us to the ecological transformation of our thinking and action with regard to creatures. Before entering this final section of my thesis, as I have mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, I will address, in brief, the theme of ecological conversion.

## 6.2 Ecological Conversion

In the Catholic Church, ecological conversion has repeatedly been raised in papal documents and speeches.<sup>1</sup> In his address in 2001, Pope John Paul II introduced the term “ecological conversion” for the first time: “We must therefore encourage and support the ‘ecological conversion’ which in recent decades has made humanity more sensitive to the catastrophe to which it has been heading.”<sup>2</sup> These words of Pope John Paul II imply that ecological conversion should be more eagerly highlighted not just for Christians but for all humanity. It is a universal calling for the global human community which is warned to be heading for a ruinous situation due to human-caused environmental destruction. Pope Francis has clearly emphasised this universal dimension of ecological conversion in the Mass for his inauguration of the Pontificate:

The vocation of being a “protector”, however, is not just something involving us Christians alone; it also has a prior dimension which is simply human, involving everyone. It means protecting all creation, the beauty of the created world, as the Book of Genesis tells us and as Saint Francis of Assisi showed us. It means respecting each of God’s creatures and respecting the environment in which we live.<sup>3</sup>

The *Common Declaration of Environmental Ethics* of Pope John Paul II and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I spells out the meaning of ecological conversion for Christians. These two leaders declared:

What is required is an act of repentance on our part and a renewed attempt to view ourselves, one another, and the world around us within the perspective of the divine design for creation. The problem is not simply economic and technological; it is moral and spiritual. A solution at the economic and technological level can be found only if we undergo, in the most radical way, an inner change of heart, which can lead to a change in lifestyle and of unsustainable patterns of consumption and production.

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<sup>1</sup> I refer to Denis Edwards’s citations of relevant documents. Cf. Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 147-51.

<sup>2</sup> Pope John Paul II, General Audience, 17<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Pope Francis, Homily of Pope Francis, Saint Peter’s Square, Tuesday, March 19, 2013, [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco\\_20130319\\_omelia-inizio-pontificato.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130319_omelia-inizio-pontificato.html).



A genuine *conversion* in Christ will enable us to change the way we think and act.<sup>4</sup>

As this quotation highlights, ecological conversion should begin with a change of the human heart since this change is a fundamental prerequisite underlying and driving other changes in various fields of individual lives and of human societies. Christianity is called to contribute to ecological conversion by plumbing the depths of the human mind and heart with the aim of changing human action, thanks to its great wealth of intellectual and spiritual traditions. Such traditions are not sheer romanticism or naturalism, but are built upon Christian faith in God the Creator, the incarnate and risen Christ and the Holy Spirit. Christians should live a way of life inspired by such a faith and traditions based upon it, and this way of life should stir up and embrace changes of attitude to and action in the natural world. Criticising some Christians' indifferent and inactive mindset on the environment, Pope Francis also insists on a similar view in *Laudato Si'*, quoting the homily of his predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI:

“The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast”. For this reason, the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an “ecological conversion”, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.<sup>5</sup>

According to Denis Edwards, ecological conversion is associated with three views of human beings in relation to the rest of creation. Firstly, while upholding the unique dignity of humans as the image of God, this dignity is to be understood not as authorising them to be the

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<sup>4</sup> Pope John Paul II and Bartholomew I, Common Declaration on Environmental Ethics: Common Declaration of John Paul II and the Ecumenical Patriarch His Holiness Bartholomew I, Monday, 10 June 2002, [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2002/june/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_20020610\\_venice-declaration.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2002/june/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20020610_venice-declaration.html).

<sup>5</sup> *LS*, 217. Cf. Pope Benedict XVI, *Homily for the Solemn Inauguration of the Petrine Ministry* (24 April 2005): *AAS* 97 (2005), 710.

intemperate exploiters of creation but as calling them to be the protectors of creation. For this view, relying on Claus Westermann's interpretation of the biblical concept of humans made in the image of God, Edwards sees the dignity of such humans as pointing to their existential characteristic of having an interpersonal relationship with God, not to their authority to subdue the rest of creation. God, who relates to creatures in terms of their proper nature, does so interpersonally to human beings in accordance with their interpersonal nature. Then humans, who are intimately related to God, are to relate, as God does, to other creatures in terms of their nature. Edwards finds a mode of such relationships between humans and other creatures in the second creation account in Genesis, especially based on Norman Habel's interpretation of the passage "to till it and keep it" (Gen. 2:15). According to Habel, the Hebrew word usually translated as "till" (*abad*) has the basic meaning of "serve."<sup>6</sup> Hence, as the image of God, human beings are called to serve and preserve the rest of creation. Their relationship with other creatures is to be built upon their respect and responsibility for them.<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, based on biblical texts exemplified by the book of Job – especially chapters 38 and 39 – and Psalm 104, human beings are called to have a humble attitude before creation. These exemplary texts describe the order of the created world designed by God, the diverse and distinct creatures within it and their direct and unique relation to God. Humans do not fully grasp these realities of the created world, and thus are called to be humble and respectful before its incomprehensible mystery which is also demonstrated by many disciplines in contemporary science.<sup>8</sup>

Thirdly, in association with the second view, human beings are to recognise that, together with the rest of creation, they form a community of creation praising God the Creator. While possessing dignity as images of God and protectors of creation, humans participate in common fellowship with other creatures and are called to praise their Creator as they are likewise created by the same God. This view is upheld by various biblical and spiritual texts in the Christian tradition: for example, Psalm 148, the Song of the Three Young Men from the book of Daniel and St. Francis's *Canticle of Creatures*. The Catholic Church expresses this view in her Eucharistic celebrations. Typical examples are found particularly in the Eucharistic Prayer III declaring that "you are indeed Holy, O Lord, and all you have

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<sup>6</sup> Norman Habel, *An Inconvenient Text: Is a Green Reading of the Bible Possible?* (Adeladie, SA: ATF Press, 2009), 68-77.

<sup>7</sup> Edwards, *Partaking of God*, 167-69.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 170-72.

created rightly gives you praise” and in the Preface of the Eucharistic Prayer IV saying that “with them we, too, confess your name in exultation, giving voice to every creature under heaven.” Human beings are to see themselves not as being separated from this community praising God but as being part of it.<sup>9</sup>

In short, ecological conversion, beginning with an inner change of mind and heart and leading to external changes in human lives, is a call to all human beings. Christian traditions should be the wellspring from which Christians can find the wisdom and direction for their ecological transformation of thinking and acting. Such wisdom and direction do not exclude the unique dignity of humans. Instead, human dignity is understood in the wider view of humanity as being called to protect and respect other creatures and to recognise its belonging to a community of creation.

With these points in mind, I will summarise, in what follows, how Bonaventure’s theology of the created world can offer us ways of thinking and acting that lead to ecological conversion, based on the arguments made throughout this thesis.

### **6.3 The Significance of Bonaventure’s Theology of the Created World as Ecological Praxis**

1) The preservation of biological life forms not only for the current generation but also for the generations to come

As I have argued, the reconstructed elements of Bonaventure’s Trinitarian theology of creation support the value and significance of other creatures. The sacramental view of creation expressing the Trinity proposes that the various fauna and flora surrounding us are revelational books of God through which we are to recognise God’s presence and message as well as our right position and identity in this wider world. These biological life forms have a direct relationship with the Trinity through the Word, imprinted with the Trinitarian trace in them; they are directly produced through divine ideas, and God remembers them individually and collectively. In addition, animals, plants and the surrounding natural environment are the receivers of God’s bountiful love; they are gifts given liberally by divine love not only to the current human generation but also to future generations.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 172-74.

From this vision, driving biological species to extinction may be seen as the loss of God's revelational book and as the rejection of God's love and gift for us. We do not have a right to damage the book of creation and to refuse God's gift for all humanity including generations to come. If we do so, just as we have already lost dodo birds, future generations will never see many current endangered species and these species will no longer reflect the sign of God's presence and loving gift. The attitude we should have with respect to creation is not rejection but thanksgiving for God's blessing and love delivered through the natural environment and multifarious life forms. In this mindset, humans should be committed to the preservation of the diverse species of fauna and flora so that these species may continue to participate with us in God's love and to be a kind of sacrament and gift not only for us but also for our descendants.

2) The pursuit of a sustainable relationship between humans and other creatures as the reflection of the relational Trinity

Economic growth using fossil fuels such as coal and oil is typical of economic development models which current developed countries have used and with which many developing countries are following suit. However, given the harmful effects caused by this model, such as climate change and its expected results, it cannot be said that such a model dependent on fossil fuels can guarantee the sustainability of human societies and natural ecosystems. As many scientists warn, climate change entails and accelerates catastrophic natural disasters such as desertification and the submerging of land due to the rise of sea levels. It is clear that the accumulation of the damages from these disasters will threaten the continual survival of all living things and may ultimately bring about annihilation.

All realities within the natural world, including human beings, are intertwined with one another. In light of Bonaventure's view of the relational Trinity, the relationality of the natural world is theologically grounded in that of the Trinity. The distinctive dignity of humans as the image of God calls them to reflect the Trinitarian relationality of intimate love and communion not only in terms of their relationship with fellow humans but also in terms of that with other-than-human creatures. It is evident that not all relationships between humans and the rest of creation are regarded as being full of love and communion since humans use animals and plants as resources to meet their needs and wants. However, I find a mode of a creaturely expression of the Trinitarian relationality in the pursuit of a sustainable relationship between humans and other creatures. Trinitarian relationships are not temporal

but permanent, based on the eternal unity of the divine nature. In this eternal unity, the three persons create all things, hold them in being and direct them to their final fulfilment. I argue that humans can reflect the eternal relationships of the Trinitarian persons when they adopt sustainable development models, such as one promoting renewable energy options, in which their relationships with other life forms and the environment are also sustained. I believe that the survival of humans, animals and plants can be guaranteed only in such sustainable relationships.

### 3) An awareness of belonging to the one community of life from a theocentric perspective

In association with the aforementioned point, I argue that Bonaventure's theology offers the view that humans and other creatures belong to one and the same community of life on Earth from a theocentric perspective. Unlike St. Francis, Bonaventure does not use language expressing kinship with respect to creatures. Moreover, his theology has a hierarchical structure. However, given Elizabeth Johnson's idea of a theocentric perspective, it can be claimed that Bonaventure's theology also contains implications concerning humanity's sense of belonging to a community of creation. According to Johnson, the biblical vision of the community of creation sees that "in its origin, history, and goal, the whole world with its innumerable relationships is ultimately grounded in the creative, redeeming God of love."<sup>10</sup> Among creatures, there is no exception from this fundamental character. Johnson expresses this insight in simple words: "Human beings and other species on earth have more in common than what separates them."<sup>11</sup> I argue that there are elements in Bonaventure's thought that support the points of commonality between humans and other creatures. These include: the Father as the Fountain Fullness of all things and the Word as their eternal Exemplar; the aspect of the vestige of all creatures including human and non-human; and materiality, which Christ has assumed in his incarnation and has brought to completion in his resurrection. I believe that these common points can contribute to a human awareness of all life forms belonging to the same global community of life.

Contemporary science sees that human beings are part of the whole history of evolution and that their existence is sustained by the relationships with other life forms and the surrounding ecosystems. We are dependent on various realities in the created world, such

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<sup>10</sup> Johnson, *Creation and the Cross*, 201.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

as climate, forest, honeybees etc. It is evident that their crisis entails the crisis of our life. The destiny of human beings is intertwined with that of other creatures and global ecosystems and vice versa. Thus, in the global community of life, concern and well-being for human beings ought to be linked with concern for other biological life forms and the surrounding environment.

As the image of God possessing a spiritual dimension, humanity has a responsibility for maintaining the creation community on Earth in well-being. To fulfil this responsibility, humans are required to adopt an attitude of humility to other creatures. Theologically speaking, as with them, we are brought forth from the same ultimate source which is God the Father, and through the same Exemplar which is the Word. In this respect, we are equal to other creatures. We should be humble in front of other beings on which our life is dependent and with which we form the global community of life.

#### 4) Sensitivity to suffering creation

Given the view of the one community of creation, Bonaventure's incarnational Christocentric theology means that Christ has joined such a community through his incarnation. Not only has the incarnate Christ maintained divinity but also he has assumed materiality which humanity and other creatures share. Consequently, as with humanity, all material creatures are related to and connected to Christ. The contemporary theology of deep incarnation proposes that, in this incarnate Christ, God suffers with all creatures undergoing hardships in the evolutionary process and the current ecological crisis.

Bonaventure does not fully recognise God's co-suffering with creation due to his assurance of the transcendent divine nature. However, it is also Bonaventure's view that, in humility through his assuming human nature, Christ experiences physical suffering, as do creatures, and he has sympathy and solidarity with them in their experiencing the same condition. For its God-intended completion, humanity ought to seek union with this Christ. Then it can be claimed that humanity's union with Christ does not exclude sensitivity to the pain and suffering of fellow humans and creatures. Rather, such a union requires this sensitivity as Christ has given the example in his earthly life.

From the perspective of this vision, Christians should not remain idle onlookers to groaning life forms and their environment. Instead, they are called to make the suffering of the natural world their own and to endeavour to heal such suffering. They should feel sympathy and humility, for example, for the situation of polar bears losing their habitat due to

the melting of Arctic ice, for the Amazon rain forest destroyed by exploitative logging and, further, for the climate refugees forced to leave their home country due to climate change. Important behavioural and political changes concerning our planet will develop from this inner change of the way Christians think and feel with respect to fellow humans, animals, plants and the natural world.

#### 5) Appreciation of aesthetic and spiritual values provided by other creatures

Although it is important for humans to have a sense of belonging to the one community of life on Earth, this sense does not mean that all life forms in that community possess equal value and dignity with one another. As I have already mentioned, we use animals and plants as natural resources to meet our needs. Even in natural ecosystems, we can see the many examples of organisms' use of others for their survival, as herbivores eat grass and carnivores prey on herbivores. In a sense, the use of other creatures by human beings, in and of itself, does not negate the sense of belonging to the community of life.

However, what is distinct to humans from other creatures is that, beyond the needs for earthly life, they can seek aesthetic and spiritual benefits through these creatures. As I have highlighted by citing Bonaventure in Chapter 5, we are called to appreciate that animals, plants and their ecosystems beautifully decorate our planet Earth where we live, as will our descendants, and lead us to a sense of wonder and love of God through their multifarious forms.<sup>12</sup> I believe that a sense of belonging to the global community of life requires us to acknowledge the use of non-human members of the community but to also appreciate the aesthetic and spiritual benefits that they provide for us through their own existence and activities. This attitude of appreciation could act as a warning sign to prevent our potential desire to use unrestrainedly other life forms and the global environment for our own purposes. If we go against such an attitude and exploit them and their ecosystems to the extent that we violate their aesthetic and spiritual values, it will bring real damage to the global community of life and will cause disturbances to the harmonious relationship that we are called to have with the rest of creation.

To conclude, I argue that, although there are negative criticisms of his thought, the reconstructed elements of Bonaventure's theology can be used as a retroductive warrant to

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<sup>12</sup> See above section 5.3.2.

guide praxis that transforms our attitude towards the natural world and our action in relationship with it. For the ecological conversion needed for this ecological crisis, we are called to change our mentality in order to appreciate the aesthetic and spiritual values of the natural world, to be sensitive towards suffering creatures, both human and non-human, and to be humble before the natural world with a sense of belonging to one creation community on Earth. Based on these attitudes, we must take action to preserve living species, especially those that are endangered, and to uphold this creation community through a sustainable relationship with all species. I believe that these conclusions are what Bonaventure himself, if he lived in this century, would recommend to us from his love of God and God's creation.



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