

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A Question of Morality

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On Sunday the 14th of this month we attended Mass at the Church of St. Ignatius of Loyola where, at the end of the Eucharist, the painter Arthur Vonn Hartung spoke about his painting *"Thy Will Be Done"* and explained the reason that motivated him to create such an impressive work. Here are the artist's reflections on his work.

"On this Earth Day, let us remember that it was only 27 years ago that we first received an image of ourselves from the Moon.

In the process of sending a man to the moon for the first time, Joseph Allen, one of the astronauts who was involved in the planning process recalls: *"Among all the arguments that were made for and against traveling to the Moon, nobody mentioned the possibility that the best reason would be simply to observe ourselves."*

And, that turned out to be the reason, to see ourselves from outside as planet.

When we received the photo of our planet, it was a global revelation that changed the way we think. From then on, our consciousness has never been the same. We saw ourselves as we really are; alone in the vast darkness of space; small, delicate, resplendent with life, divine beauty.

This was not news, it was always so. As we read in the first lines of Genesis. *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Earth was without form and void and darkness covered it and the Spirit of God moved upon the waters ..."*

It was not until the beginning of the 70's that we began to think about ethics and care of the environment. This was only commented on by mystics and environmentalists, but since then everything has changed. The world has responded with a lot of important reflections.

Now we have the scientific tools and the philosophical and ethical thinking to begin to reason about our responsibility regarding the environment.

Pope Leo XIII was the first pope to use the term *environment*. This was in the year 1891. It has taken us more time to reach this awareness.

Pope Paul VI reminded us that God put us in the center of his creation to take care of it. On the occasion of the Fifth Environmental Day in 1977, he reminded us that “*before man fell into sin the world was a paradise, beautiful, intact and of a harmonious nature ...*”, but nature began to change in a negative way when man rebelled against God.

Christ reconciled humans with God the Father, with one another, beginning the reconciliation of man with nature.

There is no doubt about this. We humans have the tools to destroy or save civilization, because God created us with that capability. But he also created us with free will.

Caring for the environment is a moral issue.

Pope John Paul II emphasizes the priority of ethics over technology, and spirit over matter. If we destroy the earth, we destroy the divine creation, we destroy ourselves.

Is that God's plan? Is that our plan?