



## God's Earth – Our Home

### Study 5

*The happy revolution  
– conversion and a lived Christian spirituality*

“Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change. We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone. This basic awareness would enable the development of new convictions, attitudes and forms of life. A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal [together]... The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion... Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or secondary aspect of our Christian experience.”

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* (202,218,219)

### Comment

At the end of the previous chapter 5, Pope Francis envisions a special place for believers in the grand dialogue he proposes. We are to model what we proclaim. Our lives are to show congruency. (200, 201)

In our last study we looked at the church as the embodiment of Jesus upon the earth, as an interdependent community of resistance, a counter cultural community that calls humanity back to the ways of God, a community of grace.

In his final chapter +Frances continues this idea. He is especially concerned with the need for “a profound interior *conversion*” (217) to a different way of seeing and acting – a “new lifestyle” that rejects consumerism and what lies beneath it. (203-208)

This new way of living is about the cultivation of virtue. It arises from being educated as to the situation we are in and what is required (209-215) but more than this, it requires a “profound... *ecological spirituality*” which issues forth in a happy and fulfilling life. In a world of suffering, choking on the outcomes of its own choices, this new way of living will also be a powerful force for social, political and economic change. (206)

In our study from Ephesians this conversion was called, “putting off” the old self and “putting on the new” – that which Paul later calls “the whole armour of God”. (Eph.4:22-24 c.f 6:10-18) Frances sees this conversion happening through a process of *formation*.

How does this happen?

## Task 1

- Carefully read Matthew 5:1-11 – take time to let the text soak in before we...
- watch Fr. Barron’s video on the Beatitudes.
- Break into small groups and carefully read through the following together...

## Comment

Fr. Barron reads the Beatitudes as a description of God’s people whose lives together are characterised by “joy and freedom... achieved through the *disciplining of desire* to make these Beatitudes first possible and then effortless.”

This conversion of our desire, he argues, is achieved through the cultivation of *detachment* from the *addictions* which destroy us – and are destroying God’s world.

There are four “classical substitutes”, or counterfeits, for our “infinite longing for God”, which pull us away from the joy and fulfilment that are ours in Christ and are at the root of our ecological crisis:

- our addiction to wealth – countered by Jesus’ call to poverty
- our addiction to pleasure (good feelings) – countered by Jesus’ call to mourn
- our addiction to power – countered by Jesus’ call to meekness
- our addiction to honour – countered by Jesus’ call to suffering for righteousness sake

The conflict between these four forces and Christ’s call to us to follow his way, is unmasked in the cross.

## Task 2

Think of our previous study from Ephesians and also this final chapter of Pope Francis’ encyclical.

Discuss together:

- How do we help each other *detach* from our addictions and set out on “the long path of renewal” which +Francis lays before us? What ideas from chapter 6 resonate here?
- What might our happy revolution look like? How do you imagine this may play out at home, in our church community, our work place, study, or social connections? How will people (‘looking in’) know we see things differently – what will be the tangible difference?