



## Rays of God's wisdom and goodness

### -The unique value of each creature

*Many traditional cultures treat nature with great respect and make use of it only for the necessities of life. Our age tends to look on nature mainly as a cheap unlimited source of raw materials to sustain our wasteful life style. Thus, we eliminate every year thousands of plants and animal species – a great loss for future generations. In his Encyclical 'Laudato Si' Pope Francis invites us to look at nature with different eyes and recognise the unique beauty and dignity of each creature which, by its very existence, praises God and gives joy to humanity.*

✿ In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the word “creation” has a broader meaning than “nature”, for it has to do with God’s loving plan in which **every creature has its own value and significance**. Nature is usually seen as a system which can be studied, understood and controlled, whereas creation can only be understood as a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father of all, and as a reality illuminated by the love which calls us together into universal communion. (Laudato Si 76)



✿ **Every creature is the object of the Father's tenderness**, who gives it its place in the world. Even the fleeting life of the least of beings is the object of his love, and in its few seconds of existence, God enfolds it with his affection. (77) Each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection... Each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God's infinite wisdom and goodness. Man must therefore respect the particular goodness of every creature, to avoid any disordered use of things. (69)



✿ Together with **our obligation to use the earth's goods responsibly**, we are called to recognize that other living beings have a value of their own in God's eyes: by their mere existence they bless him and give him glory... By virtue of our unique dignity and our gift of intelligence, we are called to respect creation and its inherent laws. (69)



✿ Our body itself establishes us in a direct relationship with the environment and with other living beings. **The acceptance of our bodies as God's gift** is vital for welcoming and accepting the entire world as a gift from the Father and our common home (155)

✿ The disappearance of a culture can be just as serious, or even more serious, than the disappearance of a species of plant or animal. (145)

✿ The ultimate destiny of the universe is in the fullness of God... yet another argument for rejecting every tyrannical and irresponsible domination of human beings over other creatures. **The ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us**. Rather, all creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God, in that transcendent fullness where the risen Christ embraces and illumines all things. Human beings, endowed with intelligence and love, and drawn by the fullness of Christ, are **called to lead all creatures back to their Creator**. (83)



*Spirituality is not the monopoly of human beings. Animals, plants, the soil, hills, trees, places, are components of human spirituality.*

Chenjerai Hove