

Way of Beauty

(Stations of Creation)



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1st Station

GOD CREATES OUR HOME.

Leader : ***We adore You O Christ and we bless You***

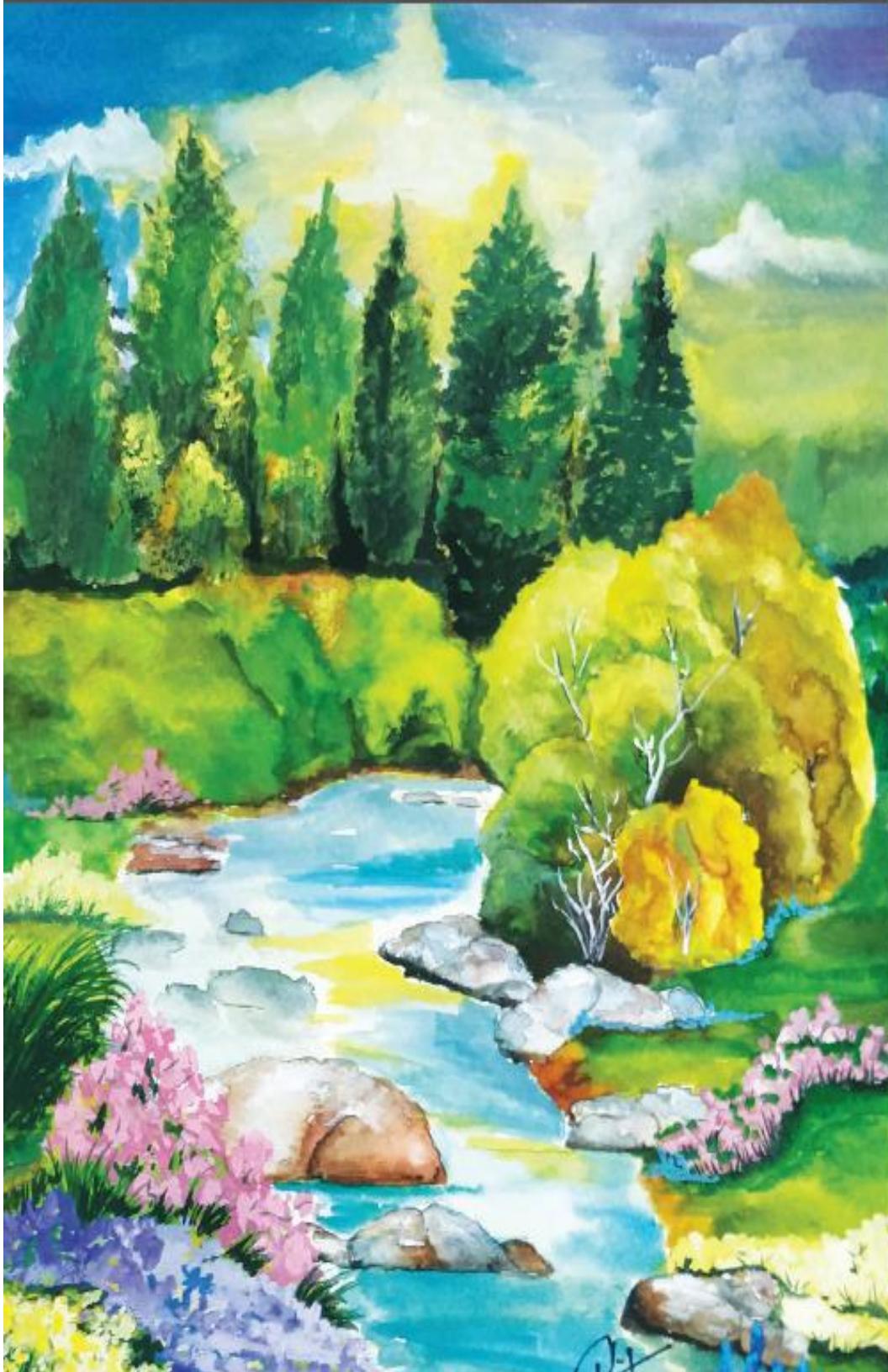
All : ***Because by Your Holy Cross You have
redeemed the world***

Word of God: "In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless wasteland, and darkness covered the abyss, while a mighty wind swept over the waters" (Gen. 1:1-2).

Reflection: God created everything out of nothing. He created everything out of His love. It was the first visible expression of His love. His love is visible in His creation. He wanted to reach out to us, so He created us. The painting of Creation by Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel is a gripping depiction of God's longing to reach out to each one of us. Are we reaching out to Him?

Laudato Si': "The Bible teaches that every man and woman is created out of love and made in God's image and likeness (cf. Gen 1:26). This shows us the immense dignity of each person, "who is not just something, but someone". He/she is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself/herself and entering into communion with other persons...We were conceived in the heart of God, and for this reason "each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary" (65).

*Laudato Si', mi Signore
To You only, they belong,
None worthy to sing Your Name.*



2nd Station

GOD CREATES EVERYTHING GOOD AND BEAUTIFUL.

Leader : ***We adore You O Christ and we bless You***

All : ***Because by Your Holy Cross You have
redeemed the world***

Word of God: "Then God said: Let there be light, and there was light. God saw that the light was good (Gen. 1:3-4)."

Reflection: The earth that God created is not a functional, monochrome, utilitarian machine. It is full of beauty, colour, and creativity. God declared it to be "very good." God created everything good and beautiful. He spoke and it sprang into being (Psalm 33:9). The first act of Creation was light. This first act of God indicates that we were able to see colours, the light and darkness. Colours gave us beauty of life. Goodness overflowed from the all Good Lord. Our Common Home is good and beautiful. Each one of us is someone beautiful for God. We all share in the beauty of God. Do we recognise the beauty in everyone and everything?

Laudato Si': "For this reason, Francis asked that part of the friary garden always be left untouched, so that wild flowers and herbs could grow there, and those who saw them could raise their minds to God, the Creator of such beauty. Rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise" (12).

Laudato Si', mi Signore

Be praised, my Lord, through all creatures

Worshipping Your Holy Name.



3rd Station

GOD ENTRUSTS THE EARTH, THE GARDEN PLANET, TO THE CARE OF HUMANITY.

Leader : *We adore You O Christ and we bless You*

All : *Because by Your Holy Cross You have
redeemed the world*

Word of God: "The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it (Gen. 2:15)."

Reflection: God entrusted humanity with a responsibility to be stewards of our Common Home. He asked each one of us to till the earth and keep it. Somehow, more than the tilling, keeping the earth from all harm was challenging for humanity throughout the history. There are billions of species in this world. Not even one of them can survive by itself or on its own. We all need to support each other in this world to sustain life. Are we responsible for our brothers, sisters and our Common Home?

Laudato Si': "We are not God. The earth was here before us and it has been given to us. This allows us to respond to the charge that Judaeo-Christian thinking, on the basis of the Genesis account which grants man "dominion" over the earth (cf. Gen 1:28), has encouraged the unbridled exploitation of nature by painting him as domineering and destructive by nature. This is not a correct interpretation of the Bible as understood by the Church....The biblical texts are to be read in their context, with an appropriate hermeneutic, recognizing that they tell us to "till and keep" the garden of the world (cf. Gen 2:15). "Tilling" refers to cultivating, ploughing or working, while "keeping" means caring, protecting, overseeing and preserving. This implies a relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature" (66).

*Laudato Si', mi Signore
Be praised through our Brother Sun
Beautiful and radiant.*



4th Station

GOD ENTERS INTO AN ETERNAL COVENANT WITH CREATION.

Leader : ***We adore You O Christ and we bless You***

All : ***Because by Your Holy Cross You have
redeemed the world***

Word of God: "I will make a covenant for them on that day, with the wild animals, With the birds of the air, and with the things that crawl on the ground. Bow and sword and warfare I will destroy from the land, and I will give them rest in safety. (Hosea 2:20)"

Reflection: The several Covenants narrated in the Scripture, speak of an Everlasting Covenant made with Creation. He makes a covenant with Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and Israel after the Babylonian Exile. In short, God is committed to His creation. Genesis describes the flood as the de-creation of the world - the earth sinks back into the chaotic waters that God cleared away as narrated on page one of the Bible. The Story of the Flood is one of God taking merciful action to restrain humanity's ever-increasing evil. God made the earth to be a place where humanity could flourish, but instead they turned it into a theatre of violence and disaster. Everything is not over with the Flood. God re-fashions the world again with a promise. God gives us hope to live again with responsibility.

Laudato Si': "The Creation accounts in the book of Genesis contain, in their own symbolic and narrative language, profound teachings about human existence and its historical reality. They suggest that human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself. According to the Bible, these three vital relationships have been broken, both outwardly and within us. This rupture is sin" (66).

Laudato Si', mi Signore
Be praised through our Sister Moon
And the stars that shine above.



5th Station

THE CREATION GROANS WITH PAIN.

Leader : ***We adore You O Christ and we bless You***
All : ***Because by Your Holy Cross You have
redeemed the world***

Word of God: The LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. (Gen 4:10) "We know that all creation is groaning in labour pains even until now (Rom 8:22)."

Reflection: The cry of the earth is due to irresponsibility towards humanity and the earth. We have hurt our common home. Climate change, global warming or pollution are not something that happens apart from us but through us. Each one of us is responsible in harming our common home. The cry of the poor and cry of the earth are interconnected. The first homicide was connected to God, earth and fraternity. Human ecology and environmental ecology are the two sides of the same coin.

Laudato Si': "This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she "groans in travail" (Rom 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters." (2)

Laudato Si', mi Signore
Be Praised through our Sister Water
Useful, humble and precious.



6th Station

GOD INTRODUCES THE JUBILEE TO RESPOND TO THE CRY OF THE POOR AND THE EARTH.

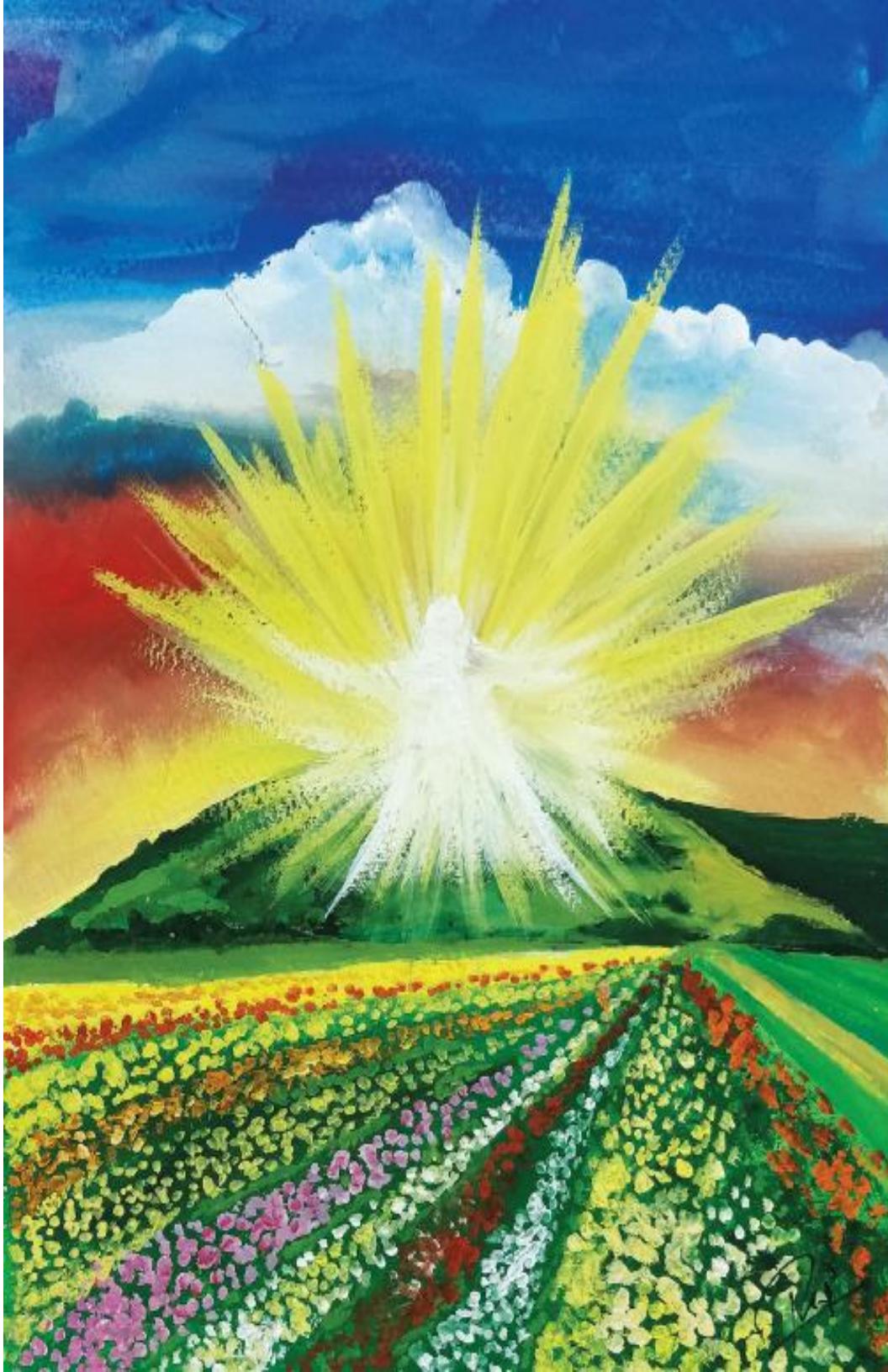
Leader : ***We adore You O Christ and we bless You
Because by Your Holy Cross You have
redeemed the world***

Word of God: "You shall treat this fiftieth year as sacred. You shall proclaim liberty in the land for all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to your own property, each of you to your own family. This fiftieth year is your year of jubilee; you shall not sow, nor shall you reap the aftergrowth or pick the untrimmed vines, since this is the jubilee. It shall be sacred for you. You may only eat what the field yields of itself. In this year of jubilee, then, each of you shall return to your own property. Therefore, when you sell any land to your neighbour or buy any from your neighbour, do not deal unfairly with one another (Lev. 25:10-14)."

Reflection: The Lord hears the cry of the poor (Ps. 34:7). He is the Lord of the poor. He is on the side of the poor and suffering. He is even sensitive to the cry of the poor and the earth. Thus, was set up Jubilee to give freedom and liberty to humanity and the entire creation. Benedict XVI insists the need for human ecology in *Caritas in Veritate* (51): "When human ecology is respected within society, environmental ecology also benefits." The cry of the poor is linked to cry of the earth. How do you celebrate Jubilees in your families and communities? Do those celebrations in anyway respond to the cry of the poor?

Laudato Si': "The Creation accounts in the book of Genesis contain, in their own symbolic and narrative language, profound teachings about human existence and its historical reality. They suggest that human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself. According to the Bible, these three vital relationships have been broken, both outwardly and within us. This rupture is sin" (66).

*Laudato Si', mi Signore
Be praised, my Lord, through all creatures
Worshipping Your Holy Name.*



7th Station

**THE HEAVENS PROCLAIM
THE GLORY OF GOD.**

Leader : ***We adore You O Christ and we bless You***
All : ***Because by Your Holy Cross You have
redeemed the world***

Word of God: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the firmament proclaims the works of His hands. Day unto day pours forth speech; night unto night whispers knowledge (Ps. 19: 2-3)."

Reflection: Francis burst forth in wonder at the praise of Creation and *Laudato Si'* was born. The creation is the art of God where we fail to recognise the artist. The psalmists praised the Creator as an outburst of emotions from their hearts. How often do we praise and thank in our normal prayers? Our prayers are normally prayers of petitions. More than petitions, we all need to go through prayers of thanks and praise daily. For this, we need to develop a sense of wonder at the creation. Jesus had a sense of wonder at His Creation, when he stated, "Look at the lilies of the field... not even Solomon in all his splendour was clothed like one of them" (Mt 6: 28,29).

Laudato Si': "The Psalms frequently exhort us to praise God the Creator, "who spread out the earth on the waters, for his steadfast love endures for ever" (Ps 136:6). They also invite other creatures to join us in this praise: "Praise Him, sun and moon, praise Him, all you shining stars! Praise Him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the Lord, for He commanded and they were created" (Ps 148:3-5). We do not only exist by God's mighty power; we also live with Him and beside Him. This is why we adore Him" (72).

*Laudato Si', mi Signore
Praised be You, through Brother Fire
Through whom you Light the Dark Night*



8th Station

CREATOR BECOMES THE CREATURE.

Leader : ***We adore You O Christ and we bless You***

All : ***Because by Your Holy Cross You have
redeemed the world***

Word of God: "And the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us, and we saw His glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth (John 1: 14)."

Reflection: Christmas brings to our mind several images. The feast of Christmas brings before our eyes the image of God as a child. The crib that represents this Mystery of Incarnation is a replica of a mini universe. One can find mountains, trees, animals, water, land and snow in a crib apart from human beings. And in that mini universe, you see the Creator, the Lord of the Universe, as a kid among the creatures. He became one like us, born with the "smell of the sheep." He pitched his tent among us. That Word which brought forth this Universe, became flesh like us. He walked on this earth before us, sanctifying our world. He was born in a dirty and squalid manger as a stranger! This is our vocation. This is what we are called for in the Church. Evangelisers thus take on the "smell of the sheep" and the sheep are willing to hear their voice (*Evangelii Gaudium* 24). Then, we experience the smell of divinity, the smell of grace!

Laudato Si': "The prologue of the Gospel of John (1:1-18) reveals Christ's creative work as the Divine Word (Logos). But then, unexpectedly, the prologue goes on to say that this same Word "became flesh" (Jn 1:14). One Person of the Trinity entered into the created cosmos, throwing in His lot with it, even to the cross. From the beginning of the world, but particularly through the incarnation, the mystery of Christ is at work in a hidden manner in the natural world as a whole, without thereby impinging on its autonomy" (99).

Laudato Si', mi Signore
Be praised through our Sister Earth,
Who produces Fruits and Herbs.



9th Station

**GOD LIVES IN FULL HARMONY
WITH THE CREATION.**

Leader : ***We adore You O Christ and we bless You***

All : ***Because by Your Holy Cross You have
redeemed the world***

Word of God: "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favour before God and man (Lk 2: 52)."

Reflection: The infancy narrative of Jesus concludes with this statement. He grew up in harmony with God and men. He grew up in wisdom, knowledge and favour with God. He was a carpenter. He sanctified work with His hands. He learnt rudiments of faith and life from family. How many of our children grow this way in families in harmony with everyone and everything? For three years of His public ministry, He spent 30 years of harmonious life in the context of His family. Family is the cradle of faith and life. How do our children grow in our families? What roles do our parents play for their entire formation?

Laudato Si': "Jesus lived in full harmony with creation, and others were amazed: "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" (Mt 8:27). His appearance was not that of an ascetic set apart from the world, nor of an enemy to the pleasant things of life. ... Jesus worked with his hands, in daily contact with the matter created by God, to which he gave form by his craftsmanship. It is striking that most of his life was dedicated to this task in a simple life which awakened no admiration at all: "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?" (Mk 6:3). In this way he sanctified human labour and endowed it with a special significance for our development. As Saint John Paul II taught, "by enduring the toil of work in union with Christ crucified for us, man in a way collaborates with the Son of God for the redemption of humanity" (98).

Laudato Si', mi Signore

Be praised for Your Mercy and Love
For those who are Sick and Suffering.



10th Station

**GOD COMMANDS THE POWERS
OF THE UNIVERSE.**

Leader : ***We adore You O Christ and we bless You***
All : ***Because by Your Holy Cross You have
redeemed the world***

Word of God: "They were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey? (Mk 4: 41.)"

Reflection: During the lockdown, Pope Francis gave us a touching homily on this passage on 27 March 2020 to an empty space at St. Peter's. He repeatedly mentioned the question of Jesus to His disciples during the storm at the Sea of Galilee. "Why are you afraid?" Jesus is at the stern, in the part of the boat that sinks first. In spite of the tempest, He sleeps on soundly, trusting in the Father; this is the only time in the Gospels we see Jesus sleeping. Do we have sufficient faith to trust in the one who created this entire universe? He is the Lord of the Universe.

Laudato Si': "A spirituality which forgets God as all-powerful and Creator is not acceptable. That is how we end up worshipping earthly powers, or ourselves usurping the place of God, even to the point of claiming an unlimited right to trample His creation underfoot. The best way to restore men and women to their rightful place, putting an end to their claim to absolute dominion over the earth, is to speak once more of the figure of a Father who creates and who alone owns the world. Otherwise, human beings will always try to impose their own laws and interests on reality" (75).

*Laudato Si', mi Signore
Blessed are those who bear in peace,
For by You, they shall be crowned.*



11th Station

GOD TEACHES 'HUMAN ECOLOGY'.

Leader : ***We adore You O Christ and we bless You***

All : ***Because by Your Holy Cross You have
redeemed the world***

Word of God: "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you (Mt. 5:44)."

Reflection: This Human Ecology is a corollary of Divine Ecology. The next verse says, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for He makes His sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. So, a harmonious life with each other is a necessity for divine ecology. The chapters 5, 6 and 7 from the Gospel of Matthew is all about human ecology. Living with each other, should make us realise that we are a family. In the novel, *Les Misérables* the escaped convict, Jean Valjean introduces himself as a burglar, escaped prisoner and dangerous man to a bishop. To which bishop answers. "I know you. I know your name. Your name is brother."

Laudato Si': A change in lifestyle could bring healthy pressure to bear on those who wield political, economic and social power. This is what consumer movements accomplish by boycotting certain products. They prove successful in changing the way businesses operate, forcing them to consider their environmental footprint and their patterns of production. When social pressure affects their earnings, businesses clearly have to find ways to produce differently. This shows us the great need for a sense of social responsibility on the part of consumers. "Purchasing is always a moral – and not simply economic – act." Today, in a word, "the issue of environmental degradation challenges us to examine our lifestyle" (206).

Laudato Si', mi Signore
Be praised, through our Sister Death
From whom no Living can escape.



12th Station

GOD SEES THE INTERCONNECTIVITY.

Leader : ***We adore You O Christ and we bless You***

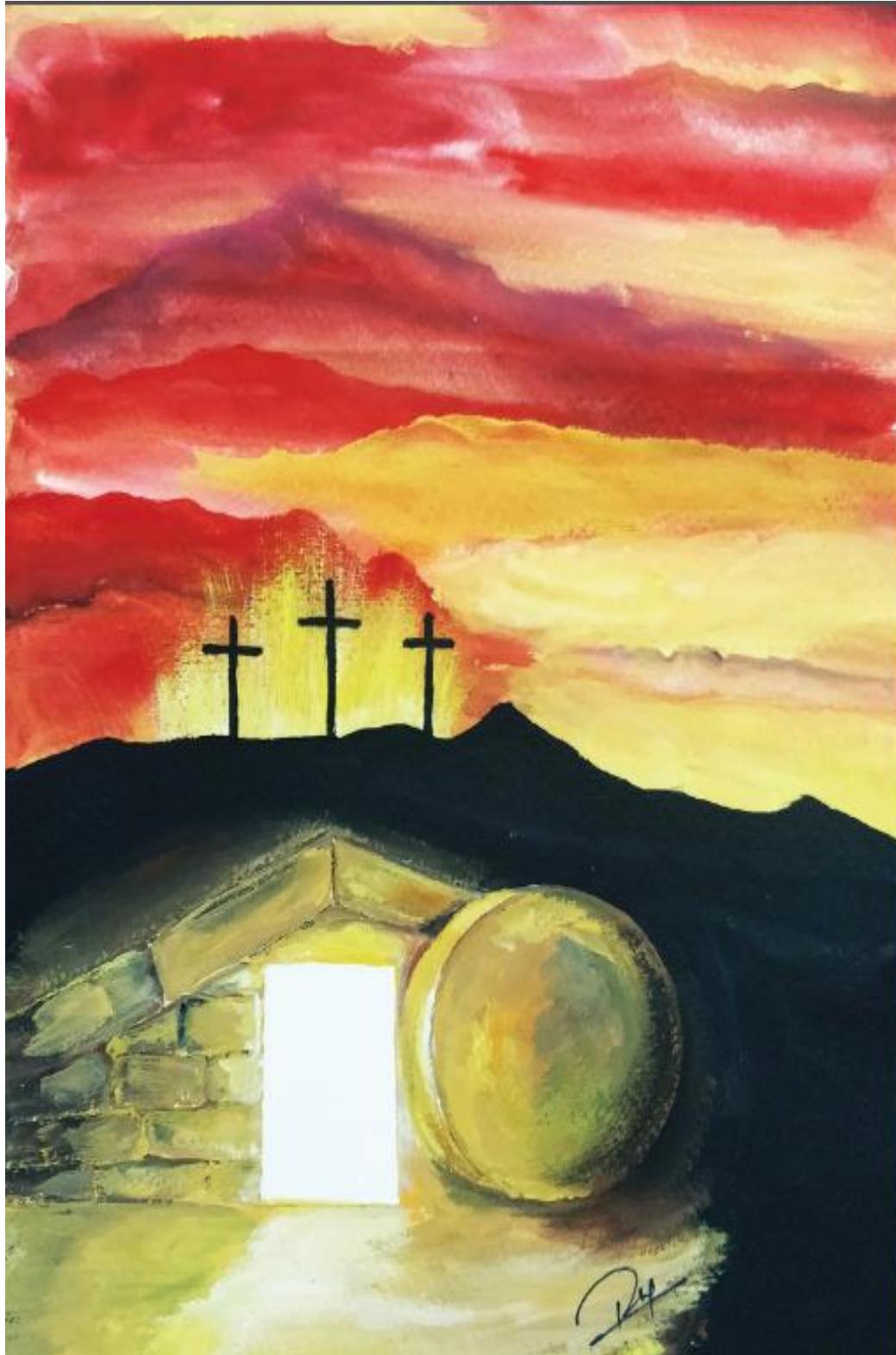
All : ***Because by Your Holy Cross You have
redeemed the world***

Word of God: "Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? (Mt. 6:26)."

Reflection: God, Nature and Humanity. "Everything is connected." This sentence is repeatedly mentioned in the encyclical, *Laudato Si'*. Perhaps during these days, when so many have stepped back from the normal rhythm of life, we've had more time to pause and examine the big picture. One cannot separate ecology from economics, or economics from ethics, or ethics from politics. Above all, one cannot separate what Pope Francis, following Benedict XVI, calls "Human Ecology" from the rest of creation. The careless habits of mind and heart that allow us to pollute and waste also allow us to treat other human beings as disposable. Let us begin by noticing this interconnectivity. Jesus noticed in the birds, the poor widow and the grass, and saw beauty of small things as God's provident care. Do we have this gaze of Jesus? What do you see when you look at the nature? Do we see the way we see?

***Laudato Si'*:** Jesus took up the biblical faith in God the Creator, emphasizing a fundamental truth: God is Father (cf. Mt 11:25). In talking with His disciples, Jesus would invite them to recognize the paternal relationship God has with all His creatures. With moving tenderness He would remind them that each one of them is important in God's eyes: "Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God" (Lk 12:6). "Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them" (Mt 6:26) (96).

Laudato Si', mi Signore
Blessed are those who live Your Will,
For Death shall do them no Destruction.



13rd Station

GOD CONQUERS SIN AND DEATH.

Leader : ***We adore You O Christ and we bless You***

All : ***Because by Your Holy Cross You have
redeemed the world***

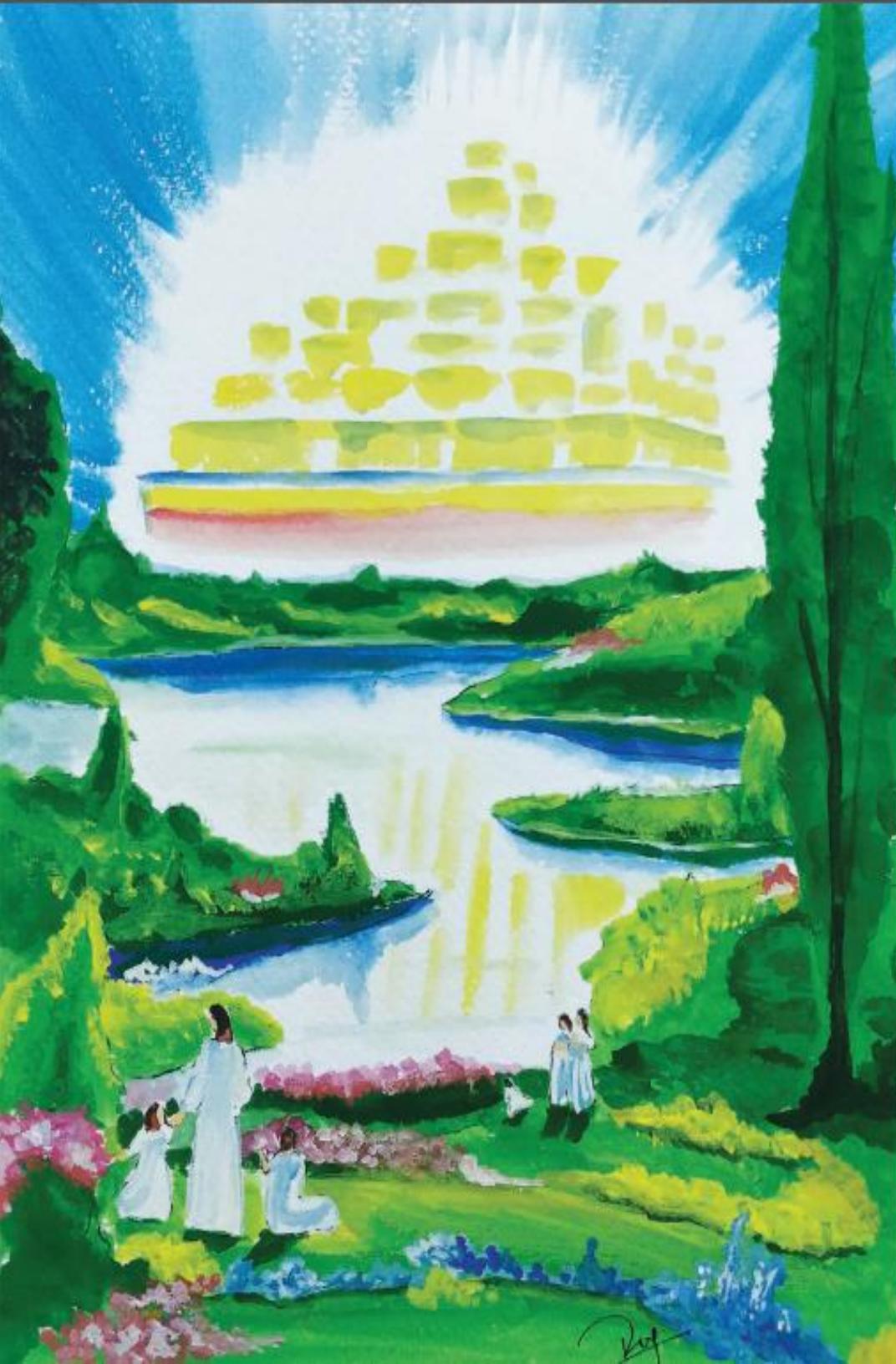
Word of God: "Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last (Mk 15:37)."

Reflection: Death is not the end of everything. So too the death of Jesus. By dying, Jesus gave a new meaning to death itself. Death can be conquered. Since God conquered our human experience, our death is not the finale of everything. The death of Jesus was the highest expression of His mercy. He died bearing all our sins, giving us a new life. He is the God of mercy. He is the God of the Living. Our stained Creation is restored once again through His Death and Resurrection.

Laudato Si': "The New Testament does not only tell us of the earthly Jesus and His tangible and loving relationship with the world. It also shows Him risen and glorious, present throughout creation by His universal Lordship: "For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross" (Col 1:19-20)" (100).

Laudato Si', mi Signore

Praise and bless and thanks my Lord,
Serving Him with Humility.



14th Station

**CREATION LONGS FOR THE NEW HEAVEN
AND NEW EARTH.**

Leader : ***We adore You O Christ and we bless You***

All : ***Because by Your Holy Cross You have
redeemed the world***

Word of God: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more ... He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away (Rev. 21: 1,4)."

Reflection: Through all the twists and turns of the biblical story, God remains committed to His creation. The story of the Bible begins with "God created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1) and ends with "a new heaven and the new earth" (Rev. 21:1). The Garden of Eden is the exemplar of what it looks like when heaven and earth meet. The same point continued when this meeting point where all become one. Our Creed asserts belief in both "the life everlasting" and "the resurrection of the body." A similar sentiment is expressed by St. Augustine. "You have made us for Yourself O Lord. Our hearts are restless until they rest in You, O Lord." St Augustine was right, after living a life of twists and turns.

Laudato Si': "At the end, we will find ourselves face to face with the infinite beauty of God (cf. 1 Cor 13:12), and be able to read with admiration and happiness the mystery of the universe, which with us will share in unending plenitude. Even now we are journeying towards the sabbath of eternity, the new Jerusalem, towards our common home in heaven. Jesus says: "I make all things new" (Rev 21:5). Eternal life will be a shared experience of awe, in which each creature, resplendently transfigured, will take its rightful place and have something to give those poor men and women who will have been liberated once and for all" (243).

Laudato Si', mi Signore

Most High, Powerful, all good Lord,
Yours the Honour, Praise and Glory.

Conclusion

Leader: After the narration of the parable of the Good Samaritan, a parable of human ecology, Jesus said, "Go and do likewise." Our Way of Beauty does not end here. It begins here. We are now to go out and meet our Creator in His Creation. We continue to walk His talk and talk His walk. As we walk let us be reminded of His words through Pope Francis: "Thus, the creatures of this world no longer appear to us under merely natural guise because the risen One is mysteriously holding them to Himself and directing them towards fullness as their end. The very flowers of the field and the birds which His human eyes contemplated and admired are now imbued with His radiant presence" (LS, 100).

A Prayer for our Earth (Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si'*)

All-powerful God, You are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of Your creatures.

You embrace with Your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of Your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in Your eyes. Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature as we journey towards Your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

Concluding Hymn: Psalm 22(23) (The Lord is my Shepherd)

