

Loving God's creation:  
Biblical stories for CAFOD's [One Climate One World](#)  
campaign

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***Genesis (1-11) and The Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37)***

In order to help the Catholic community in England and Wales raise their awareness of climate change, and to propose an individual and social *metanoia* (conversion) regarding our attitude towards creation, we recommend relying on biblical narratives.

Reviewing some of CAFOD's campaigns and policies, both external and internal, we found two crucial biblical stories that are connected with the question on how to better love God's creation. The first one is the story of creation of the Old Testament, which has been extensively used in previous CAFOD environmental programmes or statements, such as the joint report with Tearfund and Theos, [Wholly Living: A New Perspective in International Development](#) (2010), and the successful "[Live Simply](#)" campaign (started in 2007).

This passage of Genesis is also widely well-known, not necessarily in terms of its deep theological and moral insights, but in terms of a popular recognition that, according to the Bible, God is the creator of heaven and earth. There is even a new Hollywood film about Noah, the flood and the ark in which the main character is the popular actor Russell Crowe.

The second passage, the New Testament parable of *The Good Samaritan* (Lk 10:25-37), is also broadly quoted in CAFOD's programmes, and is referred to by member of CAFOD's Theological Reference Group, Celia's Deane-Drummond's research, as a fundamental text related to the promotion of being compassionate to all creatures. Indeed, this story is regarded by Catholic theology as the paradigmatic story in terms of living

to the full through loving our neighbours.<sup>1</sup> Bible scholars normally classified this parable among “the discipleship” and “the construction of the kingdom-parables” (alongside *The Two Builders* -Mt 7:24-27/Lk 6:47-49, *The Workers in the Vineyard* -Mt 20:1-6- and *The Tower Builder and the Warring King* -Lk 14:28-32),<sup>2</sup> which means that it should be highly regarded by Christians who want to expand the Kingdom of God on earth, and who want to foster their identity as disciples of Christ, as Pope Francis has recently avowed in *Evangelii Gaudium* (nbr:3.111.119). In addition, Catholic Social Teaching (CST) conceives the parable of *The Good Samaritan* as the main biblical grounds of the principle of solidarity, and the foundation of the CST methodology of ‘seeing-judging-acting’.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, both stories, *The Good Samaritan* and *The Genesis of Life* on earth, are frequently used in liturgies,<sup>4</sup> which provide the Catholic community in England and Wales with a certain familiarity with the texts. Surely these passages of the Holy Scriptures are not the only ones on which one can rely to explore and better understand our bond with creation and our responsibility towards the environment. Still, due to the familiarity of the texts for Catholic communities, one can assume they are valuable resources for our campaign on climate change, as well as a good starting point for those who are interested in connecting their Christian roots with the reality of climate change.

## **Objections to using these biblical resources**

However, there are some reservations we need to address. The first one is the fact that interpretations of these biblical texts are contestable. Indeed, some readings of both passages contradict principles of CST and CAFOD’s values. For example, in 1980, Margaret Thatcher used the parable of *The Good Samaritan* to justify the generation of wealth that, arguably, her

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<sup>1</sup> I am relying on the account of the parable of Schnackenburg (1991:158-174).

<sup>2</sup> Snodgrass, (2008) and Soding (2009).

<sup>3</sup> Misfud (2001) and Zampini-Davies (2014).

<sup>4</sup> See for example 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle C (Lk 10: 25-37) and Easter Vigil Liturgy of the Word (Gn 1:1-2:2).

policies were promoting: "*nobody would remember the Good Samaritan if he had only good intentions. He had money as well*".<sup>5</sup> Similarly, the story of Genesis is often referred to by some Christians as the core religious argument against Darwin's theory of evolution.<sup>6</sup> The denial of science on behalf the Bible is also promoted by "climate sceptics".<sup>7</sup> For example, John Shimkus - the chairman of a congressional body of the United States that oversees work to curb air, soil and water pollution - used the passage of Genesis 8,<sup>8</sup> where Yahweh sealed a new covenant with Noah after he came out of the ark, in order to convince North Americans that there is no need to worry too much about climate change because, as promised by God to Noah, God will never again strike down every living creature on earth.<sup>9</sup>

But rather than denying our argument in favour of using these passages, popular misinterpretations of *Genesis* or *The Good Samaritan* confirm our case. The reason being, that those who use these biblical texts to support their own political agenda, know very well the impact that these stories may have on people. These kinds of biblical narratives, are indeed meta-narratives that actually inform people's thinking and behaviour.<sup>10</sup> Thus, we propose to go back to these stories, not so much to foster our own political agenda, but rather to listen to what God has to tell us about our origins and our future. We propose to do so by relying on Catholic Tradition and its theology, hoping that we can discover or extract from the passages novel

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<sup>5</sup> See BBC (2013)

<sup>6</sup> See for instance: <http://www.christianet.com/bibleverses/evidenceagainstevolution.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Apart from the vast academic literature on this topic, it is worth pointing out how the debate has been popularised. For an overview of newspaper articles on the matter, see [The Guardian website](#). For popular web pages and/or blogs supporting climate change scepticism, see [this website](#) and [this blog](#). A non-scientific guidance on how to debate against climate change sceptics can be found [here](#). A list of scientists who oppose the narrative of modern climate change can be found in [Wikipedia](#). The debate between sceptics and environmentalist has escalated up to the point in which we find books entitled: *The Inquisition of Climate Science* (Powel 2011), accusing the scientific academia of forsaking the truth and aligning themselves with vested economic interests, or blogs entitled 'Time to Push Back Against the Global Warming Nazis', by Roy Spencer, 2014, who accuse the climate alarmists of using fascist methods.

<sup>8</sup> God said to Noah: 'Never again will I curse the earth because of man, even though his heart is set on evil from childhood; **never again** will I strike down every living creature as I have done. **As long as the earth lasts**, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease to be' (Gn 8:21-22)

<sup>9</sup> The Economist, 22/2/2014.

<sup>10</sup> In fact, and going back to M. Thatcher's words, The Good Samaritan is remembered by many.

ideas on how to read the reality of our relationship with people in need and with the earth, which is also in need nowadays.

A second objection to the use of *The Good Samaritan* and *The Story of Creation* is timing. Why should we rely on these stories now, if we have already explored them before? Why are we assuming that we will discover new visions on climate change by using these biblical passages? The reason is twofold. First, because biblical passages are 'infinitely' rich. According to Catholic tradition, biblical passages, as the Word of God, are creating as they are spoken. Hence, the assumption that we 'know' these texts, and that we cannot use them again, is incompatible with our belief that they are inspired and inspirational texts. Secondly, by exploring these texts in order to discern our relation with the environment, with energy and production, and with consumption and waste, we are following the call of The Second Vatican Council and subsequent CST regarding the use of Biblical theology in the readings of our social concerns, or what is more technically known as 'the discernment of the signs of the times'.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, and as something that we need to recall over and over again, the parables have helped Christian communities throughout history to read the signs of their time, especially the hard ones, and to discover unknown hermeneutical horizons for their problems. These fundamental historical testimonies can help find future semantic innovations in our economics-ridden era,<sup>12</sup> innovations that entail processes of environmental care and healing.

Still, and as a third objection, one can question whether the use of Old Testament passages, or the New Testament parables, is relevant for promoting environmental justice, a topic clearly beyond Catholicism or any other religion. To take the case of the parables,<sup>13</sup> it is worth remembering

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<sup>11</sup> *Dei Verbum*, 24, *Optatum Totius*, 16, *Document of Puebla* (1979), *Economic Justice for All* (1986), etc.

<sup>12</sup> Verstraeten (2005).

<sup>13</sup> Although something similar can be said about the story of creation in the book of Genesis, due to its particular literature genre, the explanation would require an in-depth exegetical technical discussion that exceeds the scope of this paper.

that they are relevant because their stories, although set in a particular religious context, deal with perennial dilemmas of human social existence, such as issues of 'power' or 'oppression', economic growth and systems, trade-offs, a variety of relationships, etc.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the principles contained in their stories can be understood and applied by non-believers seeking solutions to personal, social or environmental conundrums. This is, for example, the case of the Economics Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen (2009: 170-173),<sup>15</sup> who uses the parable of *The Good Samaritan* to illustrate how justice includes values such as responsibility towards strangers, which he then connects with enhancing freedom and agency in a global context. Followers of Amartya Sen's ideas have developed strong environmental arguments within economic and development literature, and they rely on Sen's idea of social commitment, for which the parable of *The Good Samaritan* served as enlightening and inspirational for the development of his 'capability approach'.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, due to the role these stories have as 'great art' or 'classics', which transcends the limitations of historical or geographical contexts,<sup>17</sup> they can help readers to discover 'a word of possibility', this means, they can inspire them to find new ways of 'being' and 'acting', particularly lacking in present global economics, which is at the heart of environmental injustice. As the economists Akerlof and Shiller<sup>18</sup> argue,<sup>19</sup> "human-interest stories that give vitality and emotional resonance to economic views drive animal spirits" (i.e. economic agents).<sup>20</sup> Because "stories people tell are also stories about how the economy behaves",<sup>21</sup> if we want to drive our economy towards a more humane, environmentally-friendly and just

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<sup>14</sup> Schnakenburg (1991), Snodgrass (2008), Soding (2009).

<sup>15</sup> Sen (2009: 170-173).

<sup>16</sup> See Deneulin (2014); Scerri (2012).

<sup>17</sup> Schneiders, S.M., 1991. *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture*. San Francisco. CA: Harper-SanFrancisco.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Shiller is one of the few economists who predicted the financial crisis of 2008. He won the Nobel Prize foreconomics in 2013.

<sup>19</sup> Akerlof and Shiller (2009).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.: xi

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.: x

society, stories with economic content or with economic implications seem to be essential. In other words, according to these economists, if we are “to reinvent our capitalist economy”,<sup>22</sup> we need stories that trigger renovated human motivation for business, stories that can counter the prevailing narrative about ‘tough’ business or development, or about the need to exacerbate ‘greed’ and mercilessness in order to be successful, or about considering natural resources just as a means for anthropogenic progress.

These motivational narratives are required in particular for policy-makers, and leaders in general, because “great leaders are first and foremost creators of stories”.<sup>23</sup> They are also required for economic agents or ordinary people, given that we are all consumers engaged, whether consciously or unconsciously, with the production-trade-consumption-waste system that affects the environment.<sup>24</sup> Put differently, narratives that can stimulate agents and leaders and transform our economy are the basis for policies that aim to foster a new economic system, hopefully one that respects the environmental dimension of our existence and redresses present environmental injustices.

In short, relying on *The Story of Creation* of Genesis and the parable of *The Good Samaritan* will optimise Catholic resources, already explored by CAFOD and incorporated into its values. In addition, due to their potential to generate novel ideas and to translate them into meta-narratives, these biblical passages can help promote new proposals in order to tackle climate change, proposals that go beyond the technicality of science and the commonly heard apocalyptic environmentalist message. Without disregarding this message, the use of the biblical passages will permit us

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.: viii

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.: 51

<sup>24</sup> Although it is true that economists and policy-makers tend to be sceptical about too many stories, particularly because quantitative facts and statistics are pivotal for any economic programme, it is also true that stories themselves move markets and instil confidence in individuals, groups, companies and nations (ibid.:54-55).

to follow Pope Francis' call to be hopeful and joyful, because, as Christ's disciples, imbued in his own Spirit of creativity and flourishing, we can indeed be agents of change (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 3.11.21.24.183.189).

## **Methodological clarification**

Before entering into the content of the argument, a methodological clarification is worth highlighting. We are not proposing to use the biblical texts in a dogmatic way, nor as a proof-text. A dogmatic way would say: because God says this in the Bible, we must therefore follow it. A proof-text approach would develop an idea, and at the end will search for a specific passage in any of these texts, and advance it as evidence that we are relying on biblical theology, or that we are "Christianising" our thought. On the contrary, a true and Catholic use of the Gospel, and of the entire Bible, requires going along with the text, allowing it to bring light into the discernment of reality (*Gaudium et Spes*, 4). It is from this process that, eventually, new ideas on how to respond to climate change will ensue.

We are aware that this method is more difficult than the two previously mentioned, but it is worth following not just because the Church advises it, but also because it is more respectful of the always renewed and reinvigorating Word of God. By developing this reading of the *Origin of Creation* (Gn 1-11) and *The Good Samaritan*, we hope to fulfil our aim, i.e., to provide substantial theological insight through which further ideas, debate and thoughts will ensue.

## **'Seeing' aggressive environmental behaviour**

To take one example among many; in a recent trip to Sri Lanka, I was able to grasp the impact environmental damage has upon those who are very poor. Some villagers in Dambulla, who are involved in programmes of peace and reconciliation between Sinhalese and Tamil families,<sup>25</sup> have

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<sup>25</sup> Ethnic enmity in Sri Lanka had triggered one of the most atrocious wars of the new millennium. For more about the need for reconciliation in the aftermath of Sri Lankan civil war, see the Pastoral Letter of the

amazingly widened their understanding of 'neighbourhood' by going beyond their village and ethnicity. They prove to be capable of the most merciful behaviour we can imagine: forgiving enemies, and those who had killed their relatives. However, they struggle to change their agricultural behaviour which, due to the use of agrochemicals, is indirectly killing their neighbours' children. Although fertilisers permit a better production, consumption and distribution, in this case they wreak havoc on the earth and, subsequently, on the neighbours' lives.

This environmental case of Dambulla's villagers,<sup>26</sup> is not just an example of a misconception of human development, understood merely as economic growth, but it is also an illustration of how environmental mistreatment foments social and family disruption, at least on a micro scale. CAFOD's research has documented that this is happening on a macro scale too. Due to the current general understanding of development, primarily as material economic growth, and the methods of production used, the environment in different regions of the world has been seriously affected. The report [What Have We Done?](#) (2013) shows how climate change distorts the economy, disrupts society, and foments serious diseases in poor regions of the planet, such as Nicaragua, Ethiopia and the Philippines, something that has been confirmed through further research in the Horn and East Africa.

## **'Judging' in the light of the Gospel**

### **Behaving in a neighbourly way**

How can we bring some theological light to these kinds of cases? The parable of *The Good Samaritan* suggests that loving our neighbour requires the entire dimension of our being, i.e. *all our heart, soul, strength and mind*. It also indicates that this love comprises a compassionate way of seeing, a sight that can deeply move us to express this love with

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Conference of Bishops of Sri Lanka (2014): 'Towards Reconciliation and Rebuilding of Our Nation'. For more information on the effect of the civil war on ordinary people, see Thiranagam (2011).

<sup>26</sup> For more on how climate change is affecting poor communities in the southern hemisphere, see the video at [cafod.org.uk/campaign](http://cafod.org.uk/campaign)

appropriate external actions. Moreover, this way of compassionate seeing, non-discriminatory judging and healing behaviour, reflects our image and likeness to God, which Jesus renovates. One of the keys to this 'neighbouring' (behaving in neighbourly way), is to address a neighbour not as an object of our charitable actions, but rather as somebody to whom I am essentially related. Indeed, the question that matters in order to have life to the full, is not "who is my neighbour?", but "who behaves in a neighbourly way?"

What has this to do with the environment and climate change? Is not the environment the locus where we perform our 'neighbourly behaviour', where we develop our humanity in the most authentic way possible? We argue that, if the 'seeing' with compassion reflects our likeness to God, we cannot limit this view, and its subsequent actions (i.e. care and restoration), only to humans in need. Everything has been restored through Christ,<sup>27</sup> who epitomises The Good Samaritan. Hence, our restored humanity in Christ should be capable of behaving in a neighbourly way not just to humans, but also to all creatures, the earth included.<sup>28</sup> Yet, this argument raises many questions.

The first one, and most obvious, is about the nature of the relationship. Can we humans have a reciprocal bond with the earth? Many passages of the Bible refer to the cry of 'the earth' and to the importance of hearing (or seeing) its suffering - e.g.: "*the earth is mourning, withering*" (Is 24:4) - something closely related to the 'neighbourly behaviour' of the Good Samaritan.<sup>29</sup> Following this line of thought, Pope Benedict XVI has argued that "the way humanity treats the environment influences the way it treats

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<sup>27</sup> The idea of Christ as the redeemer of all Creation (cf. Eph 1:9-10; Rm 8:18-30), was developed in the second century by St Ireneus (see *Adversus Haereses*, III, 21).

<sup>28</sup> Celia Deane-Drummond (2009 and 2009b) argues for a compassionate love towards animals. We would like to further the argument. If our relation is with all creatures, is not the earth an important one? Thus, our compassion, or love, or neighbourly behaviour, must include the earth too.

<sup>29</sup> Arguably, the 'cry of the land' is somehow related with 'the cry for land', as the Guatemalan Bishops' Conference suggest (1988)

itself, and vice versa”, which resonates with ancient aboriginal understandings of the earth as companion, as mother, as healer.

But even if we assume we have a sort of relation with the earth, can the earth really be thought of as ‘neighbour’? When we think about the earth’s neighbours, we normally mention Venus, Mars, Jupiter, etc. Humans, animals and plants are the earth’s inhabitants. My point is that, given that the Good Samaritan invites us to widen our notion of ‘neighbouring’, it seems feasible to explore whether the earth’s neighbours are also human beings.<sup>30</sup> As humans have the capacity to wreak havoc and even to destroy the earth, and the ability to help it heal its wounds, so the earth is competent to foster or hinder human development. In other words, “if we can help the earth heal itself, the earth will help us to heal our human wounds respectively”, as a Sri Lankan environmentalist explained to me on my recent trip.

### **Relationships to be healed**

If we talk about wounds and healings in relationships, we need to look at the story of “creation” from the book of Genesis (1-11), which reveals how our relational existence, i.e. our image and likeness of God, can be severely damaged.<sup>31</sup>

In the beginning, God commanded humans to continue the goodness of creation, and to do it in the likeness of God’s reigning, i.e. blessing,

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<sup>30</sup> The Catholic Bishops of Lombardy (1988) call us to go beyond economic or biological approaches to respond to climate change conundrums. Indeed, ‘the question, when reduced to its essential elements, becomes: “In what manner should human activity alter the dynamic ecological balances so as to guarantee the survival of both the biosphere and the resources essential for human life?”’ But this question is still anthropocentric. It focuses on human best ‘utilisation’ of resources, sidelining the questions on who we are and what life or the earth are for. Put differently, climate change and environmental behaviour are inextricably linked with our relationship with the entire creation and with a human spiritual crisis that distort those relationships.

<sup>31</sup> Although the Catholic notion of relational anthropology is based on Scriptures and derives from a dialogical understanding of the mystery of God and humanity (e.g. Mk 4:1-20), it has been developed in Catholic theology throughout centuries, especially by Trinitarian theologians (see Cambón 2000 and Soskice 2007). During the last century, it has been particularly taken as a cornerstone of CST to challenge what, arguably, are partial (or denaturalised) influential anthropologies. With regard to economic systems, for instance, CST’s relational anthropology has clashed with other two: (i) the liberal-individualistic approach, for which the flourishing of the individual, his freedom and self-interest is what really counts; and (ii) the communitarian-autocratic approach, for which the general common-interest shall always prevail over self-interest in order to achieve a reasonable level of social justice, even if this entails serious restrictions upon individual freedom (Figuerola-Deck 2005 and Borobio 1995).

producing and recreating according to the nature of each creature. But the first couple living in the Garden of Eden, a place of perfect environmental harmony, did not honour their image and likeness to God. Because they did not respect the boundaries of creation, i.e. of human activities and of a tree that could not be touched, human wellbeing was threatened. The consequences were clear. Firstly, Adam and Eve's mutual accusation and God's subsequent judgement undermined the intimate bond between men and women. Thus humans were expelled from The Garden of Eden, both a religious and environmental loss.

The expulsion from the Garden has had consequences on other types of relationships. Cain & Abel's story (Gn 4:1-16) reflects how we are able to kill our siblings because of jealousy, and how we can question our natural role as keeper of our brothers and sisters. But not only intimate and familial relationships were affected. Human beings are also keepers –or stewards- of the earth (cf. Gn 1:28-30). 'Taking-care' of humans and Creation are inextricably related. Hence, as the story of Noah depicts (Gn 6:5-9:18), the increasing violence and corruption that was filling 'the earth' proved to be detrimental to the entire planet, which suffered an environmental catastrophe: it was completely flooded. The only survivors were Noah and his wife, children, animals, birds and all that crawls on the earth, who went into the ark while a re-creation was unfolding. In the new re-created planet, Noah and the others. were entrusted with a similar stewardship task to their predecessors.

So Noah's descendants started to progress (Gn 9:18-11:2), and developed their capacity to construct buildings, cities, organisations and nations. Yet, as most of us know, progress in itself does not guarantee actual human development. Their ambition, which again failed to recognise the boundaries of growth, led humans to believe that they could become greater than others, so great that they would not need "to be scattered over the face of the earth!", this means, that they would not need to be environmentally related with or dependent on the earth. As a consequence

of their beliefs and deeds, there was general confusion “over the whole face of the earth” (Tower of Babel), impeding their progress as a human family. All these relational wounds: intimate (Adam & Eve), familial (Cain & Abel), environmental (Noah) and social (Babel), are due to a human tendency to ignore the environment and the boundaries of human growth, which could be called the anti-stewardship attitude. Yet, given that all these relational wounds have been healed by Christ, who sealed the covenant between God and humans, between heaven and earth, Christ’s followers are invited to live and promote renewed relationships in the likeness of Christ. But how? We argue that the parable of *The Good Samaritan* can help us to find the way forward. However, the parable, which epitomises the anti-utilitarian attitude towards humans, does not provide any specific indication in terms of environmental relationality. Still, it invites us to widen our notion of ‘behaving in a neighbourly way’. Therefore, if we include the ‘neighbourly’/Paschal compassionate attitude in all kinds of bonds,<sup>32</sup> then the earth could be considered more than the locus where we can flourish. The earth could be seen as a neighbour with whom we would (or not) be able to develop as a community of beings.

## **Acting: Healing our relational existence**

According to CAFOD’s experience and witnessing of climate change effects, particularly on people who are poor worldwide, and in the light of these two crucial texts of the Bible, we can propose the following courses of action.

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<sup>32</sup> Celia Deane-Drummond (2014) explains that a compassionate attitude towards all beings can be traced in ancient cultures. If we delve deep into our genesis, into the earliest time of our existence, we can find how crucial the attitude of cooperation with other creatures was. Peoples were able to survive due to the development of their inner-natural capacity to live in community, to enhance their relational being. The need to heal and look after others has always been needed to counter the spirit of competition and selfishness (original sin).

## Climate change and Christian faith

First; we suggest emphasising the pivotal role Christians have in caring for and healing the environment, and how this can help improve the wellbeing of many people worldwide, especially those living in poverty.

This is also an opportunity to respond to Pope Francis' call to be good stewards by protecting the vulnerable and safeguarding Creation (*General Audience*, 21/5/2014). Following the theology of Creation, the Pope warned us that mistreating the environment, or ignoring the fact that it is being seriously damaged, is a sin, because "we destroy the sign of God's love for us. In destroying Creation we are saying to God: 'I don't like it! This is not good!' 'So what do you like?' 'I like myself!' – Here, this is sin! Do you see?" Conversely, protecting and healing the environment is like saying to God: "Thank you, I am the guardian of creation so as to make it progress, never to destroy your gift."

Environmental responsibility is not an addendum of Christian faith, but it is rather at the centre of our beliefs. St John Paul II said that it is imperative to treat Creation responsibly, not merely because we ought to respond to God's gift of Creation respectfully, but also because by not doing so, we are breaking the seventh commandment. In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (nbr. 2415), John Paul II asserted that, given that our environmental behaviour is connected with future generations, environmental misbehaviour – by action or omission - can be equated to 'stealing' the world from them.

Moreover, for Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, we need to rediscover the 'covenant' existing between humans and the environment: "The way humanity treats the environment influences the way it treats itself, and vice versa... Every violation of solidarity and civic friendship harms the environment, just as environmental deterioration in turn upsets relations in society" (*Caritas in Veritate*, 51).

Acknowledging climate change and its detrimental effects for the earth and for humans, especially for those who are most vulnerable and who are poor,

and acting accordingly, i.e. striving to reduce climate change, and to heal the wounds it has caused, is central to Christian faith. It is a way of being good stewards of God's gift of creation, of responding with grace to it, of respecting the right of future generations to enjoy such a gift, and of rediscovering the 'covenant' or relationship we have with the Earth through God.

However, this 'good-stewardship' response would require individual and social *metanoia* (conversion). We would need to address the way we relate to each other; we need to stop damaging and start healing our intimate, familial, environmental and social relationships. This means that we need to revisit our lifestyle, in which our consumer choices, savings and investments can seek for a common growth with others and in a healthy environment (*Caritas in Veritate*, 51). Indeed, our habits of production, consumption and waste, among others, have great impact in all our relational dimensions.

### **Climate change and love: a 'neighbourly' response**

For such a conversion, the parable of *The Good Samaritan* comes as a fitting source of inspiration, because it delves deep into our relational anthropology and is connected with the first commandment of love. *The Good Samaritan* teaches us that good disciples are people who compassionately love all humans, heal those who are wounded, and help those in need. Christian love, for this parable, is not limited to those closest to us, our family, or even our fellow citizens, but it also includes all neighbours from our common neighbourhood: the Earth (cf. Gn 1-4). Yet, Jesus, who epitomises *The Good Samaritan*, has come not merely to restore our relationships with each other, but also to redeem our covenant with all creatures, as Pope Benedict XVI explained (cf. Gn 6-11). Therefore, the fundamental commandment of loving our neighbours with all our soul-strength-mind (cf Dt 6:4-9 and Lv 19:18), which is the question at the centre of the parable of *The Good Samaritan*, requires an open heart capable of loving beyond ourselves, beyond our generation, and even

beyond humanity. This compassionate and open-hearted love entails conversion and restoration for the betterment of our common world and climate.

Jesus' disciples are called to follow Christ's way of loving. This means to heal and compassionately restore the wounds of the entire Creation. Ultimately, as Pope Francis says, Creation is not merely for contemplation, nor is it limited to 'resources' for us to use as we see fit. It is a gift we have been entrusted to care for with love and compassion, and to do so 'on behalf of' and 'in the likeness of' the Creator. Climate change is not only threatening the natural world, but also the lives and livelihoods of our global neighbours, especially the world's poorest communities, as I learned in Sri Lanka. Our faith, therefore, calls us to urgently respond with much love to all those in need, the Earth included. Behaving in a neighbourly way like the Good Samaritan, in this sense, also entails healing the wounded Earth, which is not only our common neighbourhood but our neighbour too.

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