The Biblical Understanding of *Laudato Si’*

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*Laudato Si’,* Pope Francis’ second encyclical letter, was written on May 24, the Solemnity of Pentecost, and released on June 18, 2015 in the third year of his Pontificate. Subtitled *On Care for Our Common Home,* the document is comprised of six chapters which may be summarized as follows:

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1. What is happening to our common home: Observation of a range of environmental issues;

2. The gospel of creation: Biblical insights concerning ecological issues;

3. The human roots of the ecological crisis: Contemplation of the ideological roots and fundamental causes the environmental crisis;

4. Integral ecology: Suggestions from a theological-ethical perspective for a theoretical starting point to overcome the ecological crisis;

5. Lines of approach and action: Practical suggestions;

6. Ecological education and spirituality: Opening up the spiritual horizon.

Since the themes and paragraphs of the encyclical are based on numerous existing studies and alternatives, *Laudato Si’* should be read with special attention and interest to its context. This paper offers a bibliothetical understanding of the second chapter which deals with ecological issues from a biblical perspective.

Chapter 2 begins with a statement by the Pope addressing his rationale for including the “convictions of believers” in a message addressed to “all people of good will”. He asserts the importance of finding Christian ways: finding Christian ways to resolve ecological problems and to enter into dialogue with science, while at the same time being respectful, considerate and co-operative with atheists and other faith traditions.

The solutions suggested by the Catholic Church, as a revealed religion, naturally start from the Bible which contains the Word of God. Therefore, based on the biblical understanding of God, humans, and the world, the encyclical seeks answers to the following questions: Are ecological problems issues of Christian faith? What is the nature of ecological issues
from the confessional and theological viewpoint? Will Christian traditions and teachings be useful to address ecological issues?

I. The Light Offered by Faith

Paragraphs 63-64 affirm that the resolution of ecological issues will take more than just environmental engineering but need to engage the entire horizon of human wisdom and studies. Paragraph 63 notes that the Church’s teachings, which have grown alongside theological developments, can help in addressing these urgent ecological issues; in particular, its social teaching is directly related to the challenges.

Starting from an understanding of human existence, ecologists explain why humans should make efforts to preserve ecology. Meanwhile, paragraph 64 points out that what motivates Christians, on the contrary, is the realization of their ecological duty given to them in their relationship with God. The Pope sums up in this way: “It is good for humanity and the world at large when we believers better recognize the ecological commitments which stem from our convictions”. This fundamental insight provides the motivation for this paper and its systematic reflections on ecological issues through the medium of the biblical texts.

II. The Wisdom of the Biblical Accounts

In paragraph 65, the encyclical quotes Gn 1:31: “And Elohim saw everything he had made, and behold (it was) very good.” What stands out here is the adverb “very” (מאד). Using “Billigungsformel”, the idiom,
“And Elohim saw it was good” (כִּי־טוֹב) is repeated five times in the previous verses. However, in verse 31, the idiomatic phrase is used for the last time with a slight twist: while specifying what Elohim saw, the phrase omits the conjunction (וְ) and, instead, adds the adverb “very” (מאד). Exegetists consider this formula to mean that God’s act of creation is self-approved.2

The encyclical now moves to consider Gn 1:26 which presents a special understanding of humans that can be summarized as *imago Dei* (from a perspective of relationship between God and humans). The verse also reveals an objective for human creation: To let them “have dominion” (יָדְדוּ) over all things (from the viewpoint of relationship between humanity and the world).3

Through these quotes and references, *Laudato Si’* suggests a Christian understanding of human beings in the manner of a theology of creation. The anthropology of Gn 1:1-2:4 suggests the first human beings enjoyed an existence which mirrors God’s existence, and the encyclical understands this insight to mean that all humans are created as personal subjects with dignity. The paragraph concludes by re-enforcing the uniqueness of human beings by quoting Jer 1:5.

Paragraph 66 highlights the point that the creation accounts in Genesis do not report facts but describe truth. From an Eco-theological point of view, an important message told by these stories regards the basic relationship which humans should have with others. According to the Bible,

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3 There is an ecotheological stance that argues anthropocentrism generated by the concepts of “rule” (יָדְדוּ) and “subdue” (וּבָדֶה) is an ideological reason that triggered today’s environmental crisis.
right relationships are harmonious ones which result in peace. Furthermore, the biblical concept of sin is any thought, word or act which breaks the peace. Ultimately, sin results in rupture. Using Gn 1:28 and 2:15, the document explains the original harmony which humans should maintain with the earth was set by God. However, not only the relationship between God and humans, but also between the earth and humans is ruptured through human sins trespassing against the design of God. The passage where the earth is cursed because of the human sin of disobeying God is an etiology of that rupture (Gn 3:17-19). Likewise, the encyclical sees that the ecological crisis of today is fundamentally identical to the rupture story narrated in Genesis.

Paragraph 67 is based on a theological premise held by some ecologists who criticize the Bible’s anthropocentricism as the cause of today’s ecological crisis. For example, Ian L. McHarg condemns the anthropocentric (or development-centered) understanding of the world which, based on the first chapter of Genesis, has led humankind to destroy the ecosphere along with an understanding of a relationship with “nature” as an object to be conquered. Such views are shared by Lynn White and Frederick Elder. The encyclical says the criticism is not unfounded because the Christian tradition has sometimes “incorrectly interpreted” the biblical texts; in other words, interpreted the text anthropocentrically. However, the document explains that this misinterpretation does not justify the conclusion that the Bible is human-centered (The Bible is fundamentally centered around God, therefore divinity-centered). The encyclical points out that, to God, humans (albeit special) are also created, and

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5 L. White criticizes Gn 1, and F. Elder Gn 2, as a starting point for an anthropocentric (and eco-destructive) view of the world. F. Elder, *Crisis in Eden*, 87. See R. Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology*, 1-36.
they are not granted an absolute authority to rule other creatures. In this context, the encyclical reminds us that the concept of “having dominion” (Gn 1:28) needs to be complemented with “tilling and keeping the earth” (Gn 2:15). Moreover, the documents refers to Ps 24:1 and cites Dt 10:14 as well as Lv 25:23 to confirm that there is none other than God who has an absolute right over the ecosphere.

Since Pierre Auffret’s study, Ps 24 is deemed as a chapter that wraps up the block, Ps 15-24. His study was further developed by E. Zenger and P. D. Miller, and by the time of W. Brown, exegetes were observing that Ps 15 and 24 are the outer boundaries of a ten psalm block and Ps 19, the “Cosmic Torah”, is at the center. Within this context, Ps 24, it would seem, is a liturgical psalm detailing entrance into God’s celestial and cosmic existence; its first verse begins by confessing that the God of Israel is the Lord of the universe. This cosmic dimension of God and his Torah (which transcends the national and the historical) is further testified to in Dt 10:14, a component of Torah, and is concretely confirmed through the code about the land (=earth) found in Lv 25:23.

Paragraph 68 follows up on this point by affirming that “a tyrannical anthropocentrism” is not a correct understanding of the Scriptures. The Bible teaches that humans should respect “the laws of nature and the delicate equilibria”, and offers Ps 148:5-6 as a reason.

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8 Dianne Bergant took the same ecotheological view to interpret Ps 24:1 by linking it with the Torah. D. Bergant, The Earth Is the Lord’s. The Bible, Ecology, and Worship, 20-30.
Ps 146-150 close the Psalter by praising God the Creator as the cosmic and apocalyptic king of the world. These five psalms begin and end with “Hallelujah”. Among them, Ps 148 is often named as a psalm of “cosmic praise” given its praise for the mighty power of God the Creator. The acclamation, “halleluhu” (ḥa[l]lēluhu), repeatedly appears in Ps 148 as an expression of voices raised in praise, However, Ps 148:5-6, as quoted in paragraph 68 (if read in the original Hebrew context) can be seen also as a reason for praise, and at the same time as the praise itself.

Ps 148:5 begins with a jussive to praise the name of YHWH for the limited number of beings who are called. These beings first mentioned in verses 1-4 (those that are called to praise the name of YHWH) are the heavenly ones, and they should praise the name of YHWH. The meaning of this praise roughly translates as follows: (1) As He ordered, they were created; (2) He let them stand forever and ever (as setting the law that cannot be transgressed). Here all celestial beings are created by God and maintain their existence according to God’s laws. These senses of meaning can simply be understood as a praise of the regular movements of the sun, moon and stars and change of seasons (considering them as the result of God’s will).

It is also evident in the concrete laws of Israel that humans should respect the laws of nature which are praised in the Psalms (and given by God!). Likewise, the encyclical employs these as proof to support its contention that “the Bible has no place for a tyrannical anthropocentrism unconcerned for other creatures” (LS, 68; Dt 22:4. 6 and Ex 23:12).

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10 This is a characteristic of Psa 148 and 150. See Ps 22:23.
12 Gn 8:22; Jer 31:35-36; 33:25; Jn 28:26-27; 38:33 also understand the order of nature as the result of God’s decision to create.
Referring to Ps 104:31, paragraph 69 teaches that all creatures not only have their own value but also glorify God through their existence. Ps 104 contains a praise of YHWH’s ownership as the Creator. As the Creator of the world, YHWH exercises his ownership over all beings of the world. Personified as a benevolent Lord, God takes care of his creatures. After singing of the harmonious communion between the Creator and the created, the Psalm sings of joy of the Lord and that which is “mine” in the last verses 31-35. Verse 31, in particular, praises God’s glory and sings his joy. Here God’s joy is about his “works” (הָעָלְיוֹן). The broad meaning of His “work” is everything God did in the process of creation, whereas the narrow meaning refers to the creatures He has made.

Furthermore, the encyclical refers to Prv 3:19 in order to explain that humans are granted a special dignity and intelligence by which they recognize the unique value of all creatures and respect the internal order of creation. Thus, Francis notes that the Church opposes distorted anthropocentrism, as well as drawing attention to the teaching of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (339) that humans should avoid reckless exploitation of things and respect the unique goodness of all creation.

Paragraph 70 offers, from an ecological perspective, a typological interpretation of the story of Cain and Abel in Gn 4. The story shows how human injustice (towards their neighbors) jeopardizes the relationship between human beings and God, and between humans and the earth. In paragraph 66, the encyclical has already explained how the relationship between God and humanity, which was wounded by Adam’s crime, affect the relationship between humans and the earth. Now in paragraph 70, the document explains how the domino effect of the loss of these relation-

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13 See Prv 8:30.
14 This expression is rarely used in the Old Testament. F.-L. Hossfeld / E. Zenger, Die Psalmen III. Psalm 101-150. 595.
ships was caused by human violence against humans and the shed blood crying from the ground (Gn 4:9-11).  

Both paragraph 71, and the latter part of paragraph 70, quote the story of Noah. In its beginning, the story told in Gn 6-10 portrays a world where the order of creation has collapsed. Gn 6:11 summarizes the situation with two concepts: “corruption” (אָרָע) and “violence” (ﬠַלַּיִם). God regretted (זָכַר) that he had made humans and decides to wipe out all flesh. But righteous Noah and his family survived by building an ark, and God established a covenant with them. However, the covenant, as reported in Gn 9:9-11, involves not only Noah and his descendants but all living creatures. The key point here is that this new covenant is not just with humans, but with all living things. Thus, the encyclical understands the new beginning (through this covenant) as “recovering and respecting” the order of nature.

God’s respect for the order of nature can be seen in the Torah as well. Referring to the Sabbath rules (Ex 16:23 and 20:10), the encyclical contemplates the nature of the relationship between human beings and the earth through the prism of the rules for the Sabbath and Jubilee year (Lv 25). The document also cites Lv 19:9-19 and reflects on the social and ethical call embodied in the rules for the land from the perspective of creation theology. Through this, the encyclical confirms that God’s request to humans is inherent in the Torah. Humans should live by maintaining proper relationships. The right relationship which humans must establish with both nature and their neighbors starts with an attitude of respect for the order of nature and the recognition that everything the land gives belong to everyone.

Gn 3-4 presents two types of human sins. Adam essentially sinned against God, and Cain against (neighboring) humans.
While paragraphs 70-71 unfold with primary attention given to the text of the Pentateuch, paragraph 72 focuses on the theology of creation which is manifest in the Psalms. The encyclical first quotes Ps 136. This Psalm traces the history of the Pentateuch all the way back to the moment of creation and repeatedly sings “for his mercy endures forever”. In Ps 136:4-9, the psalmist gazes in awe at YHWH’s creation of the world. Verses 5-6 depict the creation of the heaven and the earth (somewhat differently from Gn 1). Here YHWH, like an architect, builds the world according to a set plan.

Paragraph 72 also quotes Ps 148. In the beginning of this Psalm, which praises the infinite power of the Creator, the psalmist invites all heavenly beings to “praise him”. In verses 3-4 are the sun, moon and stars as well as “heavens of heavens” and “waters above the heavens” are invited to do likewise. The inherent worldview in this psalm is shaped by the idea of the dome of creation (cf. Gn 1:7). Once this logic is grasped, the psalmist can be seen to be using a merism in order to summon the totality of the universe, seen and unseen, to the act of praise.

In short, by quoting these two psalms, the encyclical remembers that the mercy of God who created the world lasts forever, and that humans and creatures are called to praise the Lord in unison.

In paragraph 73, the focus shifts from the Psalms to the Prophetic Books. Through these books, the encyclical confirms that the Creator’s “strength” and the Savior’s “affection” are united. In both Jer 32:17.

\[16\] Ps 136 mentions only the time (from the creation) until the conquest of the lands east of the Jordan River.


\[18\] The encyclical has already cited Ps 148:5-6 in paragraph 68.

\[19\] See F.-L. Hossfeld / E. Zenger, Die Psalmen III. Psalm 101-150, 897.
and Is 40:28-29, which are cited in this paragraph, the prophets are seen to confess their trust in the mighty power of the world’s Creator and the love of Israel’s Redeemer. Through this, the encyclical teaches that the faith exhibited by the prophets in God’s “two divine ways of acting” is the Christian starting point to address today’s ecological challenges.

Paragraph 74 turns to the hope in God which was nursed by Israel during the historical crisis of the Babylonian exile, and by the church community in the New Testament when faced with another crisis, the persecution by the Roman Empire. Thus, Rv 15:3 speaks of “the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb”. This song confesses trust in God’s might and righteousness, offering consolation and hope to those who stand by their faith and fight against injustice. Through these texts, the encyclical not only declares God’s infinite power and justice, which surpasses the evil and injustice that lies behind the environmental crisis, but also exhorts people to trust and hope in God as they try to overcome the crisis.

Paragraph 75 completes the encyclical’s overview of “The wisdom of the biblical accounts” by drawing attention to “spirituality”. As it has been revealed through the quotes above, the spirituality manifest in the biblical texts starts with the confession of God as Creator, owner and source of all power. The encyclical points out that an understanding of the world in a way which places humans or any other being in God’s place can never be the correct place to launch an ecological spirituality. Christian ecological spirituality commences from an awakening to the fact that the world belongs, not to humans, but to God.
III. The Mystery of the Universe

In paragraph 76, the encyclical teaches that the word “creation” has a bigger meaning than “nature”. While “nature” is something that humans conquer, possess and control, “creation” is God’s gift to build a relationship with, and be drawn with into universal communion. Paragraph 77 argues that the world was not formed by chance. Moreover, the world was created because God willed so, “creation is of the order of love”, and God’s love is the fundamental reason for creation. This is confirmed by Wis 11:24. All created things are subject to God’s tenderness.

Paragraph 78 talks about the meaning of the “demythologization of nature” which developed alongside Judeo-Christian monotheism. In particular, the demythologizing process portrayed in Genesis shifts the perception of nature from a divine entity to a created reality. While some ecologists blame this process for humanity’s inability to grasp the mystery of nature, the encyclical, on the contrary, affirms that humans, through this dymythologizing process, have a greater moral responsibility for the ecosystem. Furthermore, the document argues that a proper understanding of human responsibility breaks forever, the modern mythology of “unlimited material progress”.

Paragraph 79 reminds that humans are given both the the ability to discern and the freedom to choose. Paragraph 80 testifies to God’s existence in the inner place of all beings, and teaches that creation continues even when humans do evil through misusing their abilities and freedoms. Paragraph 81, which refers to personal identity (as a subject) and

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20 Of course, “earth” and “water” are created as special beings in the process of the creation in Gn 1. See Gn 1:11. 12. 23. 24.

21 In 1710, the German philosopher, Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716), introduced the concept of “theodicy” in his work Essais de Théodicée sur la bonté de Dieu, la liberté de l’homme et
range of capabilities, interprets these as God’s special call. However, despite this uniqueness, humans do not exist to rule in power but to serve in weakness (Mt 20:25-26). In paragraph 83, the encyclical teaches that the ultimate destination of God’s creation and Christ’s redemption is the fullness of God. This teaching, in turn, sheds light on the fact that other creatures, too, exist not to benefit humans but, along with humanity, to discover the fullness of God. The human vocation is to guide the world to its Creator.

IV. The Message of Each Creature in the Harmony of Creation

In paragraphs 84-88, the encyclical explains about the unique meaning of each creature. The entire material world not only reflects God’s love but is a “precious book” that reveals God. As such, paragraph 85 explains the entire created world as revelation of God by quoting Saint John Paul II’s Catechesis, concerning the precious book of nature. In the following paragraph, the encyclical contemplates the theological meaning of each creature with a quote from the Summa Theologiae concerning the nature of its multiplicity and variety. Paragraph 340 of the Catechism

\[ \text{\textit{l’origine du mal} in an attempt to harmonize his philosophical system with Catholic dogma. While paragraph 80 appears to be theodical in its interpretation of the issue of evil and suffering, it also emphasizes the “autonomy” of creatures.}\]

\[ \text{22 The “precious book” mentioned here is a book dubbed creation, and the letters that form the book are various creatures created by God. C. Cummings has explained in detail the concept of the “book”. He offered Wis 13:5 and Rom 1:20 to back his argument that the concept is already illustrated in the Bible. C. Cummings, Eco-Spirituality: Toward a Reverent Life, 67-93.}\]

of the Catholic Church is also quoted to highlight the will of God which is found in the diversity of creatures and their interdependence, completing and serving each other. Moreover, paragraph 87 presents Saint Francis’ Canticle of Creatures as an exemplary prayer of praise and worship which can be offered by humans who have realized creation’s reason for existence. Finally, paragraph 88 cites A Igreja e a Questão Ecológica by the National Conference of the Bishops of Brazil and teaches that creatures not only reflect God but are the venue of God’s presence. Finally, the encyclical points the need to grow “ecological virtues” without confusing the Creator with creation through avoiding pantheism and some forms of panentheism.24

V. A Universal Communion

The concept of “universal communion” appears in paragraph 76 and again in paragraph 220. Introducing this theme, the encyclical first quotes Wis 11:26 in paragraph 89: “For they are yours, O Lord, who love the living.” In Wisdom, a theological logic is observed which tries to connect folk wisdoms with the awe of God which is at the heart of the YHWH religion. Numerous secular-Hellenistic wisdom sayings in the Book of Wisdom are theologically re-interpreted, whereas the Old Testament texts are revisited in the sense of wisdom literature. In this context, the author of Wisdom offers his view of how folk wisdoms should take root in the

YHWH religion. While explaining the value of wisdom through Wis 6-9, the sage teaches that wisdom is ultimately God’s gift and thus we should ask for wisdom in our prayers.\(^{25}\) From Wis 10, the author traces, with personified wisdom, the history of the Old Testament from the act of creation.\(^{26}\) After offering his interpretation of God’s punishment for Egypt’s idol worship (Wis 11:15-20), the author praises God’s power and mercy (verse 21). Wis 11:26 is the last part of that praise.\(^{27}\)

In Wis 11:21-26, the author confesses that God, who does not detest any of his creation, did not wipe out Egypt despite its grave sin of idolatry. This shows that the author’s interest (when viewed from the context of the entire Book of Wisdom) lies in providing a theological clarification of the tension between God’s mercy and justice by contrasting the foolishness of idolatry with God’s wisdom. On the other hand, *Laudato Si’* pays attention to God’s universal ownership and love of creation. In the Wisdom author’s theology presented in verse 26 (along with verses 24 and 25), the relationship between creatures and God is summarized as existence and love.\(^{28}\) The encyclical takes this creation-theology to understand that God’s universal ownership is precisely that everything belongs to God. And thus, the theology of *creatio continua*, which holds that the existence of any creature mediates God’s love for all creation, and is thus a call to respect and be in solidarity with the ecosphere.\(^{29}\)

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\(^{25}\) Wis 9 is re-interpretation of Solomon’s prayer from 1Kgs 3.

\(^{26}\) The personified wisdom (replacing Moses!) is introduced as the one that released Israel from Egypt. See Wis 10:15-21.

\(^{27}\) Of course, the entirety of Chapters 11-19 of Wisdom is comprised of recollection and praise of the Exodus.

\(^{28}\) In verse 26, the vocative case of δεσπότης is used to emphasize his ownership. In Wisdom, the word is used to mean the Creator with ownership over his creatures. See Wis 6:7; 8:3; 13:3. 9. In Wis 18:11, the word is used in its general sense.

\(^{29}\) See H. Engel, *Das Buch der Weisheit*, 199.
Paragraph 90 discusses how the universality suggested by the previous paragraph does not take away humanity’s uniqueness or deify the world. Through this, the encyclical stays away from forms of ecocentrism based on a radical interpretation of Leopoldian Ethics, and links the issue of ecological justice to that of social justice (paragraph 91). Paragraph 92 calls us to safeguard human dignity through “universal communion” and confirms once again the teaching from paragraph 89, saying that everything created by God is connected.

VI. The Common Destination of Goods

In paragraph 93, a general statement of a “shared inheritance” is juxtaposed with a theological one that God created the world for everyone. By doing so, the encyclical confirms the Christian ethical principle that “private property” is subordinate to “the universal destination of goods”. In other words, development which only benefits a few does not meet this ethical principle. The next paragraph explains every human’s equal dignity in terms of creation theology by quoting Prv 22:2, Wis 6:7 and Mt 5:45. Based on that (and following the ethical standard in paragraph 93), the encyclical cites the Paraguayan bishops’ pastoral letter which teaches about farmers’ “natural right” to the land. Paragraph 95 offers a comprehensive principle in which (not only the land that should be given to farmers) all natural environment should be seen as a “collective good”, and thus, even privatized land should be managed for the benefit of all. Finally, the paragraph connects the crime of unjust distribution with the

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30 See P. Smith, *What Are They Saying About Environmental Ethics?*, 47-56.
VII. The Gaze of Jesus

Turning to the theme of “The Gaze of Jesus”, paragraph 96 explains the relationship between God and creation from the perspective of the Gospels. The encyclical first refers to Mt 11:25. The three sentences in Mt 11:25-27 are bound by a theme of “Father”. Before that, in Mt 11:20-24, Jesus rebukes the towns where he had worked many miracles. And the following verses 28-30 report Jesus’ promise of rest for all “who labor and are burdened”. Accordingly, the context of Mt 11:25-27 can be understood as a reprimand for those who did not recognize Jesus and a consolation for those who recognize and follow him. Thus, Mt 11:25-27 can be read as a selection-theological interpretation of the confession that everything is the Father’s will.

In Mt 11:25, Jesus’ words begin with a form of Eucharistic prayer that reads like this: “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth” (ἐξομολογούμαι σοι, πάτερ, κύριε τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς). In this form, Jesus first identifies the one to whom this prayer is addressed: namely, his “Father”. Following that, Jesus specifies whom he calls his “Father”. Jesus’ “Father” is the “Lord of heaven and earth”. The parallel placement of the two vocative cases reveals the special relationship between Jesus and the “Lord of heaven and earth”. And the relationship is theologically reflected within the flow of Mt 11:25-27. Only those to

31 Ex 20:13; Dt 5:17.
33 Sir 51:1.
whom the Father wills can “know the Son”, and those to whom the Son wishes can “know the Father”.

Paragraph 96 emphasizes how Matthew the Evangelist tries to identify Jesus via his relationship with God through the dialogue in Mt 11:25-27, whereas Laudato Si’ refers to the passage in order to understand who God is. God is Jesus’ Father, the Father of all who follow Jesus and the Father of all creation. Surprisingly, the paragraph teaches that, through Jesus, we came “to recognize the paternal relationship God has with all his creatures” which goes beyond the Church’s teaching that has stressed Jesus as “the Only Son of God”. The encyclical finds biblical grounds for that in Lk 12:6 and Mt 6:26.

Lk 12:1-12 is a bundle of Jesus’ various dialogues with his disciples. Here Jesus speaks to the necessary attitudes needed by the disciples in daily life. They shall “beware” (προσέχετε) of the Pharisees’ hypocrisy and shall not “fear” (φοβηθήσεσθε) secular powers “who kill the body but after that can do no more”. Verses 6-7 are Jesus’ reasoning why there is no need for his disciples to be afraid. In short, God, who does not forget any one of the five sparrows that are sold for two copper coins, will definitely not forget “you”, and “you” need not fear earthly powers.

On the secular front, one bird is not worth very much. An “ἀσσιάριον” refers to a Roman copper coin, and one denarius, the equivalent to a day’s wage, is worth 16 copper coins. As such, the value of a sparrow set against human life may be a trifle, but is precious in the eyes of God.

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34 See Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraphs 238-242; 441-445. The Creator has already been called as the Father inDt 32:6 and Mal 2:10.
35 A similar story is told in Mt 10:29-31 where the Evangelist mentions two sparrows sold for a coin. While Luke speaks of God who does not forget a single sparrow, Matthew talks about how not even one sparrow falls to the ground “without your Father’s knowledge”. Luke and Matthew took the words from Q. See S. Schulz, Q: Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten, 158-159.
36 F. Bovon, Das Evangelium nach Lukas, 256.
Hence God, *a minori ad maius*, will never forget humans who are more valuable (in earthly terms) and more precious (in theological terms).

What should be noted here is that at the center of the comparison lies a universal relationship between God and His creation. To make the comparison work, the premises at the *a minori* level — the description of secular and theological values of sparrows — must be true. Since the rhetorical interrogative sentence which mentions the price for five sparrows (two coins) is a general description of the earthly value of sparrows, there is no room for doubt. Jesus’ audience and Luke’s readers already know about the price of sparrows. Then, what of the thesis in the theological statement that God does not forget a single sparrow true? Whether the statement is logically true or not is determined by the understanding of God shared by Jesus, Luke and their audiences. Thus, the credibility of the comparison is based on the premise that God does not forget a single insignificant sparrow (according to their shared understanding of God). To anyone who does not agree to such a view, Jesus’ comparison reported by Luke must be very unconvincing.

The fact that God does not forget a sparrow offers a glimpse into God’s affectionate side while manifesting his greatness as the Creator. God is an omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent Creator. Luke’s final intention in reporting this passage (Lk 12:8-12) is to say that the disciples of Jesus should testify about the Son of the Man without fearing earthly powers through placing their trust in God.

*Laudato Si’* focuses on the shared perspective of God (rather than Luke’s original theological intention). Based on Jesus’ talk about the universal relationship God has with all creatures, the encyclical interprets that this God is the one who is revealed as the Father of all creatures through the Jesus event. Of course, some contemporary ecologists may
object to the premise that humans are more precious than sparrows. However, it is meaningful that the perspective of God who cares for all creatures, not only human, was generally accepted during the time of Jesus and the Evangelist, and that is the point *Laudato Si’* pays attention to.

Mt 6:26 is found within the framing discourse of the Sermon on the Mountain. One of the literary characteristics of the Gospel of Matthew is that Jesus’ teachings are put together and placed in five or six groups.\(^{37}\) The first of them is often titled the Sermon on the Mountain, where the evangelist addresses concerns for Christian ethics. Among them, Mt 6:19-7:11 teaches about what Christians should choose by contrasting earthly and heavenly desires.

Mt 6:25-34 is centered around a command of “do not worry” (μὴ μεριμνάτε) (regarding earthly matters). Among the basic necessities of humans’ earthly life (food, clothing and shelter), verses 26-27 talk about food, and verses 28-30 about clothing. The Gospel converts the teaching that worrying too much about such things is foolish — a phrase which seems to bear the hue of folk wisdom — into a theological one. Human worries about eating and clothing are, in a way, indeed foolish. For worrying about earthly things does not help extend our lifespans (verse 27) or clothe us better (verse 30). On the other hand, such human worries also mean a lack of trust in the “heavenly Father” (verse 30). In conclusion, the gist of this folk wisdom-like teaching is not to worry as “tomorrow will take care of itself” (verse 34). Matthew transforms this wisdom into a theological teaching to let go of our earthly worries and seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness as everything is up to the “heavenly Father” (verse 33).\(^{38}\)

\(^{37}\) Mt 5-7. 10. 13. 18. 23. 24-25. Among them, Chapter 23 and Chapters 24-25 can be considered as a single group.

\(^{38}\) Such a theological shift cannot be seen as Matthew’s own. Lk 12:22-32 is found with the
Quoting Mt 6:26, *Laudato Si’* notes that the fundamental trust in the “heavenly Father” lies in the relationship between God and his creatures. On the horizon of folk wisdom, the call to look at the “birds in the sky” and “wild flowers” must be to broaden the view into a universal perspective of the ways of the world. In Matthew, the call is rendered from a perspective of creation theology.\(^{39}\) At this point, focusing on the understanding of creation presupposed by the Gospel, the encyclical interprets that the relationship God has with his creatures is implied in the expression “heavenly Father”.\(^{40}\)

Paragraph 97 focuses on Jesus’ teaching that encourages us to pay attention to beauty in the world. The encyclical refers to Jn 4:35 and Mt 13:31-32, and the former is a part of a conversation between Jesus and his disciples. Jn 4:1-42 reports a dialogue between Jesus and a Samaritan woman. An overview of the story is that Jesus was revealed as the Christ is revealed as the Christ in this dialogue and thus, through the Samaritan woman’s witness her whole town came to know “the Savior of the world” (ο Ἰσχυρός του κόσμου). While the woman “left her water jar and went into the town and said to the people”, Jesus talks with his disciples. As such, Jn 4:31-38 is inserted, interrupting the main flow of the story, and Jn 4:35 is Jesus’ words in the dialogue. Whereas the conversation with the Samaritan woman starts from “a drink”, the conversation with the disciples begins with “food to eat”. While the talk with the woman answers the question of “Who is Jesus?”; the talk with the disciples addresses the question of “What do Jesus and his disciples do?”. However, it is difficult to under-

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\(^{40}\) The exact expression used in verse 26 is “your heavenly Father” (ο πατήρ υψών οικοράνως), and “you” here means disciples.
stand what Jesus says here. First, Jesus uses an agricultural proverb that says “In four months the harvest will be here”. It indicates a farming experience that it takes four months to harvest after sowing. After quoting the saying, Jesus tells the disciples to look up and see the field. The disciples should recognize that the crops are ripe (although four months have not passed). That the field and crops used here are metaphors related to the proclamation of the good news is disclosed afterwards. Jesus’ proclamation of the good news follows the time of God. While earthly farming requires the quantitative time of four months between seeding and harvesting, the time of sowing and that of reaping are concurrent according to the qualitative time in the proclamation.

Through this context, the author states that what matters to Jesus is not a “drink” or “food to eat” but to do the Father’s will and finish the Father’s work; and that the “Savior of the World” who is sent to sow eternal life is an evangelical interpretation of the title of the Christ as well as Jesus’ identity. Meanwhile, the encyclical understands Jn 4:35 as Jesus’ command to discern God’s message harbored by nature, and views it as an evangelical testimony to the existence of the Creator reflected in his creatures.

In Mt 13, Jesus teaches the crowd using parables. After the introduction (verses 1-2), the chapter consists of the Parable of the Sower (for the crowd, 3-9), conversation with disciples about why he uses parables (10-17), and an explanation of the Parable of the Sower (for disciples, 18-23). Following that, verses 24-30 report the Parable of the Weeds, 31-32 the Parable of the Mustard Seed, 33 the Parable of the Yeast, 34-35 an editorial explanation of Jesus’ parables and 36-43 the explanation of the Parable

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43 See S. Schulz, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, 77-78.
of the Weeds (for disciples). The section containing parables and teachings ends with the Parable of the Treasure and the Pearl (verses 44-46), the Parable of the Net (47-50) and Jesus’ question and disciples’ answer (51-53).

Both the Parable of the Mustard Seed in Mt 13:31-32, and the Parable of the Weeds right before (13:24-30) and the Parable of the Yeast right after (13:33), have a common denominator. All three begin with a sentence which says, “The kingdom of heaven is like […]”\(^44\) According to Jochim Jeremias, they should not be simply interpreted as eschatological parables according to the kingdom of heaven.\(^45\)

The Parable of the Mustard Seed is connected with its surrounding texts by the verb “sow” (σπείρω).\(^46\) Although it is not scientifically true that the mustard seed is smaller than any other kind, that does not matter in the world of the evangelist and his readers.\(^47\) Here, the Gospel highlights the contrast of being small and big through the fact that a big(!) tree grows from a small(!) mustard seed.\(^48\) However, Laudato Si’ pays attention to the method of the comparison rather than its message. Looking around the ecosystem, Jesus unfolds a parable of the kingdom of heaven via the Creator’s providence reflected in the order of nature. The encyclical notes the intersection of creation-theology and eco-theology found in

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\(^44\) The expression of “οὐσία εἶστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν” is found in Mt 13:31. 33. 44. 45. 47, and “οὐκοιμώθη ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν” in Mt 13:24; 18:23; 22:2. Sometimes Matthew sees “ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν” used here with the kingdom of the “Son of Man” (=Messiah) (built in the world). See Mt 13:41; 16:28; 20:21.

\(^45\) See M. Limbeck, Matthäus-Evangelium, 182.

\(^46\) This verb used a lot in Mt 13. Mt 13:3. 4. 18. 19. 20. 22. 23. 24. 27. 31. 37. 39.

\(^47\) In Mt 17:20, the mustard seed is also used as a metaphor for smallness.

\(^48\) The mustard seed mentioned here grows 2-3m in nature of the Far East. Thus the expression that birds dwell there should be understood as birds nesting in the forest of the mustard plants. Theological metaphors of trees and birds are also found in Ez 17:3; 31:6; Ps 104:12; Dn 4:11, etc.
the logical development of the parable which says that we can understand the Creator’s will, as we do with an artist’s will, through their work.

Paragraph 98 is wary of an attitude of dualism: that is, considering material things as sin and pursuing only spiritual things. Such dualism misunderstands the value of the ecosphere. In line with that, the encyclical characterizes Jesus’ life as one of “full harmony with creation”, quoting Mt 8:27 and referencing 11:19. Viewed within the entire structure of the Gospel of Matthew, Chapters 5-7 report Jesus’ words and Chapters 8-9 his acts. After reporting Jesus’ teachings to the disciples and the crowds in Chapter 5-7, the evangelist describes how Jesus realizes his words in Chapters 8-9. For that, Jesus’ healing stories are compiled in Mt 8:1-17. Jesus cleansed “a leper”, healed a centurion’s servant, cured Peter’s mother-in-law, drove out demons and healed the sick. Under the theme of “following Jesus”, Mt 8:18-22 reports Jesus’ talking with a scribe and one of his disciples. The evangelist points out how people were willing to follow him after hearing Jesus’ teachings and experiencing his healing, but yet do not know the essence of “following Jesus”. The subsequent verses (23-27) indicate that even his “disciples” who should have recognized Jesus did not know him (verse 27). In verses 28-34, Jesus drove out demons in the territory of the Gadarenes.

As such, what the evangelist intended to show through Mt 8:27 is that people (even disciples) did not recognize who Jesus is despite his teachings and actions. Here, Jesus rebuked the winds and the sea, instead of praying to God to ask Him to calm the storm. This demonstrates that Jesus’

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49 The framework of the words and actions recorded in the Gospel of Matthew is clearly shown in 9:35 that wraps up Chapters 5-9. “Jesus went around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness.” Jesus’ words are his teachings and proclamation, and his actions are cures. See Mt 4:23.
authority and power are those of the Creator who embraces the entire world (neither limited to the Judean region nor the human realm). In turn Jesus Christ is revealed as much greater than the Messiah, long awaited in the Jewish tradition, but as a being with divine authority and power. Meanwhile, Laudato Si’ notices in this verse a full harmony between Jesus and creation. By “full harmony”, Jesus’ means a respectful attitude towards creatures as a party in a relationship (not just a mere object). Jesus’ perspective stands in contrast to the “philosophies which despised the body, matter and the things of the world”.

Mt 11:2-19 explains the identities of Jesus and John the Baptist. The passage can be divided into three parts: (1) John’s question about Jesus and Jesus’ answer (Mt 11:2-6); (2) Jesus’ interpretation of John (11:7-15) and (3) Jesus’ interpretation of “this generation” (that is hostile to John and Jesus, 11:16-19). In verses 16-17, children are playing games about weddings and funerals. However, “this generation” does not participate in either the wedding play (of Jesus’) nor the funeral (of John’s). The metaphors explain why both John and Jesus were rejected by “this generation” despite many differences between the two. In the first place, they were not going to “play the games together”. In other words, they were not going to accept the changes called for by both the John and Jesus movements.

Through these quotes, Laudato Si’ notes the Gospel’s description of Jesus, which is “far removed from philosophies which despised the body, matter and the things of the world”. The encyclical is convinced that such gnosticism has negative and unhealthy impacts on the Church’s theology

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50 See Ps 107:29.
51 In 11:18-19, Jesus and John the Baptist are described in contrast.
52 The last part of verse 19 indicates the wisdom literature-style context that was initially intact in this parable. See M. Limbeck, Matthäus-Evangelium, 158-159.
and even “disfigured the Gospel”. The world created by God is not an object to be despised.

Paragraph 98 also quotes Mk 6:3. In Mk 6:1-6 (// Mt 13:54-58; Lk 4:16-30), Jesus goes to his hometown and teaches in the synagogue on the Sabbath. But his home folks “took offense at him”. Jesus would not perform any miracles (verse 5) and was astonished by their lack of faith (verse 6). Here, people asked him many questions, in which they connected the wisdom of his teachings and the power of his wonders with his earthly identity. Mk 6:3 is one of the questions, which shows that they regard Jesus as “τεκτων”. They also call Jesus “the son of Mary”.

In the entire context of the Gospel of Mark, Mk 6:1-6 reports how Jesus was not understood in his home town. And that is in line with the flow of the first half of the Gospel. Despite Jesus’ teachings and miracles, his contemporaries did not understand him. Mk 3:20-35 indicates that even his mother, brothers and relatives did not understand him either. The author is describing the mysteriousness of Jesus’ identity. Meanwhile, Laudato Si’ meets Jesus who “labors” in this text. The document emphasizes the sanctity of labor by noticing the fact that God who became a human chose the life of a laborer (not a man of power or capital). The encyclical underlines that labor is also important in the sense that it is where humans and other creatures directly meet. The Church’s teachings point out that hav-

53 A “τεκτων” refers to a worker in wood or stone. The use of an article here implies that Jesus was someone who could be specified by the career in his hometown. Some manuscripts call Jesus the son of “τεκτων”. In that case, his father, not Jesus himself, is a “τεκτων”. See J. Gnilka, Das Evangelium nach Markus (Mk 1-8. 26), 230.
54 In Jewish tradition, it is general to use his father’s name to call a son. However, there is no discussion of Joseph in the Gospel of Mark. See H. K. McAthur, “Son of Mary”, 57; J. D. Crossan, “Mark and the Relatives of Jesus”, 102.
55 Mk 6:3 has been interpreted already as a text that substantiates the dignity of work in paragraph 18 of Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical Rerum Novarum (on Capital and Labor).
ing a proper relationship with creation through labor is necessary for the sanctification of human beings.

Paragraph 99 explains a relationship between (visible) creatures of the world and the (invisible) mystery of Christ in the “Christian understanding of the world”. To do so, the encyclical quotes Col 1:16. The verse belongs to Col 1:15-20 and is dubbed the “Hymn of Christ”. The hymn breaks into two parts: verses 15-18a and 18b-20. The first half praises Christ from the perspective of creation theology, and the latter half from that of soteriology. The hymn confesses that the entire cosmos is directed towards Christ from creation to the eschaton. Of that, 1:16 gives the reasons for the praise in the previous verse. In summary, the statement in verse 16 says that “all things” (τὰ πάντα) were created “in him” (ἐν αὐτῷ), “through him” (δι’ αὐτοῦ), and “for him” (εἰς αὐτὸν). This means that Christ is more than a creation since creatures attain existence through him and are completed in him.

The author of Colossians is stressing through the hymn in Col 1 that the Christians of the Colossian community should not give up the hope of Gospel. In contrast, however, the encyclical pays attention to the relationship between Christ and all creatures through the confession in 1:16. No created is outside the auspices of Christ, and the Gospel of Christ is proclaimed to all creatures under heaven (Col 1:23).

After that, the encyclical cites another hymn. Quoting a part of Jn 1:14, part of the Logos Hymn (Jn 1:1-18), the encyclical understands the confession about the mystery of the incarnation expressed as “became flesh” (σὰρξ ἐγένετο) as a confession that “the destiny of all creation” and that of Christ are connected. The document teaches that “the mystery of Christ”

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56 The hymn (Col 1:15-20) is surrounded by its introduction (1:12-14) and interpretation (1:21-23). See E. Schweizer, Der Brief and die Kolosser, 44-45.
57 See R. Hoffe, Epheserbrief / Kolosserbrief, 115-117.
is related not only to the human world but with the entire realm of nature.

Paragraph 100 closes Chapter 2. Here the encyclical clarifies the essence of the relationship between Jesus Christ and ecology after focusing on how they are related. First, the document quotes Col 1:19-20, the second half of the Hymn of Christ (Col 1:15-20) quoted in paragraph 99. As mentioned above, the first half of the hymn concerns creation theology, while the other half focuses on salvation theology. A theological contrast (along with literary parallelism) is found between verses 19-20 and 16. All fullness dwelled “in him” (ἐν αὐτῷ), and all creation reconciled “through him” (δι’ αὐτοῦ) and “for him” (εἰς αὐτὸν).⁵⁸ Through such a soteriological interpretation of Christ, the author sings of the reconciliation which takes place for all creation (not limited to humans with God).⁵⁹ Furthermore, the encyclical teaches that the Risen Christ exists in all creatures and that this existence enables the reconciliation of all creation.

Quoting 1Cor 15:28, the encyclical draws out, from an ecotheological standpoint, the eschatological meaning of God’s creation and Christ’s salvation events. 1Cor 15 is Paul’s teachings about the Resurrection. In 15:1-11, Paul testifies about Christ’s resurrection and then teaches about the resurrection of the dead in verses 12-34. Among them, verses 20-28 narrate the Second Advent and eschaton. And the last sentence there is 1Cor 15:28 quoted by the encyclical. The sentence describes the final result that will occur after Christ returns and brings everything into submission.⁶⁰ Here becoming “all in all” (πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν) may be misunderstood as

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⁵⁸ Col 1:19-20 is difficult to understand. See E. Schweizer, Der Brief und die Kolosser, 65-69. The “fullness” (πλήρωμα) mentioned here refers to God’s creative power.
⁵⁹ A general Hellenistic view of the universe is that the world is divided by conflicts and discord among imperfect creatures. A similar description of creatures is found in Rom 8:19-22 as well. See E. Schweizer, Der Brief und die Kolosser, 103-104.
⁶⁰ See W. Schrage, Der erste Brief an die Korinther (1Kor 15:1-16:24), 186.
pantheism. However, based on the context, what the author intended was to say that God’s power and glory are completely manifest in all creation through Christ.\footnote{See F.-J. Ortkemper, \textit{1. Korintherbrief}, 156.} The encyclical takes these affirmations as a narrative about fulfilling eschaton and salvation. The ecotheological perspective of the document teaches that fulfillment achieves the fullness of God’s presence in all creation in the universe through the guidance of Christ.

**Conclusion**

This paper has sought to understand Chapter 2 of \textit{Laudato Si’} from the perspective of biblical theology and, in particular, by analyzing the biblical texts referenced in the encyclical. This exegesis leads to the following theological premises:

1. Christians should acknowledge ecological problems as a matter of faith. The biblical texts do not directly stipulate an ecological duty for Christians. However, the biblical narratives about God, humans and the ecosystem describe a proper relationship between ecology and humans which is built on the foundation of knowing that God alone is the creator and humans, along with the rest of the ecosphere are God’s creation.

2. As free and personal subjects, human beings are certainly special. However, they do not have an absolute authority to govern/own creatures. The universe belongs only to the Creator. The \textit{raison d’être} of human beings revealed through the Bible is to care for the world by respecting the order of nature. Human dominion is defined as tilling and keeping. By doing so, all creatures, including humans, show God’s glory and complete the creative action of God.
3. Meanwhile, Genesis narrates human sins through the stories where humans fail to realize their purpose and transgress against God. As told by Genesis, sin destroys the order of the world. Thus, the ecological crisis is in essence a consequence of human “sins”. The Bible explains why and how people turned away from God using concepts such as “corruption”, “violence” and “injustice”. As a result of sin, the order of nature also returns to a state of chaos.

4. However, despite human sin, God’s will for salvation continues. Building on the insights of the Prophetic Books, which sing of hope amid despair, restoration from the ecological crisis must start with trust and hope in the Creator’s “power” and the Redeemer’s “love”.

5. Contemplation on “creation” opens humans up to the mystery of the world. In demystified nature, humans meet the Creator. This paradox emerges because God’s presence is in all creatures: together they are the “precious book” which reveals God. Realizing this mystery, humans recognize that other creatures do not exist for the good of humanity. Instead, all creation is oriented to God’s fullness as all of them are drawn into “universal communion”. Here the concept of “universal communion” includes a call to respect and reconcile the ecosphere (based on God’s universal ownership and love for the world).

6. As stressed in the encyclical’s subtitle, the world is a “common home” and a “common inheritance”. Thus, a principle of Christian ethics is that the natural environment (even that which has been privatized) is confirmed as “common goods”, and thus, should be used in ways that serve universal purposes. This comprehensive principle applies to both social justice and ecological justice.

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62 In theology, the counter concept of “sin” is “repentance”. Laudato Si’ covers the theme of “ecological conversion” from paragraphs 216 through 221.
7. The relationship between God, humanity and other creatures is revealed more clearly through Jesus. Jesus’ parables regarding nature remind that God is the “Father” of all creation. Jesus’ life was a life which respected creatures (he did not despise body and matter) and the life of a laborer which was lived in harmony with the world. Christ’s salvation (event) is for all created things, and the Good News has been proclaimed to all creation. That is because all creatures reconcile through Christ, and the fullness of God’s presence will take place in all creation.

As such, the encyclical, by quoting and referencing biblical narratives, reinterprets God’s creation event and Jesus Christ’s salvation event from the perspective of Ecotheology. This reinterpretation establishes theological standards for a proper relationship that should be exist between God, humanity and the world. Crucially, the central problem of the ecological crisis disclosed by these standards is egocentrism, not anthropocentrism. The consequence of greedy egocentrism, which only seeks personal worldly benefits without reflecting or questioning on what is a good relationship with God, neighbors and the world, is the violent destruction and exploitation of earth. This egocentrism is also the cause of social inequality.

In its reflection of the ecological issues, *Laudato Si’* tries to grasp the essence of the ecological problem and, through its journey through the Bible, searches for a theological and confessional starting point. The encyclical finds its theologies of creation and salvation to be manifest in the Biblical text. Whereas, traditional biblical theology paid attention to the bilateral relationship between God and humans, the encyclical reflects on why humans and the world exist and what salvation means in a tripartite structure involving God, humanity and the world. This establishes an eco-theological thesis in which no creature is a subject to be conquered and
ruled, but a neighbor to be cared for and fellowship to be enjoyed. This tripartite structure also generates a theological and anthropological discourse in which human dignity is completed when humans live with respect for, and solidarity with, all creatures.

In this context, *Laudato Si’* is more than a simple document but deserves to be called an event! This ground-breaking document integrates ecotheological theses and discourses which affirm that the Church’s interest in the ecosystem is in line with the nature of the Church. The arrival of this document means that, even if impending challenges such as climate change and decreasing biodiversity are resolved by using technology, the Church must continue to question and promote right relationships with God, and between human beings and all other creatures. In the end, the ecotheology which takes shape in Chapter 2 of the encyclical demands ecological contemplation on the entire corpus of theology instead of becoming a branch of the study.
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Laudato Si’ is an encyclical letter of Pope Francis, which is comprised of six chapters. Subtitled as “On Care for Our Common Home”, the document establishes the ecclesiastical perspective regarding the ecological crisis of humankind, and seeks Christian solutions for that. The document’s early chapters deal with existing ecological or ecotheological researches, approaching to the deep dimension of the ecological problematics on the theological basis. This paper’s interest is the chapter 2 “The gospel of creation” among them. “The gospel of creation” provides biblical insights into ecological problematics, reinterpreting Old and New Testament. While the existing understanding of creation stories in Old Testament is the hierarchical relationship of God-Humankind-World, Laudato Si’ reads the universal communion among God, Humankind and ecosystem between the lines of biblical texts. Reinterpreting New Testament, the document affirms that the salvation of Jesus Christ is toward not only humankind but every creation. And in the same sense the Good News is proclaimed to every creation. From the eschatological perspective, all creatures will reconcile through Christ, and the fullness of God’s presence will take place in all creation.

Such innovative interpretations and reinterpretations of Laudato Si’ teaches the raison d’être of the Catholic Church in an era of ecological crisis. And the ecotheology established on Laudato Si’ calls first of all for “ecological conversion” of the church’s belief, theology and praxis.

Key Words: Laudato Si’, Pope Francis, Ecotheology, Common Home, Conversion.
「찬미받으소서」의 성서신학적 이해

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이와 같은 회칙의 새로운 해석을 통해 생태계에 대한 교회의 관심이 교회의 본질과 존재 이유를 관통하고 있음을 드러난다. 그리고
이렇게 회칙의 2장을 통해 꼴을 갖춘 생태신학은 교회의 신앙과 실천 그리고 신학 전반에 걸친 생태적 반성과 회심을 요청한다.

▶ 주제어: 「찬미받으소서」, 교황 프란치스코, 생태신학, 공동의 집, 회심.