



# Roots & Wings

VOLUME 7 No. 4 DECEMBER 2021

*The Periodical of the Professional Society of Religious Educators*

## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the fourth issue of *Roots & Wings* for 2021. This publication, sent electronically free of charge to members of the Professional Society, appears quarterly. It contains regular features as indicated in the Contents table alongside.

In view of the critical issue of climate change being at the forefront of global attention at this time this edition will focus in part, and in different ways, on the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) held in Glasgow from 31 October to 12 November.



**UN CLIMATE  
CHANGE  
CONFERENCE  
UK 2021**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY

## CONTENTS

### REFLECTION

Pope Francis' New Encyclical .....2

### REFLECTION

Laudato Si' Goals and Actions .....3

### REFLECTION

Beads of Prayer .....7

### TALKING ABOUT RE (CPTD)

Educating to Fraternal Humanism .....9

### CLASSROOM PRACTICE

RE Today Catalogues .....12

### ARTISTS' CORNER

Julie Heffernan - Environmental Art...13

### WEBSITE

Yale Forum.....15

### BOOK REVIEW

Praying with Icons.....16

### LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS

.....17

QUESTION (CPTD) .....24



Members are encouraged to send material for future editions. What might you send? Here are some examples:

- Lesson ideas or plans
- Reviews of useful materials such as books or websites
- News from your school's RE Department
- Short articles of interest to religious educators
- Adverts for RE posts in your school

## REFLECTION

### Pope Francis' New Encyclical

#### *Fratelli Tutti - On Fraternity and Social Friendship*

(Ron Rolheiser - 12 October 2020)



On October 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, Pope Francis released a new encyclical entitled, *Fratelli Tutti - On Fraternity and Social Friendship*. It can appear a rather depressing read because of its searing realism, except it plays the long game of Christian hope.

*Fratelli Tutti* lays out reasons why there's so much injustice, inequality, and community breakdown in our world and how in faith and love these might be addressed. The intent here is not to give a synopsis of the encyclical, other than to say it's courageous and speaks truth to power. Rather the intent is to highlight a number of special challenges within the encyclical.

First, it challenges us to see the poor and to see what our present political, economic, and social systems are doing to them. Looking at our world, the encyclical submits that in many ways it is a broken world and it names some reasons for this: the globalization of self-interest, the globalization of superficiality, and the abuse of social media, among other things. This has made for the survival of the fittest. And while the situation is broken for everyone, the poor are ending up suffering the most. The rich are getting richer, the powerful are getting more powerful, and the poor are growing poorer and losing what little power they had. There's an ever-increasing inequality of wealth and

power between the rich and the poor and our world is become ever more calloused vis-à-vis the situation of the poor. Inequality is now accepted as normal and as moral and indeed is often justified in the name of God and religion. The poor are becoming disposable: *"Some parts of our human family, it appears, can be readily sacrificed for the sake of others. Wealth has increased, but together with inequality."* In speaking of inequality, the encyclical twice highlights that this inequality is true of women worldwide: *"It is unacceptable that some have fewer rights by virtue of being women."*

The encyclical employs the parable of the Good Samaritan as its ground metaphor. It compares us today, individually and collectively, to the priest and the scribe in that parable who for religious, social, and political reasons walk past the one who is poor, beaten, bleeding and in need of help. Our indifference and our religious failure, like that of the priest and the scribe in the parable, is rooted both in a personal moral blindness as well as in the social and religious ethos of our society that helps spawn that blindness.

The encyclical goes on to warn that in the face of globalization we must resist becoming nationalistic and tribal, taking care of our own and demonizing what's foreign. It goes on to say that in a time of bitterness, hatred, and animosity, we must be tender and gracious, always speaking out of love and not out of hatred: *"Kindness ought to be cultivated; it is no superficial bourgeois virtue."*

The encyclical acknowledges how difficult and counter-cultural it is today to sacrifice our own agenda, comfort, and freedom for community, but invites us to make that sacrifice: *"I would like especially to mention solidarity which is a moral virtue*

*and social attitude born of personal conversion."*

At one point, the encyclical gives a very explicit (and far-reaching) challenge. It states unequivocally (with full ecclesial weight) that Christians must oppose and reject capital punishment and take a stand against war: *"Saint John Paul II stated clearly and firmly that the death penalty is inadequate from a moral standpoint and no longer necessary from that of penal justice. There can be no stepping back from this position. Today we state clearly that 'the death penalty is inadmissible' and the Church is firmly committed to calling for its abolition worldwide. All Christians and people of good will are today called to work not only for the abolition of the death penalty, legal or illegal, in all its forms, but also to work for the improvement of prison conditions."*

As for war: *"We can no longer think of war as a solution, because its risks will probably always be greater than its*

*supposed benefits. In view of this, it is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a 'just war'*

The encyclical has drawn strong criticism from some women's groups who label it "sexist", though this criticism is based almost exclusively on the encyclical's title and on the fact that it never makes reference to any women authors. There's some fairness, I submit, in the criticism regarding the choice of title. The title, while beautiful in an old classical language, is in the end masculine. That should be forgivable; except I lived long enough in Rome to know that its frequent insensitivity to inclusive language is not an *inculpable* oversight. But the lapse here is a mosquito bite, a small thing, which shouldn't detract from a big thing, namely, a very prophetic encyclical which has justice and the poor at its heart.

Website: [www.ronrolheiser.com](http://www.ronrolheiser.com)



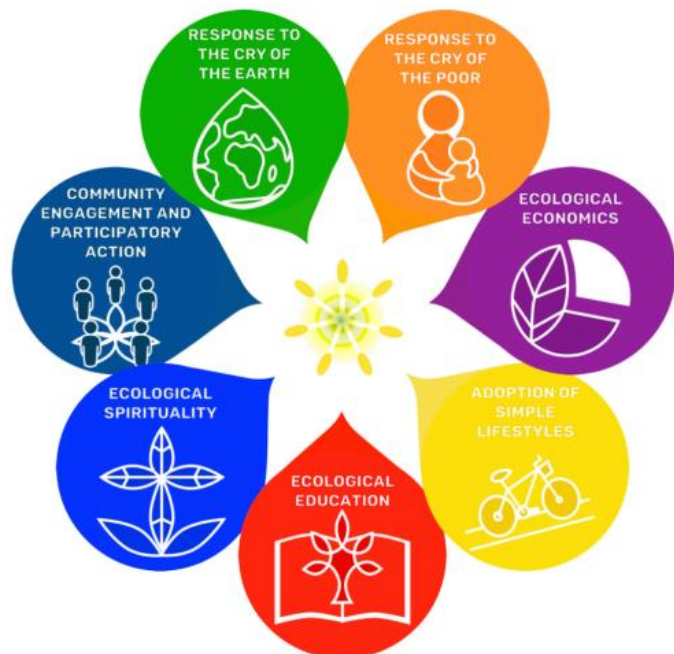
## REFLECTION

### *Laudato Si' Goals and Actions*

Laudato Si' Plans help your institution, community, or family discern and implement your response to Laudato Si'.

The ecological crisis is "a summons to profound interior conversion," a reexamining of our relationships with the Creator, with creation, and with our sisters and brothers. (LS 217) This conversion process is one that unfolds over months and even years, as the Holy Spirit calls us to an ever deeper richness of spirit.

In our response to that conversion, we realize that "living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue." (LS 216). Action is needed.





The Laudato Si' Goals guide our actions. They redefine and rebuild our relationship with each other and our common home. Their holistic approach acknowledges the planetary limits of all socio-economic systems and the human roots of the ecological crisis. They call for a spiritual and cultural revolution to realise integral ecology.

### *Response to the Cry of the Earth*

The *Response to the Cry of the Earth* is a call to protect our common home for the wellbeing of all, as we equitably address the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and ecological sustainability. A proposed set of actions to make progress towards this goal includes the following (to be finalized in the coming months).

- Protecting the climate by installing solar panels, insulating buildings, buying renewable energy credits where available, and installing cleaner or more efficient cook-stoves or appliances
- Protecting biodiversity by planting native trees, planting native gardens, removing invasive species, practicing regenerative agriculture, and protecting pollinators
- Protecting waterways and land by ensuring sensible fertilizer use, instituting drop irrigation and other conservative irrigation models, planting waterway buffers, avoiding the installation of impermeable surfaces around buildings, instituting regular litter removal and prevention campaigns, and pursuing conservation schemes

### *Response to the Cry of the Poor*

The *Response to the Cry of the Poor* is a call to promote eco-justice, aware that we are called to defend human life from conception to death, and all forms of life on Earth. A proposed set of actions to make progress towards this goal includes the following (to be finalized in the coming months).

- Protecting all life through educational events
- Delivering WASH services by ensuring access to clean water, training community members in hygiene practices, and ensuring diverse community members plan WASH projects
- Promoting and protecting Indigenous leadership by ensuring Indigenous communities have the rights to their land and by elevating Indigenous leadership
- Delivering access to land and clean air by ensuring community members have free access to green space and that children's spaces are free of air pollution
- Growing in solidarity with vulnerable people by doing an audit of community challenges, delivering programs to address basic needs, and delivering programs to address failed systems
- Sharing resources and wisdom by learning from elders, sharing social resources, sharing monetary resources, and holding community-wide action days

### *Ecological Economics*

*Ecological Economics* acknowledges that the economy is a sub-system of human society, which itself is embedded within the biosphere—our common home. A proposed set of actions to make progress towards this goal includes the following (to be finalized in the coming months).

- Building and supporting the circular economy by launching trading communities and purchasing from retailers that use recycled materials
- Ensuring financial investments are ethical and sustainable by divesting from fossil fuels, investing in socially responsible enterprises, and choosing ethical banking and insurance companies
- Practicing fair and sustainable purchasing by supporting ethical businesses, taking a “total cost of ownership approach” to purchases, making a sustainability shopping list, and purchasing from local retailers

- Ensuring the dignity of workers by supporting good jobs with liveable wages and benefits, supporting cooperative management practices, supporting those who perform “care labor,” and buying from cooperatives and other ethical enterprises
- Participating in the gift economy by teaching gift economy values

### *Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles*

The *Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles* is grounded in the idea of sufficiency, and promoting sobriety in the use of resources and energy. A proposed set of actions to make progress towards this goal includes the following (to be finalized in the coming months).

- Improving sustainability in buildings by installing cleaner or more efficient lighting, reducing use of heating and air conditioning, and installing low-flow taps
- Improving sustainability in transportation by increasing use of electric vehicles or bicycles and by replacing air and auto trips
- Improving sustainability in diets by reducing food waste before and after market, composting, buying food from local producers when possible, and transitioning from meat-based to plant-based meals
- Improving sustainability in consumer purchases by eliminating the use of disposable plastic and styrofoam, correctly recycling as much as possible, and reducing purchases of new consumer goods



### *Ecological Education*

*Ecological Education* is about re-thinking and re-designing curricular and institutional reform in the spirit of integral ecology in order to foster ecological awareness and transformative action. A proposed set of actions to make progress towards this goal includes the following (to be finalized in the coming months).

- Developing *Laudato Si'* learning opportunities by implementing a *Laudato Si'* education plan and by ensuring that members of the community are familiar with the local ecosystem, the science and social dimensions of the ecological crisis, and ecological virtues

- Ensuring education is community-led by creating ways for educators to undergo ecological conversions, creating opportunities for youth-led events, and developing mechanisms to publicly recognize young people for their leadership
- Weaving *Laudato Si'* themes into the community's communications by regularly highlighting them in newsletters/bulletins and on social media and by encouraging community members to develop *Laudato Si'* Plans
- Delivering equitable access to education by ensuring under-represented groups are educated, shaping education programs with a wide variety of people, offering culturally appropriate and/or alternative forms of education, and ensuring that education promotes human rights and dignity

### *Ecological Spirituality*

*Ecological Spirituality* recovers a religious vision of God's creation and encourages greater contact with the natural world in a spirit of wonder, praise, joy and gratitude. A proposed set of actions to make progress towards this goal includes the following (to be finalized in the coming months).

- Celebrating the Season of Creation by co-hosting a Season of Creation event with another community, publicly praying for our social and ecological redemption during the season, developing an annual Season of Creation practice, and publishing annual statements of support for the Season of Creation
- Encouraging community reflection on *Laudato Si'* themes by having the leader of the community speak about them, including them in the celebration of liturgical moments, and making study and prayer guides available
- Praying in nature by blessing a natural space as a reflection/meditation area and regularly praying there, hosting an outdoor prayer service, and creating a prayer journal, bulletin board, or other way of recording and sharing prayers made in nature

### *Community Engagement and Participatory Action*

*Community Engagement and Participatory Action* encourage the development of cultures and policies that protect our common home and all who share it. A proposed set of actions to make progress towards this goal includes the following (to be finalized in the coming months).

- Advocating for social and ecological causes by identifying a social/environmental policy focus, organizing public and/or private community events with officials to discuss advocacy issues, maintaining a regular review of policies and sharing updates with the community, and having a community leader make public statements about advocacy issues
- Engaging the wider public by organizing social/ecological events, regularly exploring the local ecosystem as a group, and writing for local newspapers or commenting on local news stories related to *Laudato Si'* themes
- Developing a social response to shared challenges by collaborating with leaders to identify ways the Church can support your social/ecological programs and developing a community coalition to prepare for and respond to emergent social crises
- Developing resilience by analyzing the physical, social, and spiritual ways your community is likely to be affected by climate change and biodiversity loss and making a plan to resiliently prepare for those changes, ensuring buildings are prepared for changes in heat, storm intensity, and sea-level rise, and ensuring members of the community are able to travel to other locations in the event of a weather emergency

[Overview of Laudato Si' Goals and Actions \(laudatosiplatform.org\)](https://laudatosiplatform.org)



## REFLECTION

### Beads of Prayer

*The quest for solitude is a contradiction to the very nature of our society where noise and busyness abound and our purpose is to be found in our doing something*

(Chris McDonnell)



Prayer is never easy.

"Prayer and love are learned in the hour when prayer has become impossible and hearts have turned to stone," wrote Thomas Merton.

There is a struggle implicit in those words, a struggle that each one of us experiences as we seek to pray.

"In the hermitage, one must pray or go to seed," Merton wrote in a journal entry for December 5, 1964, in the early days of his becoming a hermit.

"The pretense of prayer will not suffice. Just sitting will not suffice. It has to be real. Yet, what can one do? Solitude puts you with your back to the wall, or your face to it, and this is good. So you pray to learn how to pray!" he noted.

It was certainly a struggle that Merton knew only too well.

Isaac of Syria linked love and prayer in a way that points to personal circumstance when he wrote that "love comes from prayer and prayer comes from remaining in seclusion".

For although many of us experience prayer in the company of others, be it in the parish, at school, among family or in the monastic community, there is an essential core in prayer that identifies a personal relationship with God. And in that, we are alone.

*"He went off to a lonely place and prayed there"*

Mark tells us in the first chapter of his Gospel account that "in the morning, long before dawn, (Jesus) got up and left the house and went off to a lonely place and prayed there".

Of course, this is not exclusive to our Christian commitment, for many faith traditions invite the experience of solitude,



a time of stillness and an opportunity just to be.

"Most of the time, we are lost in the past or carried away by the future. When we are mindful, deeply in touch with the present moment, our understanding of what is going on deepens, and we begin to be filled with acceptance, joy, peace and love," observes the Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh.

Sitting alone for an extended period of time, whether on an open hillside, by the shore of the ocean or in a church or at a shrine, is not easy. Our attention naturally wanders, distractions come and go, and we too often become caught up with lots of words and fine phrases in our attempt to be alone with the Alone.

This quest for solitude and quiet is, in fact, a contradiction to the very nature of our society where noise and busyness abound and our purpose is to be found in our doing something.

It was to help with such times that these beads were made.

They are not intended as traditional rosary beads, though they can be used for that purpose. Rather, offer a focal point for fingers to handle in a repetitive way during a time of meditation.

The loop, slipped over the second finger of the right hand, leaves the thumb and index finger available to go from bead to bead, back and forth, maybe to the background of music or the repetition of a simple phrase or just in silence.

A small group of beads, easily contained in the palm of the hand that offer a presence and a reminder -- whether it's outdoors in the garden, on a walk along a beach or down a city street; or indoors in the quiet tranquillity of an empty church or before a candle lit icon picture at home or in the dark hour before dawn.

Whatever the setting, the intention is the same: that the handling of the beads might bring us in to the still presence of God, and that finding us there, we might listen to him."

### *"Not in many words..."*

We may wish from time to time to use a simple repetitive phrase such as:

- Lord in your mercy, hear my prayer.
- Love comes from prayer.
- In your mercy Lord.
- Jesus, remember me.
- Into your hands Lord.

Maybe a line from a psalm that has some particular association for us can be repeated as our fingers move from bead to bead.

We might say slowly the Our Father, handling a bead with each phrase, and allowing time before rushing on to the next phrase, for it is time that we must give if meditative prayer is to grow in us.

As the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* said, "We must therefore pray in the height and the depth, the length and the breadth of our spirit- and not in many words but in a little word of one syllable."

Each string of beads has a central group of ten beads with ten spacing discs or smaller beads. A larger bead, by the loop, heads the string and is separated from the central group by one or two other beads.

Likewise, above the cross, hand-made from a hard wood, a further group of beads is placed. After a while, the cross and the beads develop their own patina from handling and the hours of our prayer struggle are evident in the worn wood.

This piece was written some ten years ago, long before I made the first bead string. It reflects the same story.

### *Hour of solitude*

Space for prayer time  
wordless hour of solitude  
inner silent peace  
Silent peace for wordless  
prayer space  
solitude of inner time  
Wordless  
Solitude  
space for  
inner peace  
silent prayer time hour.

And these few words written specifically for the beads:



## *Strung Stones*

Words are shaped smooth round  
beads, handled each day, gentle  
strung stones, passed between  
finger and thumb till darkened wood,

worn by touch, cross grained, is reached  
and the return journey begins.

[Chris McDonnell is a retired head teacher  
from England and a regular columnist for  
La Croix International.]

<https://international.la-croix.com/news/religion/beads-of-prayer/14582>



## *TALKING ABOUT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (CPTD) <sup>1</sup>*

### *Animals and humanity in the world*

(Brienne Donaldson)

*Are animals a talking point in our Religious Education classes? Should they be? If so, what are the lessons to be drawn from the article below? Read Job Chapters 38 and 39 before reading the article<sup>2</sup>*



*The Joy of Creation (Bill Bell)*

swaddling clothes (38:9). Leo Perdue writes, “It is infant chaos, not human mortals, whom Yahweh nurtures.” Binding the creation in this way keeps chaos under control. Even light, which changes reality as it illuminates the shape of all things, cannot be contained by

Job 38-39 offers a picture of a creation-centered universe in which humanity and creatures are in dialectical<sup>3</sup> relationship. It reveals kenosis<sup>4</sup>, or self-limitation, as the grain<sup>5</sup> of an aesthetic universe, which all creation is persuaded to mimic.

### *Creation-centered universe*

Without question, the first Yahweh speech offers a unique glimpse of a powerful God symbolically defined against other deities of ancient Near Eastern mythology (38:8, 32, 38). The “war of words” between Job and Yahweh introduces the four inexplicable spheres of earth, sea, heaven, and underworld, and with them the artistry of a divine midwife who brought it all into being. Yahweh is a master architect, laying the earth’s foundations and garnering the praise of the stars and the heavenly councils. The Lord is also a divine parent who wraps the newborn creation in

<sup>1</sup> Read this article for CPTD points. See Page 24.

<sup>2</sup> Editor’s note

<sup>3</sup> Give-and-take between two differing points of view

<sup>4</sup> Self-emptying

<sup>5</sup> Tendency or inclination

humans. In a corrective translation by Robert Gordis, Yahweh asks Job, “Can you take light to its border? Can you trace its path home?” (38:19). Light is shed on wickedness but also on those who defy the rule of God. The mysteries of death are preserved even further below the abyss of the sea, another phenomenon incomprehensible to human knowing.

Additionally, the relationship between the Creator and the land and creatures is independent of humans. In fact, human existence is unnecessary for the animals and natural phenomena seen in this text as under the intimate care of God. The trust between the Creator and her creation is implicit in divine provision of what each animal needs for survival, “from instinct to food to the capacity to reproduce.” There is a movement from rebuking Job to instructing him in wonder. Yahweh puts Job in his place by stating what Job doesn’t know, but at the same time God *proclaims* what Job doesn’t know and points to “a world full of an emotional hum not assumed by Job’s rationally grounded questioning of the deity.” Except the horse, the animals paired in these verses dwell in regions uninhabited by humans. These creatures do not fear or dread humanity (compare Gen. 9:2: “The fear and dread of you shall rest on every animal of the earth...”). According to Perdue, many of the animals cited would have been “hunted by Ancient Near East kings in ritual acts designed to secure order in society and the cosmos.” He continues: “In a striking repudiation of an anthropology<sup>6</sup> in which humans are kings in God’s creation, Yahweh speaks of sustaining a world hostile to human life. The anthropological tradition grounded in the metaphor of humanity as king is shattered. Dwelling in a reality that is not anthropocentric<sup>7</sup>, Job receives no divine commission to go forth and subdue the cosmos.” The ethical workings of the universe are grounded in a kind of ordered rationality, but they also rest firmly on Yahweh’s aesthetic<sup>8</sup> appreciation of the universe for what it is.

### *A dialectic of humanity and creatures*

The distinction between the beautiful and the irrational is worth expanding. According to Horne, “the dialectic of anthropology and cosmology<sup>9</sup> represents the best approach to expressing the theology of wisdom literature.” Job is not at creation’s centre. Placing the beautiful over against rational human justice is the means by which the Yahweh speeches teach Job about the ethical order of the universe. Set against the symbolic use of animals elsewhere in the book as signs of wealth and power (1:3), or as victims of religious sacrifice (1:5; 42:8), the animals in chapters 38–39 are not “mere possessions manipulated by human owners.” Neither are they used allegorically (as elsewhere in the book) to illustrate wicked (24:5; 30:29) or exemplary behaviour (9:26). The images of 38–39 also take us in a direction different from that of the didactic<sup>10</sup> concern about the relationship between humankind and God found earlier, in Elihu’s contention that the Maker crafts humans wiser than the birds (35:11), for example.

The dialectic of 38–39 demonstrates that animals have value aside from human aims. Further, they have real lives given them by their Designer. The freedom of the wild donkey in 39:5 is indicated by its obstinacy and speed and general avoidance of humans.

Writes Gordis, “The poet here adopts the limited perspective of man, who normally expects these animals to be in bondage for his benefit.” Fetters of humanity are not the ultimate authority for these animals. Gordis provides a more accurate translation of 39:1, “Do you know when the mountain goats give birth?” changing it to “Do you know about the lusts of the mountain goats?” The desires of animals can be seen, at least in part, as intentional and inspirational.

---

<sup>6</sup> A way of understanding human beings

<sup>7</sup> Having humankind at the centre

<sup>8</sup> Concerned with beauty

<sup>9</sup> Conversation between the meaning of humanity and the world

<sup>10</sup> Teaching



Even the “unnatural behaviour” of an ostrich who does not care for its young (39:13–18) is the handiwork of God, revealing the diverse character of creation, if one at variance from a rational model. The portrayal of the hawk or vulture (of 39:26, 30), with its unique lifestyle needs, further upsets the human hierarchy. The bird God exults in, Gordis writes, “is not merely of no use to man, but actually feeds on his body.”

The parabolic use<sup>11</sup> of animals requires that the teacher identify some similarities between humans and other animals, so the latter work as teaching models. But these chapters do not assign anthropomorphic<sup>12</sup> qualities to animals; they do not accentuate traits that would make the animals seem human. Rather, these animals possess real cries, longings (38:41, 39:1), and even a laughter all their own (ox and ostrich); they serve as pedagogical instruments for Job’s learning.

### *Self-limitation and the preservation of freedom*

The ethical order of the universe comes through in lessons of beauty, divine provision, and intimate relation with “irrational” creatures in their own right. Humans are not the mediators of value to the universe. Animals and nature teach their own lessons to Job.

Prominent among these lessons is a divine ontology<sup>13</sup> radically different from the one evident in the traditional view of Job’s friends. Although the swaddling control of the universe is intact, that control takes on a limited shape. The divine parameters of creation are not set through all-powerful coercion but through the preservation within creation of freedom to respond. The strange habits of the ostrich (39:17), the obstinacy of the wild donkey (39:7)—these behaviours are allowed. Just as the offspring of the deer “grow up in the open; go forth, and do not return to them” (39:4), neither does the ox return to any human crib (39:9). A divine acceptance allows things to be what they are. The wild ox has to give its “consent” (39:11), just as Job is free to serve and fear Yahweh gratuitously.

Both are also free not to do so.

The preservation of freedom requires a self-limiting God who is nothing like the retributive deity described by Eliphaz (4:9–11), “a destructive tyrant who overpowers and even brings to their end animals who do not yield to the divine will.” The whelps of the lioness are no longer scattered as in 4:11. Instead their particular longings are satisfied (38:39–40). Nature



Creation (Brigitte Whittingham)

becomes a canvas on which the character of the universe is painted; we can participate in that change. A kenotic Creator preserves the freedom of creation’s response by invitation and persuasion. Inevitably, this freedom will lead to some suffering and competition, but

---

<sup>11</sup> Expressed in parable form

<sup>12</sup> Human

<sup>13</sup> Order of being



the kenotic God will not coerce things into being what they are not, by stealing their freedom and forcing compliance.

This kenotic disposition is represented in a pacifist example. By choosing not to kill an armed intruder, human kenosis or self-limitation may lead to suffering and perhaps the injury of others whom one's violence could protect. However, self-limitation, whether creaturely or divine, will not violate the grain of the universe. Mutual relationship and interdependence is the imago Dei that all creation is capable of imitating. Job 38-39 presents a cruciform<sup>14</sup> theology that illumines the path humans should take to find their rightful relationship to the elements and particular creatures whose lives are affected by our actions: Let them be.

Invite and persuade. Never coerce or subdue. Yahweh's aesthetic appreciation of a beautifully free universe, however irrational it may seem, grounds all ethical inquiry.

### *Closing*

Job's appeal to human justice is corrected in these chapters. The divine speeches show that a formula of deeds and consequences is not adequate to "cover the complexity brought on by the needs for survival, of real freedom and choice or relationships between caregivers and care receivers, of simultaneous foolishness and beauty."

The invitation is to think theologically about the creation-centered world of Job, the true dialectic between the uniquely gifted lives of animals and the value imposed on them by humans. Readers of Job 38-39 witness a self-limiting Maker who shows humanity how to recover a sense of belonging among earth's creatures, and a challenge to reconsider our relationship with nonhuman animals within our daily actions and within systems of consumption.



## **CLASSROOM PRACTICE**

### **RE Today Catalogues**

#### ***NEW Resources Catalogue: Digital & Interactive!***

We've gone digital with our RE Today Resources Catalogue!

As a Primary RE teacher, you can now access all our high-quality classroom resources, browse our best-selling publications, online CPD courses and webinars as well as professional development opportunities and consultancy at your fingertips - all fully indexed by major world faiths and non-religious worldviews in RE to support RE at your school!

#### **How does it work?**

The digital catalogue is interactive, so you can easily navigate to the areas you want find out more information on. Simply:

**FLICK** through the pages to our resources, publications, courses, professional development, consultancy etc.

**PICK** what you would like to order

**CLICK** on the item to place your order directly from our web shop

---

<sup>14</sup> In the form of a cross - implying suffering

### Can I download the catalogue?

You can download the PDF and still access the interactive elements to the catalogue. Look out for the downward arrow icon located on the footer of the flipbook.

### Can I print the catalogue?

Once you've downloaded the catalogue as explained above, you can print off a copy and keep in your staff room for your colleagues to browse through. Please note that you will lose the interactive ability when you print the catalogue.

**P.S. Look out for special offers on some of our best-selling resource bundles!**

**CTRL + Click in this box to access the catalogue**

**[RE Today Catalogue - EYFS & Primary RE](#)**



## ARTISTS' CORNER

### *Julie Heffernan - Environmental Art*

Environmental art is a range of artistic practices encompassing both historical approaches to nature in art and more recent ecological and politically motivated types of works. Environmental art has evolved away from formal concerns, worked out with earth as a sculptural material, towards a deeper relationship to systems, processes and phenomena in relationship to social concerns. Integrated social and ecological approaches developed as an ethical, restorative stance emerged in the 1990s. Over the past ten years environmental art has become a focal point of exhibitions around the world as the social and cultural aspects of climate change come to the forefront. The term "environmental art" often encompasses "ecological" concerns but is not specific to them. It primarily celebrates an artist's connection with nature using natural materials. The concept is best understood in relationship to historic earth/Land art and the evolving field of ecological art. The field is interdisciplinary in the fact that environmental artists embrace ideas from science and philosophy. The practice encompasses traditional media, new media and critical social forms of production. The work embraces a full range of landscape/environmental conditions from the rural, to the suburban and urban as well as urban/rural industrial (Wikipedia).

On the following page are two paintings by the environmental artist, Julie Heffernan:

- ❖ Last resort (TOP)
- ❖ Self-portrait as hiveminder (BOTTOM)

To view more go to

[Bright Environmental Paintings Focused on Survival by Artist Julie Heffernan | Colossal \(thisiscolossal.com\)](http://thisiscolossal.com)

Or her website <https://www.julieheffernan.net/>





Julie Heffernan is a contemporary American painter known for her Baroque-inspired fantasy portraits and landscapes. Influenced by allegories, politics, and literature, Heffernan's work explores a sensual fantasy realm where plants and animals coexist in harmony within a lush, plentiful atmosphere. In a reoccurring series, she paints women standing in full skirts made out of ripe fruit or blooming flowers. "When I look back on my work, I realize I was wrestling with my own psychic and physical growth," the artist has said. "I realize now that when I was doing the flower skirts, they were about a burgeoning sexuality. [...] Now I've shifted my work entirely to the tortured landscape. I'm looking



around for new metaphors for my own present-day experience.” Heffernan notably employs an aesthetic based on the traditional oil painting techniques of Northern Renaissance artists—such as Hieronymous Bosch—while maintaining a wholly contemporary atmosphere that seems to come more from science fiction than art historical tropes. Born in 1956 in Peoria, IL, Heffernan went on to receive her BFA from the University of California Santa Cruz and an MFA from the Yale University School of Art in 1985, where she worked alongside fellow figurative painter Lisa Yuskavage. Today, Herffernan’s works are in the collections of the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Knoxville Museum of Art, the Norton Museum of Art in West Palm Beach, and the Virginia Museum of Fine Art in Richmond, among others. She lives and works in New York, NY.

[Julie Heffernan | Artnet](#)



## WEBSITE

*Yale Forum on Religion and ecology*

[Ecojustice | Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology](#)



The Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology is an international multireligious project contributing to a new academic field and an engaged moral force of religious environmentalism. With its conferences, publications, monthly newsletter, and website, it explores religious worldviews, texts, and ethics in order to contribute to environmental solutions along with science, policy, law, economics, and appropriate technology.

The Forum was founded in 1998 by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim and has been based at Yale University since 2006. Please explore the About Us section for more information on the Mission, History, and Projects of the Forum.

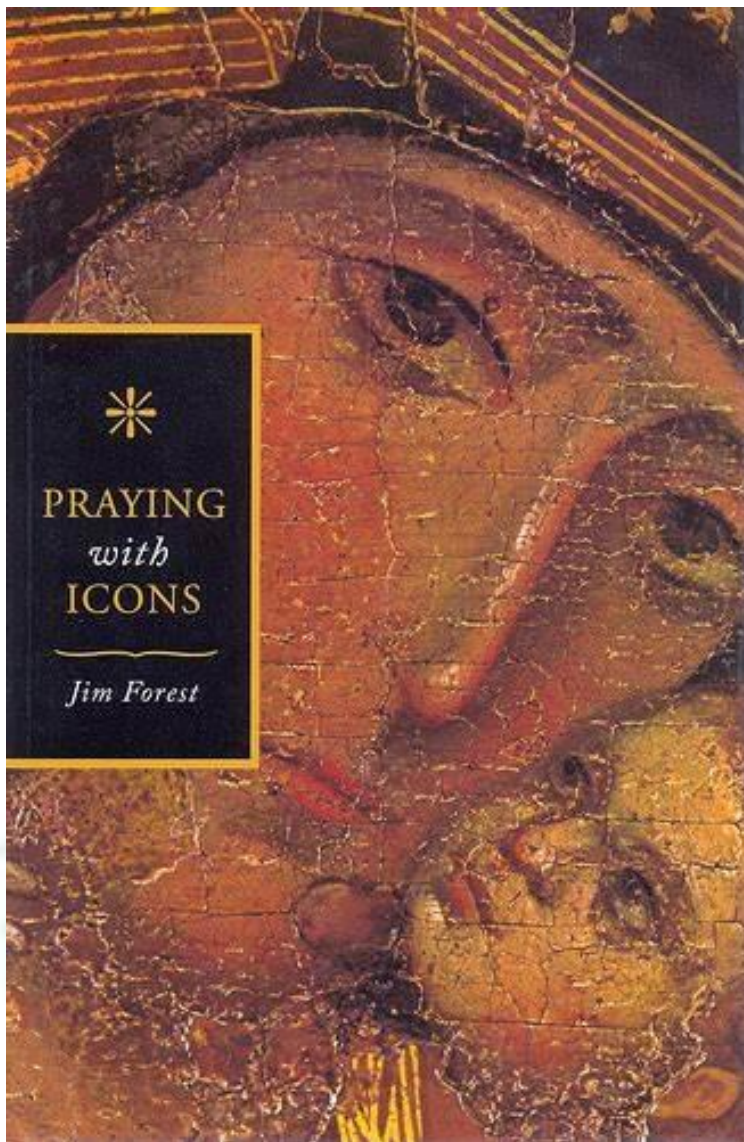


## BOOK REVIEW

### *Praying with Icons*

(Jim Forest)

*An Orthodox explanation of icons as aids to prayer.*



Jim Forest, a convert to the Russian Orthodox Church, provides a succinct and profound overview of the use of icons in this tradition. For Orthodox Christians, these art forms have long been a visual meditation and an aid to prayer and worship. Forest also sees them as physical objects that provide bridges to Christ, links with the saints, and reminders of significant events in the history of salvation.

Using icons, which are illustrated with both colour plates and black and white photographs, the author ponders the mystical meanings of the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Raising of Lazarus, the Transfiguration, the Descent of the Holy Spirit, and much more. This book will enable you to re-envision the importance of beauty, reverence, and attention as important spiritual practices. It also contains a series of prayers that can be used with the icons.

[Praying with Icons by Jim Forest | Review | Spirituality & Practice \(spiritualityandpractice.com\)](http://spiritualityandpractice.com)





## LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### *Nobel Laureates Urge Humanity to Stop 'Taking Colossal Risks with Our Common Future'*

(Brett Wilkins, staff writer)

Published on Thursday, April 29, 2021 by [Common Dreams](#)

*"We need to reinvent our relationship with planet Earth. The future of all life on this planet—humans and our societies included—requires us to become effective stewards of the global commons."*



The sky over San Francisco and much of northern California turned orange on September 9, 2020 due to numerous climate-driven wildfires burning in the region. (Photo: Jessica Christian/*The San Francisco Chronicle* via Getty Images)

Warning that "time is running out to prevent irreversible changes" to the planet, a group of academics including 13 Nobel laureates on Thursday issued an "urgent call for action" in the form of "effective planetary stewardship" to address the climate emergency, global health threats including pandemics, and various forms of inequality.

In a statement acknowledging that "humankind faces new challenges at unprecedented scale"—including the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the climate emergency, inequality, and what they call an "information crisis"—the academics assert that "time is the natural resource in shortest supply."

"The next decade is crucial," they write. "Global greenhouse gas emissions need to be cut by half and destruction of nature halted and reversed. An essential foundation for this transformation is to address destabilizing inequalities in the world. Without transformational action this decade, humanity is taking colossal risks with our common future. Societies risk large-scale, irreversible changes to Earth's biosphere and our lives as part of it."

**"The long-term potential of humanity depends upon our ability today to value our common future. Ultimately, this means valuing the resilience of societies and the resilience of Earth's biosphere."**

**—Academics' statement**



We need to reinvent our relationship with planet Earth. The future of all life on this planet, humans and our societies included, requires us to become effective stewards of the global commons—the climate, ice, land, ocean, freshwater, forests, soils, and rich diversity of life that regulate the state of the planet, and combine to create a unique and harmonious life-support system. There is now an existential need to build economies and societies that support Earth system harmony rather than disrupt it.

"The Anthropocene epoch," they write, "is more likely to be characterized by speed, scale, and shock at global levels."

"We must act on the urgency, the scale, and the interconnectivity between us and our home, planet Earth," it says. "More than anything, planetary stewardship will be facilitated by enhancing social capital—building trust within societies and between societies."

**"Humanity is waking up late to the challenges and opportunities of active planetary stewardship. But we *are* waking up."**

"Global sustainability offers the only viable path to human safety, equity, health, and progress," the statement says. "Humanity is waking up late to the challenges and opportunities of active planetary stewardship. But we *are* waking up. Long-term, scientifically based decision-making is always at a disadvantage in the contest with the needs of the present."

The academics' call to action follows the 2021 Nobel Prize Summit, a first-of-its-kind virtual event at which scientists, policymakers, business leaders, and youth activists explored near-term solutions to set the planet on a path "to a more sustainable, more prosperous future for all of humanity."



Roots & Wings



## *Divestment from Fossil Fuels*

[Faith institutions divest from fossil fuels and call for just recovery ahead of G7 and COP26 - Laudato Si Week](#)



7 MAY 2021

Today, 36 faith institutions from 11 countries announce their divestment from fossil fuels. It comes from institutions in Brazil, Argentina, India, the Philippines, Uganda, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Ireland, the UK and the United States.

Today's announcement comes from Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist institutions, among others. The group includes the Church in Wales, with more than £700 million (\$975 million) of assets under management, which voted to divest from fossil fuels at its Governing Body meeting in April. It also includes the Diocese of Bristol and the Diocese of Oxford, the first Church of England dioceses to announce their divestment from fossil fuels, as well as seven Catholic dioceses from the UK and Ireland and several religious orders from around the world.

The global divestment announcement, which takes place as the UK prepares to host the G7 Summit in June and the UN climate summit (COP26) in Glasgow in November, demonstrates the leadership of faith organisations highlighting the urgent need to divest from fossil fuels and invest

in clean alternatives in response to the growing climate crisis.

As governments around the world continue to invest significant sums in economic recovery packages, it is vital that these investments support a just and green recovery from Covid-19. Yet, as the UN has stated, only 18% of the Covid-19 recovery spending announced by the world's 50 biggest economies in 2020 can be considered green. Governments have given considerable financial support to the fossil fuel industry in their Covid-19 recovery packages.

The announcement comes a day before the Royal Dutch Shell AGM is set to take place, on Tuesday 18 May. Shell has been coming under considerable pressure as a result of its plans to increase gas production by 20 per cent in the next few years. The Methodist Church announced it had divested its remaining fossil fuel holdings at the end of April 2021, including £21 million (\$29 million) of shares in Royal Dutch Shell, citing Shell's 'inadequate' climate plans.

In February, the UK Supreme Court allowed a group of 42,500 Nigerian

farmers and fishermen to sue Shell in English courts after years of oil spills in the Niger Delta contaminated land and groundwater. The UK government is facing a court challenge over its controversial decision to provide \$1 billion to a massive liquified natural gas (LNG) development operated by French oil company Total in Mozambique.

Rt Revd Ernesto Manuel, Anglican Bishop of Nampula in Northern Mozambique, said: "Fossil fuel investments increase climate change and impacts on those most vulnerable, and also destabilise communities. We have seen how over 700,000 people in Northern Mozambique have been displaced – many fleeing for their lives in terror from insurgents. Dozens have been beheaded, even children as young as 12. This violence only occurs in the areas where gas prospecting is taking place. Locals are not consulted and nor do they benefit, only suffering the impacts of rising prices, pollution and loss of land. We plead with the international community – take your money out of fossil fuels and invest in renewable energy which

is decentralised, benefits local people and does not contribute to climate change."

The announcement takes place during Laudato Si' Week, a celebration of the progress the Roman Catholic Church has made on its journey to ecological conversion following Pope Francis' encyclical on climate change and ecology.

Faith communities have long been at the forefront of the global divestment movement, and have contributed the single greatest number of commitments. Out of the global total of over 1,300 divestment commitments made to date, more than 450 are from faith institutions.

Tomás Insua, Executive Director of the Global Catholic Climate Movement, said: "Our common home cannot take any more dirty fossil energy, so today's announcement is great news. It's heartening to see how Catholic institutions are implementing the Vatican's fossil fuel divestment guidelines, in tandem with so many other faith-based institutions. I hope it inspires many others to follow suit, decisively responding to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor."



## A short history of synodality

*The synodal process, from the early Church to the pontificate of Pope Francis*



Launch of the Versailles Synod, at Saint-Louis Cathedral, September 2021. (Photo by CORINNE SIMON/CIRIC)

Read more at: <https://international.la-croix.com/news/religion/a-short-history-of-synodality/15016>

(Honorine Grasset | France)

The Catholic Church this weekend officially begins preparations for the next ordinary assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which will take place in October 2023 in Rome.

The theme Pope Francis has chosen for the gathering is "For a synodal church: communion, participation and mission."

In doing so, he is seeking to give new impetus to a synodal process that has involved the whole people of God since the very beginning of the Church.



### *What is the origin of synods?*

From the earliest days of the Church, people gathered to discern when they were faced with a crisis or at a turning point.

The Acts of the Apostles tell that when the early Christian communities needed to resolve certain practical problems or pastoral questions, they held an assembly of believers, called on the Holy Spirit and discussed with those in authority.

"The convocation of assemblies is a very old and traditional practice in the Church. It has taken place with more or less intensity according to the periods of history," says Gilles Routhier, member of the Synod of Bishops' theological commission on synodality.

Whether diocesan, local or ecumenical, synods or councils can be traced continuously from the early Church to the Second Vatican Council, which marked a real renewal of this practice."

The Greek word 'synod' is originally the equivalent of the Latin concilium or council in English," Routhier says.

"In a context of crisis, contention or in a period when the Church needs to reform, synods are used so that a common decision can be reached following a process of discernment," he points out.

St. Cyprian, the third century bishop of Carthage and a Church Father, made it a rule not to decide anything "without your counsel and without the suffrage of the people, according to my personal opinion".

### *How can we define "synodality"?*

The word synod comes from the Greek sun-odos, a road traveled together.

Through this notion of a common journey, synodality is presented as a process during which it is a matter of listening and discerning God's will for the Church of this time, involving all the baptized.

For ecclesiologist Routhier, the term synodality "says something about the original form of governance in the Church, since it implies working together, coming together as an assembly, through the differentiated participation of all".

Rather than a theoretical definition, Isabelle Morel, theologian and co-author of *Petit Manuel de Synodalité* (The Little Handbook on Synodality), prefers to speak of synodality's criteria.

"Synodality is like a mode of governance of the Church that brings about a dynamic. To do this, it is first necessary to be able to listen to the people, and the Holy Spirit through them," she says.

"The entire synodal process carries more weight when it begins by listening to the voice of the baptized," Morel says.

"In order to respect a process of maturation, it is necessary to allow for time, moments of silence. The gathering must take place in the name of Jesus Christ, with people who are in a variety of states of life and situations," she says.

This representative aspect is necessary to allow the "sensus fidei" of the faithful to be heard.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) affirmed that "the entire body of the faithful... cannot err in matters of belief" (Lumen gentium n. 12) and that this sense of faith "is aroused and sustained by the Spirit of truth".

### *What has happened since Vatican II?*

The last council was a moment to rediscover synodality as experienced at the international level.

Refusing to ratify documents the Roman Curia had prepared before Vatican II even got underway, the Council Fathers collaborated with experts and became involved in the drafting of new texts in a different way.

After having experienced for four years the richness of this mode of government of the Church, Paul VI created the "Synod of Bishops" in 1965.

The list of Synod assemblies convened since then shows the importance of this institution. The more recent assemblies have focused on the Word of God (2008), the family (2014-2015) and the Amazon (2019), for example.

The pontificate of Pope Francis is particularly characterized by the conviction that the Church is essentially synodal.

### *Is this a form of democracy?*

No, the synod is not a parliament. Synodality cannot be confused with party politics in which the minority camp is submissive to the majority camp's position.

"The risk would be to spontaneously come to the assembly already having a certainty about what the Church should do," notes Routhier.

"At the Synod on the Amazon, we saw that everyone came with their own solutions or opinions on ordinating the viri probati. But the question the participants had to answer was rather: 'Church of Amazonia, how is God calling you to announce the Gospel?'," Routhier notes.

While the fruit of the synodal process is the result of the communion of the people of God, it is not, however, a compromise, synthesis or consensus.

"We must recognize that ecclesial authority assumes a necessary service of communion and decision-making," Isabelle Morel emphasizes.

"The quality of listening is one of the fundamental criteria. Authority is the guarantor of unity in fidelity to Jesus Christ. If the final result is different from the initial intuition, it's a good sign!" she says.

### *What are the challenges of synodality for the Church today?*

Synodality unfolds the ecclesiology developed by Vatican II: that all the baptized participate in the life of the Church as members of the People of God.

But Morel issues a cautionary note.

"There can be no fruitful synodality without training the baptized, including priests and bishops," she says.

"To be useful to the life of the Church, one needs an 'enlightened conscience'," she adds.

The renewal of synodality also appears to be a sign of the times, especially in the way power is exercised in the Church.

"The Church no longer needs monarchs," recently stated Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary general of the Synod of Bishops. "The path of synodality" – said Pope Francis in 2015 on the fiftieth anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops – "is the path that God expects of the Church of the third millennium."



## Days of purification

(Yann Vagneux | Nepal)

*A Catholic missionary in Nepal and his experience of the "feast of non-violence" that is observed by followers of the ancient Indian religion of Jainism*



Every year at the beginning of September, the Jains observe the Paryushan festival. It is a time of intense spiritual purification, based on fasting and prayer.

Throughout ten days of austerity, the faithful meditate on each of the virtues they wish to acquire to the highest degree: forgiveness, humility, straightforwardness, purity, truthfulness, self-restraint, austerity, renunciation, non-attachment and chastity.

These qualities are obtained through an inner liberation from the evils that plague human existence: anger, lust, pride, greed and covetousness.

Thus, the one whose karma is purified can set out again on the road to awakening and deliverance from the cycle of rebirths (samsara).

During Paryushan, I rarely get together with my Jain friends because I do not want to disturb their spiritual observance.

I wait until the very last day of Paryushan when they celebrate Kshamavani or "Forgiveness Day". In the afternoon, everyone rushes to the temples and the men sit in a circle in the middle of the forecourt, under the gaze of the women who have put on their most beautiful saris.

For a long time, people stand in silence before saying the traditional prayer of

Michchhami dukkhadam: "I forgive all living beings. May all souls forgive me. I am the friend of all. I have no animosity towards any soul. May all my faults be dissolved."

Then begins a joyful hullabaloo where, as everyone stands up, they try to be quicker than the other in asking for forgiveness for the faults that, consciously or unconsciously, were committed against the other over the last year.

In this way, the whole community is renewed in deep peace.

The joy of Kshamavani gives one the opportunity to enter into the heart of the noble Jain way.

One of their verses says that forgiveness is the treasure of heroes. Indeed, the forgiver ceases to feel resentment towards others: the person is freed from the inner anger that inevitably leads them to violence.

In a sense, forgiveness is the only path to non-violence (ahimsa), which Jainism has made "the highest moral virtue" according to the Sanskrit adage: ahimsa paramo dharma.

In the 20th century, no one was more influenced by the virtue of non-violence than Mahatma Gandhi, who placed it at the heart of his spirituality and his political action.

"No religion in the world has explained the principle of non-violence (ahimsa) so deeply and systematically, with its applicability in life, as in Jainism," he wrote.

For Gandhi, ahimsa was much more than not doing physical violence to others. It was an inner struggle against resentment, falsehood and dishonesty.

Put positively, ahimsa is a creative force that leads us to seek the truth and conform to it when we have found it.



"Non-violence is a way of life, a way of working for peace, of resolving conflicts and of relating to different people who appear as enemies, not through power but through greater love and deep respect. It

is above all a path of personal transformation that seeks to eliminate all forms of selfishness, pride, hatred and violence within oneself" (Jean Vanier).

<https://international.la-croix.com/news/religion/days-of-purification/14938>



## CPTD

### *Animals and humanity in the world*

Read the article for CPTD points and record your response to the following questions:

- What is the writer's main argument?
- What significance does the argument have in my context?
- What practical action does the argument's conclusion suggest?

### *Professional Development Points Schedule*

<https://www.sace.gov.za/Documentation/PROFESSIONAL%20DEVELOPMENT%20POINTS%20SCHEDULE.pdf>



Catholic  
Institute of  
Education  
CREATING FUTURES



66 Nelson Road, Booyens, Johannesburg 2091  
P O Box 2083 Southdale 2135;  
Tel: 011 433 1888 Web: [www.cie.org.za](http://www.cie.org.za)

