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LITURGICAL-SACRAMENTAL ACTION AND ECOLOGY REGARDING *LAUDATO SÌ*

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Abstract: This research seeks to analyze ecological liturgical pastoral praxis today. Praxis is the reflective and material activity of the human being, it is a transformative action, for an ecoliturgical pastoral in the public dimension of faith. The research consists of studying the interrelationship that must exist between Liturgy and Ecology, based on biblical concepts and the way in which praxis can influence and articulate itself for the development of an ecoliturgy in the current reality, having as a reference space the church in Brazil and especially the Amazon and the Encyclical: *Laudato Si* (LS). The research is developed in three stages: presentation and considerations about the *Laudato Si*: About caring for the Common Home; a contextualization of the current situation; and finally, the approach to liturgical-sacramental action and ecology.

Keywords: Liturgy; ecology; *Laudato Si*; ecoliturgy; praxis.

INTRODUCTION

A first consideration that we want to make is that every liturgy arises in a social, historical and spatial context, being influenced by these aspects, and the way of life produced by the liturgy also influences the economy, politics, and human relations, as well as in the relationship with the elements of nature.

And besides, the contemporary liturgy in its relationship with issues of reality, such as the environment, ecology and types of celebrations, needs a new paradigm, a reference for a spirituality that gives meaning to life and an awareness of interconnection with the creation. Therefore, our intention at this point will be to analyze the ecological liturgical-sacramental pastoral practice in

the life of the Church, but especially, to verify how we can collaborate in the care of the common home. Praxis is the reflective and material activity of the human being, it is a transformative action, for a pastoral, which we could perhaps call “ecoliturgy” in the public dimension of faith (BUYST, 2008)¹.

We want to study and propose a conversation about the interrelationship that must exist between liturgical-sacramental action and ecology, based on biblical-theological concepts and the way in which praxis can influence and articulate itself for the development of a type of ecoliturgy in the current reality.

1. *Laudato Si*: about caring for our Common Home

Pope Francis’ Encyclical Letter: *Laudato Si*, it’s like a wake-up call to the world to help humanity understand the destruction that man is causing to the environment and others. By directly addressing the environment, the document’s scope is broader in many ways, as it analyzes not only man’s effect on the environment, but also the many philosophical, theological and cultural causes that threaten man’s relationships with nature. and man, with humanity in various circumstances. This document is, in many ways, the epitome of Pope Francis. It is an unexpected work that presents the truths of the Gospel and offers a challenge for all believers, but also for non-believers.

THE MESSAGE OF THE DOCUMENT

Pope Francis was very courageous in placing the struggle that the world is fighting today in the light of faith. The situation of our home is not only of interest to politicians,

1. I. Buyst says that ecoliturgy: “It is a liturgy that educates us to care for the universe in the place where we occupy it, also applying in this case the recognized formulation: think globally and act locally». As Saint Paul already stated: ‘Everything was created by Him and for Him’ (Col 1:16). He says how Teilhard spoke of ‘holy matter’. ‘The Cosmos is the work of God and requires a contemplative approach (...). Everything is a great cosmic liturgy. Worship leads us to feel God’s step through the Universe. It is up to us to capture and celebrate this great cosmic festival”.

movements, organizations and ecological groups, but it is everyone's responsibility to take care of the earth. The document presents in a very realistic way the Church's approach to human abuse in its relationship with nature. He presented some environmental problems caused by various speculative, but basically, they are caused only by an anthropological issue. For example, the loss of biodiversity and the lack of natural resources such as water are not the effects of a population that continues to increase, but the imbalance in the distribution of goods is caused by selfishness, by anthropocentric roots. In addition to criticism, the letter proposes a path, a solution, a path to achieving the favorable objective of the state of the world. Ecology is a topic that has not received much attention in the recent past, but its issue is a reality that, behind humanity's ignorance, is degrading and disappearing. "Everything is interconnected" (LS, 142), therefore, it is no coincidence that we are talking about man's activities and their effects, because man is part of nature and nature is part of man.

The core of the document is aimed above all at Christians, at people who have a confident sensitivity towards nature, at people who love the world like Christ, at people who are truly strong in changing not the world, but first and foremost themselves. same. It is necessary to look at one's own identity and reality to understand and accept the calling that is given to each person. Reflect and internalize the responsibility entrusted to you. To live in harmony with the world that is not under man, but with man, he also moves towards a glorious goal. "Creation as it is created from the beginning, is loved, desired and admired by God, is in his thought as man is the fruit of divine thought" (BENEDICT XVI, 2005). The Supreme Pontiff, Pope Francis wants to talk to everyone about what is happening in our common home to make us aware

of our situation and invite us to promote a community network to spread a culture of altruistic and environmental care and a life of mature spirituality and ecological spiritual.

THE REALITY - HOW THINGS ARE

Creation today is screaming like never before, fighting to be freed (Rm 8). The current environmental crisis particularly affects the poor and vulnerable. There is an urgent need for action on the part of Christians and all people of good will. If we are to be honest guardians of this wonderful planet, entire nations and peoples need an ecological conversion. We can still change the course of history.

Our faith desires that creation be cared for and renewed. A completely new way of living opens up as a result of a personal and passionate relationship with Jesus. We receive the grace to go beyond ourselves. We gain new strength to care (LS, 208) for others and for creation (LS, 217). We can live with a new horizon, embracing Jesus' vision of the Kingdom of God, of a renewed and transformed world and ecosystem, where we are all brothers and sisters, responsible for each other.

We must understand the need for reconciliation with the Creator and the created. We realize what we are involved in, what we are part of and not just think about destroying, enjoying, without recognizing the gift. This way, it allows a true examination of conscience, to verify our relationship with creation, to consider the liturgical space as the identity of the human being in contact with the sacred and, at the same time, in the reunion with himself, based on his physical nature., emotional and spiritual. We remember that Mircea Eliade defined the sacred in terms of man and divinity:

The sacred is an element in the structure of consciousness, not a stage in the history of this consciousness. It is by imitating the models revealed by Supernatural Beings that human life takes on meaning. The imitation of transhuman models constitutes one of the primary characteristics of “religious” life, a structural characteristic that is indifferent to culture and time. From the most archaic religious documents accessible to us to Christianity and Islam, *imitatio dei*, as a norm and guideline of human existence, has never been interrupted; in reality, it could not have been any other way. At more archaic levels of culture, living as a human being is in itself a religious act, as food, sexual life and work have a sacramental value. In other terms, being, or rather, becoming a man means being religious (ELIADE, 2001, p. 18).

We must also not forget that every celebration space must reflect “the spirituality of the community and be a true sign of the Kingdom that this community wants to announce” (MACHADO, 2001, p. 9). In this we can highlight that in the popular liturgy there is a kind of eco-liturgy that involves nature, the environment and its relationship with the body and other various forms of celebrating the Creator. Maraschin states that there is a certain crisis, since the elaboration of the liturgy, of the meaning of space as a meaning of life, of the causes and objectives defended in our liturgies, as if it were something disconnected from reality and the environment. Generally, the type of space we have is reflected in liturgies and churches, a mirror of European and capitalist society, focused on power and domination, consumption and political interests, which does not always reflect the context of a local community (Cf MARASCHIN, 1996, p. 162-163).

LITURGICAL-SACRAMENTAL ACTION AND ECOLOGY

In the relationship between liturgy, space and sacred ², liturgy can really act on the human mind, offering knowledge and proposing transformations, when necessary, in the experience lived by humanity, which is why it: “needs to be urgently discovered (...) as a spiritual adventure that engages the self in a rich experience of life, intelligence and emotions” (COELHO, 2006, p. 32).

M. Eliade, in turn, states that: “if spaces do not create identity and meaning of existence, human beings lose their reference” (ELIADE, 2001, p.18). This way, the crisis of liturgical space is a crisis of respect for human life, for others and their problems, for nature. Is ecology, the environment the space of God’s creation and life? “What is the human person in relation to his space?”

Doesn’t empty space touch us?... For the person... space is not homogeneous” (ELIADE, 2001, p.18-20). Specifically, when this concept of space is assumed, it is considered that they are always spaces of life and well-being, of birth, of identity, of relationships, of others, of proximity, it is your home, it is your home.

It is precisely in the experience of space that the habitable environment is created. This space identifies, reflects and speaks to the spirituality of the community, its way of being, believing and seeing the world, of finding peace and feeling at home. Where we are is the place of encounter, of relationship and communion, of coexistence and forgiveness, of friendship, of life. An integral liturgical space is created through involvement and participation. From this we emphasize the importance that the sacred, liturgical space plays as a soteriological, that is, salvific, function.

Let us remember another important

2. The Sacred is the mediator between the Divine and man, as is the Reason between man and profane reality, which is the ability to achieve complementarity that allows man to achieve harmony and balance. Cf.: ELIADE, 2001, p. 19.

element, that in seeking to develop the most significant aspects of its own life, Israel links the Jewish calendar to agricultural festivals, which become a privileged space to develop principles such as gratuitousness, sharing, equality and sociability. In reality, liturgical festivals have the objective of reliving, remembering events such as the History of salvation, awakening feelings of gratitude, reflection on life³.

Speaking specifically about ecology, we remember that Leonardo Boff presents a broader theory to the theory of relationships, calling it the New Ecological Era. He understands environmental ecology in which relationships and interrelationships are an integral part of all living beings that, in the same *oikos*, live together “in the common home”, like our planet. According to Boff, one must help the other, ensuring that everyone can exist and preserve each other in ecology: «... Environmental, which deals with the environment and the relationships that the various historical societies have with it, sometimes benevolent, sometimes aggressive, sometimes integrating human beings into nature, sometimes distancing them (BOFF, 2004, p. 147).

In a broader reading, we could say that spirituality can be the motivating and integrating element of human actions. For Boff, spirituality is the set of values and principles that gives meaning to life. Remembering that it is not a monopoly of religions, it is about the search for the depth and mystery of life that can dwell in the heart of anyone. Therefore, spirituality shows that things are not random, there is an organization, there is a link, which in the Christian tradition is called God (Cf. BOFF, 1993, p. 15-17).

For Boff, people who think and are sensible, take this God out of anonymity by producing relationships of affection, generosity,

otherness, inclusion and cooperation:

We can synthetically speak of four ways of understanding ecology. The first, environmental ecology, which deals with the relationship between human beings and the environment. The second, social ecology, which deals with the relationship between human beings within relationships with the environment (for example: the issue of access to natural resources, socioeconomic inequality). The third, mental ecology, which deals with nature as represented inside the mind in the form of psychic energies, symbols, archetypes and patterns of behavior (BOFF, 1993, p. 15).

From our reflection we want to consider that the vision of expanding theological paradigms of reality in relation to traditional theology, this way we must also expand the concept of liturgy seeking to involve ecology, thus emerging a new alternative to the issue of liturgical-sacramental action and ecology. We can think of ecology as the place where the liturgy takes place, since from the beginning it was a place of celebration, the place of encounter with God, his influence on the community and his mission in the world.

God has always met people in various places. These places were separated with a specific purpose, that of renewing the relationship between creature and Creator. This happens through the meeting between creature and Creator in a place. This place does not become sacred and unique, but it becomes a Liturgical Place, that is, a place where God meets his people. Its relevance lies in the fact that it carries meaning (WHITE, 1997, p. 66).

Mc Fague, in his reflection of the world as the body of God, says that it is through the five sense organs, seeing, feeling, hearing, touching, speaking, where one communicates, “an encounter”, with nature, with God, with the close and with oneself (Cf. Mc Fague, 1987, p. 20-87).

3. These dimensions are present in the various biblical festivals, in their diverse liturgy, where each celebration includes all the essential and special elements for each of them.

Ecology as a model of the body is a way of interpreting the Universe and the atoms, everything that exists as a basis and meaning for the connection of the whole of creation, in its part and the whole, and the parts as the body of God. This is God as brain and creation as his body, the comparative, interrelational and independent body of God as a “whole”. The systemic method he uses aims to undo the mechanistic and reductionist dichotomy of technology and its machines as a way of governing the planet (Cf. Mc Fague, 1993, p. 105).

Buyst also highlights the need for theological responses to ecological-liturgical questions, for the formation of an ecoliturgy in praxis. And the question one can ask is: why is that? First of all, to adapt theology to the new scientific vision we have of the cosmos, in which everything is interrelated with everything, as in a human body. And she states in comparison: “The human body as a living, systemic and integrated organism”, just as I cannot imagine any part of my body acting individually (BUYST, 2010, p. 11).

This way, an ecoliturgy that expresses the sacredness of the cosmos can be considered an important element in this common basis, overcoming anthropocentrism and at the same time the secularism of current culture. Every gesture in favor of preserving the planet is a true spiritual attitude that expresses our desire to act in dialogue with the energies that work to build the universe.

Ione Buyst also observes that we are challenged to also rethink the liturgy from a cosmic and ecological perspective. Celebrations must integrate this new way of perceiving the universe or of perceiving ourselves in it, expanding and giving new light to liturgical expressions with their ecotheological substrate and incorporating new elements. It is necessary to take care of the spaces so that the participation of

creation in the praise and intercession of the Church becomes more sensitive. On Shabbat it is recited: “The soul of every living being must bless Your Name... and the psalms are permeated with this awareness that the entire creation participates in the praise of God” (BUYST, 2010, p. 15).

She also questions the theological-liturgical dichotomy and highlights the importance of establishing an interrelationship between liturgy and ecology for a better liturgical pedagogy with our environment:

Two facts provoke our way of celebrating and our theological-liturgical reflection: the ecological crisis and the new scientific vision of the cosmos. The ecological crisis is on the agenda of the day - in the news, at congresses and forums, on social, political and scientific agendas. The new cosmology points to the interrelationship and interdependence of all things. We humans are part of a whole, an inseparable part of the cosmos. How can we celebrate in our liturgies the mystery of salvation, the mystery of Easter and communion with God without taking this double reality into account? How, from liturgical pedagogy, could we contribute to ecological sensitivity, awareness and commitment? (BUYST, 2009).

Ecology this way becomes a true spiritual adventure. We can begin to build an ecological spirituality that teaches us to embrace the Cosmos and the God of the Cosmos. Teilhard de Chardin already made an appeal to the liturgy – Creation relationship:

Perhaps we imagined that Creation had ended a long time ago. Error. It continues to be increasingly active, and in the highest areas of the world. And it is to end it that we serve, even through the humblest work of our hands. This, in short, is the meaning and value of our actions. By virtue of the Matter-Soul-Christ interconnection, whatever we do, we bring to God a portion of the being he desires. Through each of our works, we work very piecemeal, but really in the construction of the Pleroma, that is, we

contribute a little to the completion of Christ (CHARDIN, 1989, p. 392).

The meaning of the liturgy, its evolution, its changes and alterations happen in the daily lives of the people, in a sacred space, in the expression of spirituality through culture, in the sense of adapting to the context and elements of tradition.

Liturgical formulas are, therefore, indicators of tradition, history and the future, in relation to nature, existential crises, rites of passage and the people's relationship with God, the service of the sacred, worship. From this comes the relevance of a space that becomes a reference, a meeting point, an important place to keep memory and a lifestyle alive, which produces a contextualized and integrative liturgical pastoral pedagogical praxis "that can be seen as an expression of joy, hope, grace and service, a supportive pastoral care that accompanies the individual as a whole; a worldview that finds in the message of hope paths to the announcement and concreteness of the Kingdom of God" (SILVA, 2008, p. 21-22).

We could say that liturgical theology on ecology can provide the formation of an ecoliturgical reading, which today would be one of the ways of deconstructing, constructing and reconstructing the liturgy, in a new paradigm, understood as a basic interpretative model of reality and not outside her. Perhaps the term that best reflects the moment of searching for this spirituality is reenchantment, in the importance of giving meaning to life, life, liturgy and spirituality.

We can assume with I. Buyst the meaning of a liturgical-sacramental action:

It is a liturgy that educates us in care, reverence, and responsibility. The Earth Charter reminds us that "we are, at the same time, citizens of different nations and of a

world in which local and global dimensions are linked. Each shares responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the entire world of living beings. The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence the mystery of existence, with gratitude for the gift of life, and with humility in relation to the place that human beings occupy in nature». This way, the liturgy will be inserted within the movement that gains a universal dimension and will contribute to ecological sensitivity, awareness and commitment (BUYST, 2009B, p. 6)⁴.

BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

Initially concluding this research, we can define the liturgical-sacramental action and its relationship with ecology by saying that "the liturgy is an encounter... a true human action, involving the entire human being: body, mind and spirit" (BUYST, 2010, p. 22) and the liturgist further expands the sciences of relationships:

Working Ecology with a liturgy focus, we are led to perceive the sacred dimension of creation and to value the cosmic potential of the liturgy. We draw attention to the importance of experiencing the Liturgy in terms of ecological sensitivity and awareness and of contributing to the elaboration of a liturgical theology that includes the cosmic and ecological dimension, to reach a spirituality in tune with deep ecology: not just interacting with other beings in the universe (BUYST, 2010, p. 22).

In fact, the spiritual quality of life is not disconnected from the physical, material, social, economic and ecological quality of life. Each human being is an integral being. We must heed Pope Francis' invitation: "The urgent challenge of protecting our common home includes the concern to unite the entire human family in the search for sustainable and

4. The Earth Charter is "the result of a global consultation spanning 8 years (1992-2000), one of the most important global documents from an ethical and spiritual point of view.». BOFF L., ``*Ecologia e Missão. Do ventre da terra o grito que vem da Amazônia*, in CEB's, *Texto básico do 12º Intereclesial*``. Belo Horizonte: Lutador, 2009, p. 95.

integral development, as we know that things can change. The Creator does not abandon us, he never backs down from his plan of love, nor does he regret having created us.” (LS, 2).

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