

THE DIMENSION OF SOBRIETY IN THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CREATION

METROPOLITAN AMBROSIUS OF HELSINKI

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Your Eminences, honourable sisters and brothers, I come with greetings and blessings from Patriarch Bartholomew, who was not able to be here. I also extend cordial greetings from the Orthodox Church in Finland that was established along the Viking roads 1000 years ago, and became an autonomous Church within the Ecumenical Patriarchate approximately 100 years ago. It is with great honour and joy that I am invited to give a lecture about an urgent and most important matter, our responsibility in relationship with the Creation. Let me begin with a quotation from the European Commission.

"In 2050, we live well, within the planet's ecological limits. Our prosperity and healthy environment stem from an innovative, circular economy where nothing is wasted and where natural resources are managed sustainably, and biodiversity is protected, valued and restored in ways that enhance our society's resilience. Our low-carbon growth has long been decoupled from resource use, setting the pace for a safe and sustainable global society."

This is from the "Environmental Action Programme" that the European Commission decided upon last year in November. Strong words that challenge the way we are living today, both inside and outside the Churches. We Christians should make every effort to support this determination and encourage European Countries to stay within this commitment.

The previous World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) has changed their name to World Wide Fund for including more strongly the need of accounting not only for the preservation of the wildlife but the preservation of the entire environment. World Wide Fund has also presented an Action Plan for us all that they have given the name "Green Living". The plan is divided into four simple steps applicable as well to individuals as to organizations, and could be found on their website.

The first step is to calculate and measure the impact we have on the environment, and they provide a country-based calculator for this. The second step is to reduce our carbon emissions, which they provide a simple guideline for. The third step is the use of our consumer power for

which they offer some advices. The final and fourth step then is the Green cycle of reducing, reusing and recycling.

So we have the governments with us, the European Union and the strong support by environmental organizations like the World Wide Fund. Why then should it be so difficult? The answer could be found if we have a closer look on what Green Living is all about. In each of the points offered by the World Wide Fund we find that they suggest simplifying your living. Walk instead of taking the car, do not fly far away, question yourself if your travel is really necessary, and if you need to travel choose your hotel and means of travel with a Green Attitude. The message is clear: Live a simpler life and you will certainly contribute to a better environment. This seems easier to say than actually doing. The reason seems to be that a solid environmental ethics is not enough. We also need a way of being, or in this context it would be appropriate to speak about an environmental spirituality that accompany our intended action plans. How to develop such Spirituality is the message I will extend to you on this day in the middle of Great and Holy Lent.

I have divided my lecture in three reflections. In my first reflection I will make the argument that ethics is not sufficient for combatting the ecological crisis. Instead we need to establish a Christian ethos within ourselves. The second reflection considers the concept of sobriety and the need for asceticism in establishing a Christian ethos based on communion. The third reflection considers fasting as connected to our common priestly duty where the preservation of the Creation is a necessary part.

DISCOVERING A CHRISTIAN ETHOS

We are all aware that human responsibility is a most tragic story. We are often not capable of taking responsibility for our own lives, not to talk about our neighbour and even less the Creation. Today, as an example, we know that smoking is potentially lethal. On each packet of cigarettes across the European Union, it is written in black and white that smoking kills. Nevertheless, people are literally willing to sacrifice their lives for a cigarette. Today we know that an excessively enlarged air traffic slowly destroys the living conditions for a sustainable world. Yet many people are prepared to sacrifice an entire world for the opportunity to be able to travel freely.

If we ask the man or woman on the street whether it is right to smoke or not, the majority, including smokers themselves, probably would say that it is wrong. Similarly, one would probably also say that it is wrong with an excessive unregulated travel. Yet, people smoke despite the

warnings, and people are traveling like never before, despite Al Gore and other environmentalists.

While the tobacco industry continues to make big profits and airlines offer new departures every week, so are issues of justice, solidarity and environmental ethics more important than ever before, and various organizations with various well-intended purposes are emerging like mushrooms in a field. Our own so-called ecumenical organizations devote the bulk of their time to these issues, and topics such as philosophy, theology and ecclesiology can be in the hallways sometimes considered a utopian navel-gazing .

Why has it come to this? The answer, it seems to me, lies in the prospect of an increasingly pragmatic ethics that primarily focuses on what man shall do and which documents are worth pursuing. Based on such a spectrum rational ethics with its principles and considerations is increasingly dependent on the advances made in environmental research, social sciences and economics, while other aspects of life are neglected. This is in accordance with the statement that the Meeting of the Primates of the Local Orthodox Churches issued in Istanbul three weeks ago:

“A fundamental threat to justice and peace – both locally and globally – is the global economic crisis. The ramifications of this are evident on all layers in society, where such values as personal integrity, fraternal solidarity and justice are often wanting. The origins of this crisis are not merely financial. They are moral and spiritual in character. Instead of conforming to the worldly idols of power, greed and hedonism, we emphasize our vocation to transform the world by embracing the principles of justice, peace, and love.”

Another trend is that ethics is more and more determined by how we view the human suffering through the camera lens or the general media noise or through our various aid organizations marketing. Tonight's feature film is broken by the image of a starving child, and the main headings of news reporting allow us to see the victims of an environmental disaster. So, at the same time as we are fed with a rational attitude through popular science, there is an appeal to our innermost room with all that emotion drives.

In ancient Greece, ethics was more than a rational standpoint, and more than an emotional driving force, it was part of a whole that gave man a place in the universe. Christianity took over this basic attitude and was not satisfied with merely a rational perspective on human actions, but instead searched for a deeper meaning, the very purpose of human existence.

The Church Fathers therefore penetrated beyond the horrific façade of suffering and found an even deeper abyss. They found that the human being had lost its *telos*, its goal and purpose, what they identified as *astochia*. The human being has become self-sufficient, the great teachers argued, and merely exists for its own sake, what the Church Fathers identified as *anthropomonism*. Because of this *anthropomonism* and *astochia* we are in need of repentance, to change the focus of our life.

The Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew I, harmonizes with these teachers and says:

“The environmental program of the Churches cannot simply involve philosophical or political changes. It must include a spiritual repentance that occurs only through continual prayer.”

Human beings, according to the Fathers, were created with a unique purpose to "cultivate and care for" the creation (Gen. 2:15), but even more, "every creature" also "got the name the man gave it", and so it is the high obligation of the humans to complete the creation. The Christian understanding of this calling or obligation leads us to regard the Creation as created in relation to humankind and cannot be isolated from the human being. Creation is therefore *anthropocentric*, but not in the sense of existing for the sake of humankind, that would mean that the human being would exist independent from Creation. Instead the human being is fashioned within Creation for the sake of taking part in Creation in harmony with its existence. From a patristic perspective, this is a positive form of *anthropocentrism* instead of a negative *anthropomonism*.

This anthropocentrism permeates the Christian tradition, and instead of a pragmatic matter, we get an existential question: "Who is this human being?" Both St. Augustine as the so-called Cappadocian Fathers of the East, St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian, and St. Gregory of Nyssa, saw the conversion of the human being from an existential perspective and founded the Christian ethic not only on what humans do, but even more on the basis of what she is. Based on such an approach these Fathers speak more about an attitude, an existential orientation, 'a way of being', *tropos tes hyparxeos*.

Ethics, in this context, becomes too narrow to describe the Church Fathers' 'a way of being'. John Zizioulas, Metropolitan of Pergamon, therefore suggests the concept of *ethos*. The ancient Greeks considered *ethos* to be a quality of authenticity needed by a speaker to be able to convince the listener. In relation to ethics it means that it is not enough just to outline certain principles or plans, you also have to be convinced and engaged in the necessity of implementing them yourself. Metropolitan John describes this as an existential attitude of "how people

are in relation to everything that exists."

Ethos is the continuation of ethics. When we have fulfilled all preparations and considered all rational principles and action plans we must be honest and internalize them in our own life and thinking, and thus become one with the message. This is the meaning of ethos; to be authentic with a humble approach.

A Christian ethos consists of two essential parts: first, a coherent worldview that unites people, and secondly symbols (of *symballein*, throw together) that can bring everything into a whole. The Christian symbols may be said to be gateways to the whole, which the Greeks have one and the same word for, *kosmos*. Cosmos includes not only the material universe but also the social universe as well as the spiritual universe. It is through the symbols that the worldview is internalized in the life and thinking of people and thus become capable of bringing people together in communion with each other, Creation and God. Without these symbols the proposed worldviews do not have an existential relationship with human beings, and become mere theories that can exist without the human endeavour needed for them to come alive.

These cosmological symbols can in turn be divided in two categories. Firstly, we have *eucharistia*, Thanksgiving, which means that everything that God has placed in the Cosmos, retains its proper place in relation to the human being, within a whole, through thanksgiving, just as when Adam named the creatures. Secondly, we have *koinonia*, which implies that the Cosmos *as a whole* then is offered back to the Creator Himself so that the created and the uncreated also become a whole, as it was when God walked in the Garden of Eden.

Eucharistia is the collective name for all actions and categories by which human sanctifies or "name" creation through blessings and holy deeds; as for example the blessing by the priest of the bread used for the various feasts of the Church. In many Orthodox churches the first fruits of what humankind has grown is blessed, and every time we eat we make the sign of the cross over the food and ourselves. *Koinonia* in turn is the name of the community where everything has retained its proper place through Thanksgiving.

Both categories are necessary parts of a complete Liturgy, the Orthodox Church's main service. The liturgy is the gate that opens up to Cosmos, through Thanksgiving and Communion, and which extends beyond time and space into eternity, the new kingdom. The symbols connects ethics with a liturgical ethos, which makes it possible for man to take part in the whole, and from this wholeness incorporating the rational ethical principles in his own life and thinking. Thereby, ethics get a personal significance that emphasize joy and thanksgiving that unites people in the family or community through expressing their

concern for each other, Creation, and the entire Cosmos. Origen expresses this ethos in an ingenious way: "Christ is the church's cosmos." It is Christ that brings everything in order in the Church and thus establishes the holistic view of the Church. In the same way it is justifiable to say that the Church is the Cosmos of Creation that brings Creation into an established order. Since the Church is by its very nature Communion between humankind and with God it means that it is Communion that brings Creation into order, which transforms Creation into Cosmos.

Without a unifying ethos, that makes Creation into a Cosmological entity, our relation with Creation will be dominated by decomposition and segmentation. Poverty, violence and human suffering become impersonal phenomena, which we regard with indifference and without deeper compassion, but for a moment may bring storms of passions and then disappear without further consideration. In a similar way we could say that the ecological crisis is primarily the result of the absence of a unifying ethos, allowing rational and acceptable principles to be questioned and even becoming irrelevant.

The Church has a special mission to preserve a Christian ethos in a broken world, and through this ethos point toward humankind's deification, *theosis*, and as St. Maximos the Confessor says, bring creation into communion with God and let it take part in the deification of humanity so that all of Creation will be deified. Patriarch Bartholomew argues that this mission belongs to all baptized Christians that make each one of us a Priest of Creation. Such an approach leads inevitably to 'a way of being', a liturgical attitude, which breathes naturally when rational considerations are not sufficient.

TOWARD SOBRIETY, A WAY OF ASCESIS

In one of his lectures His All-Holiness Bartholomew I says that "[t]he cross is the singular, ultimate and absolute solution to the ecological crisis. The cross reminds us of the reality of human failure and of the need of a cosmic repentance." The call is for an ascetical attitude, His All-Holiness continues, where "[a]sceticism is the conscious awareness and deeper recognition that humanity is dependent not only on God, but also on the world, and indeed on the food chain, just like every other creature made by God."

Christian life is by its very nature communal and as such it should be a constant invocation of Grace. *Astochia* makes us suffer from a memory loss, *agnoia*, according to St Maximos, that make us forget God and his Coming Kingdom, and the invocation of Grace. The consequence is that

there is a mutability of our natural desires, *epithymia*. This brings forth a rage, *thymos*, which is jealous, violent and possessive. This makes us loose self-control and sobriety.

Self-control and sobriety is contained in one word by the ancient Greeks, ἐγκράτεια [engkrátia], “to be in power”, acquiring self-control, to assume personal responsibility. When we loose our sense of responsibility we become insensitive toward injustice, solidarity and sharing. We become dis-engaged from life and the feeling of being alienated not just from other people but also in relation to Creation and our own life. We become strangers to ourselves.

As Christians we are obliged not just to fulfil what the law requires but also let our inclinations concur with the law so that our actions are fulfilled in our human nature, following St Maximos. In that way we can offer thanksgiving, *eucharistia*, and Creation will retrieve its sacredness. The Sacredness of Creation is the contextual fact of deified love, and the path toward this is restoration of Sobriety, ἐγκράτεια.

The path toward Sobriety is the Way of Asceticism. The monastic and ascetic traditions are often wrongly understood in today’s world as a devaluation of matter and the denial of life, and do not concern ordinary Christian life. On the contrary they are life-creating traditions that concerns everyone. We are all in need of asceticism for the fulfilment of our Christian lives.

The ascetical way begins in the “baptism of tears”, which was a central feature for the desert fathers. Instead of asking for wisdom and strength and even holiness, the angels of the desert asked for tears of repentance in their sojourn and struggle for salvation.

The reason for this is the insanity of sin that makes us loose the sense of reality. Without the “baptism of tears” we are caught in an illusion of our own superiority and perfectness that convince us that we are worthy of wisdom and holiness, and as such they are signs of our immortality that sets us apart from this valley of death. The monastic and ascetic traditions are ways back to reality. Without the gathering of tears, the virtues of wisdom, strength and holiness become degenerated and distorted, so that they become means for perverting the reality. The gathering of tears is the necessary pre-condition for the sanctification of all Cosmos to become real. It begins with a *metanoia*, a conversion or changing of the mind, reflective of the sanctity of tears.

Through this change of mind, *metanoia*, the rivers, seas and oceans become images of the sanctity of tears. The waters become sacred vessels of Grace, the mountains remind us of the Creator and the green fields remind us of the wealth of God’s love. In sight of this richness we become aware of the human failure and the need of a Cosmic repentance. These symbols also urge us to act in a spirit of humbleness, to lay down our

selfishness and adopt a spirit of *enkrateia*, acquiring self-control, and this is done through the Way of Ascesis, which is revealed in the prayer before the Reading of the Gospel that we pray in each liturgy:

“Shine forth within our hearts the incorruptible light of Your knowledge, Master, Lover of humankind, and open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of the preaching of Your Gospel; instill in us also the fear of Your blessed commandments, that, trampling down all lusts of the flesh, we may pursue a spiritual way of life, being mindful of and doing all that is well-pleasing unto You. For You are the enlightenment of our souls and bodies, Christ God, and unto You do we send up glory, together with Your unoriginate Father, and Your most holy and good and lifecreating Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.”

The heart and deep meaning of this prayer is contained in the short but concise sentence that “we may pursue a Spiritual way of Life”, in Greek, πνευματικὴν πολιτείαν μετέλθωμεν [pnevmatikín politían metélthômen], to pursue a Spiritual Politeia.

Politeia implies all aspects of life. It involves the spiritual reality as well as the social and material reality, and concerns social planning and moral behaviour, as well as sanctification. The moral aspect of Politeia is merely one out of many. The reduction of Politeia to the mere moral aspect, where the Spiritual and material aspects are subsumed into a moral aspect is clearly often the case in the contemporary society, which creates a kind of moralism.

Moralism makes Truth much more important than Love, to the extent that you do not need to take responsibility for your actions as long as you are honest, keeping your word and following agreed principles. The effect of this is the soldier killing innocent civilians by the order of his commander, the exploitation of Eastern Africa, because it is allowed, and the complicated play with emission rights. Politeia instead implies full responsibility for your actions.

St John Chrysostom expands the concept Politeia by relating it to an eschatological reality. In his sermon on the Gospel of St Matthew he talks about a Heavenly Politeia, or more precisely a Politeia that belongs to Heaven, the Coming Kingdom. He deplores this aspect of Politeia by infusing a strong sense of relationship into the concept, and as such Politeia is a personal responsibility that is not individual but communal rooted in the relationship between God, the fellow human being and finally with all of Creation.

Communion is not fundamentally a moral effort or a quantity, but a qualitative effort, something you are together with others. When Chrysostom adds Creation to the relational understanding of Politeia,

then Creation is not merely an object surrounding us, but something that exists in relation to us. It is part of the relational existence; part of the Communal being that makes reality move toward its end, the *eschaton*, that demands a holistic responsibility.

Employing a holistic responsibility is what the 40 days of Great and Holy Lent is all about. As we are in the middle of Great Lent we are reminded to make a *metanoia*, to enter into a new orientation of life, where we take charge of our life, in its entirety, and not just following some prescriptions. We need to enter into a deeper relationship with God, our fellow human being and with Creation.

Lent is a renewal of our lives within the cycle of the week and within the cycle of the year. The Greek word for renewal is ἐγκαινία [engkénia], which is the same word we use for the consecration of a Church. Renewal is the work of the Holy Spirit whether it is a renewal of a place or the renewal of a heart.

The first step towards renewal is the invocation of the Holy Spirit, which is manifest liturgically in the three weeks preceding Great Lent in Orthodox tradition, with special focus on the renewal of our lives in the recollection of the parable of the Prodigal Son. In the Kontakion for the Sunday of the Prodigal Son the theme of renewal is imminent:

“Father, foolishly I ran away from Your glory, and in sin, squandered the riches You gave me. Wherefore, I cry out to You with the voice of the Prodigal, ‘I have sinned before You Compassionate Father. Receive me in repentance and take me as one of Your hired servants.’”

The Power of the Spirit then reveals itself as profound dis-possession, where we renounce everything in order for everything to be renewed. The renewal necessarily includes both mind and body. Therefore fasting and prayer belongs together. This is evident in the beginning of Great Lent. The first prayer in the Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete that is read in the first week of Great Lent in the Orthodox Church manifest the insanity of sin and how we are stripped naked in relation to both mind and body, asking for a complete renewal:

“Where shall I begin to lament the deeds of my wretched life? What first-fruit shall I offer, Christ, for my present lamentation? But in Your compassion grant me release from my falls.

Come, wretched soul, with your flesh, confess to the Creator of all. In future refrain from your former brutishness, and offer to God tears in repentance.

Having rivalled the first-created Adam by my transgression, I realize that I am stripped naked of God and of the everlasting kingdom and bliss through my sins.” (Genesis 3)

Through the teaching of Christ we know as Christians that whatever we renounce, we shall receive in hundredfold, but what we receive is stripped of sin and possession. That what is stripped of possession and sin is nothing less than the everlasting Kingdom, because it is only through the Power of the Spirit that we may become “dis-possessionate” in the sense that we are stripped of our unnatural desires and clothed in a glorious robe in communion with God and the entire Cosmos.

Becoming dis-possessionate make us interested in life more than death. As long as we strive toward possessing the world we become aware that death is the major obstacle for seizing the world. When we instead become dis-possessionate we become more interested in the other. We become attentive to the voice of the other and the voice of nature in Creation. We become friends of one another and a friend of Creation. More importantly we also become self-attentive in relation to the other. What is good for the other become an inner voice of love that flows like a fountain breaking through our unnatural desires, and that is what deification includes.

In Romans St Paul reveals this by arguing that following the law is good but it is not enough for a Christian. Instead we need to rid ourselves of our sinful nature and not only to be a “hired servant”, but also change the very inclination so that we will do what we want and what we want would be according to the law. Thereby we will not be slaves anymore but free. It is for this reason that Christ addresses us as friends, because we are not only called to serve Christ but to follow him: “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”

The Way of Asceticism leads us to become friends of one another and friends with Creation. This is the foundational ethos for a Green Living, but how are we to express this friendship. That is the theme for my last reflection.

FASTING AS A WAY TOWARD A GREEN LIVING

Christos Yannaras writes in one of his articles that “the Church is not a religion, it is not a school of spirituality, but a place where we are invited to transform our existence into *being as relationship*. We are invited to a meal, to a banquet – and a banquet is a way of practicing life as communion.”¹

Fasting as abstaining from food is a necessary step toward a renewal of our lives, but it is not sufficient just to abstain from something. This would only be a kind of self-afflicted individualistic punishment. When we abstain from meat and unnecessary food we calibrate our sense of belonging to Creation.

In the ancient Greek Orthodox tradition, at least up to the 10th century, it was forbidden to slaughter an animal without a particular prayer and ritual, that reminded the Christian that the earthly resources had a limit that humankind had to respect. If an animal was slaughtered without a certain order the meat was considered defiled and forbidden to eat.

Today we encounter an industry that is mass-producing meat, and we even use genetic manipulation so that the particular animal will produce more meat. This is contrary to the idea of a Green Living, becoming friends with Creation. As Christians we should be mindful of what we buy and what we eat. If we would consider the coin as a gift for the preservation of the Creation, we need to be attentive of what we use our coins for. We should also be thoughtful of what we eat, and if we need to eat meat, at least we should choose to eat meat with a Green Attitude, and remember that in a sense we become what we eat.

Abstaining from food is only the first requirement. The second requirement in fasting is blessing. Blessing is thanksgiving that reveals love as fulfilled communion, which is at the heart of a true *politeia*. In relation to Creation it is manifested as a life devoid of possessiveness where the entire Cosmos reveals itself as Sacred and Divine Grace. Among the slavophiles (e.g. Alexei Khomiakov) in the 19th century as well as among contemporary Greek Orthodox theologians and philosophers of today (e.g. Christos Yannaras and Ioannis Zizioulas) we find that Love and Freedom are interconnected. Without enough freedom love cannot develop and without love freedom cannot evolve. Love is the existential ground of freedom, and freedom is a mode of being as a contextual fact of love.

Love and freedom are the necessary requirements of a true *politeia* that embraces the family as well as the Creation. In a similar way as we have to acknowledge the freedom of another human as a mode of being,

within the context of love, we also have to recognize the freedom that is intrinsic to Creation. A flower or a bird devoid of freedom become part of our possessiveness and does not flow forth as a contextual fact of love. Excessive use of our natural resources also expresses this possessiveness, which is the existential ground of a non-relational existence instead of love.

Employing a Spiritual Politeia then feeds on communion as coexistent with freedom and love. Creation is not able to produce a Spiritual Politeia on its own. Only through the human being can Creation become part of a Spiritual Politeia. Neither a bird nor plant would be part in a free existence without the human being. Creation is therefore dependent on humankind for its freedom, because the Christian understanding of freedom is not freedom from humanity but freedom with humanity. The Fathers and Mothers of the Church did not teach us that Creation is independent from the Creator, on the contrary it is created for being in Communion with its creator, but as a consequence of freedom and love, and not out of necessity. This is why God gave Adam and Eve the high command to be the custodians of Creation. Not for the sake of possessiveness but for the sake of freedom and love. As God gave us his freedom we have been commissioned to give Creation our freedom. Since love is the existential foundation of freedom it follows that the Love of God flows through us and through us Creation becomes able to give back that Love as thanksgiving, *eucharistia*.

Thanksgiving thus necessarily entails freedom and love, and in the relationship with the Creation this is expressed in every act where we release Creation of excessiveness and possessiveness. Thanksgiving is therefore not a mandatory law or an international agreement, but those simple acts that a human being endowed with sobriety can produce as created in the image of God. Instead it is an *ethos* that breathes naturally when rational principles and agreements are not enough.

As Christians we all are priests offering the Creation back to God so it will be transformed into the Paradise, and in the Mother of God the gates will be open so that the Savior may enter and offer us the salvation in the end of days. We are fulfilling our priestly duty through Thanksgiving, and this is done through prayer and our friendship with Creation. Friendship implies a change of mind, where we again and again are giving back Creation its freedom. The family is the natural place for this priestly duty as well as within the parish.

When the Lent is over the enduring effect should be a renewed awareness of the Sacredness of Creation, where we let our gift sweat in our hand before we give it, and ask ourselves if we are righteous in our eating and living. Yes, we need to change our lives if we want to invite

the Lord and Savior into this world, and it is this world that will receive Him who made a perfect sacrifice, not another world. If we deny the Sacredness of Creation we deny Paradise and in the end deny salvation and the Coming Kingdom. Christ has not given us the Creation as a possession for our excessive use. Christ has given us the responsibility of Creation for the sake of liberating Cosmos in the same way as He is liberating us, for the sake of freedom and love.

We as hierarchs and shepherds have to express freedom and love as the natural mode of being Christian, and remind our people that the integrity of Creation as an icon of this mode of being is intimately related with humanity. If Creation is excessively misused it becomes an image of our possessiveness, and every act of humans become an act of sin instead of love. As Christians we need to be honest in this commitment. We need to be more committed to a Christian ethos than we are. It is not enough just to talk about an environmental ethics we need to be authentic about our message and internalize it in our own lives. We should set aside one hour in Great Lent for the sanctity of tears, an hour for the Creation.

If we would do that we should be mindful of the prime environmental injustice stemming from the imbalance between rich and poor countries. This is one of the major problems in combatting the ecological crisis. We need to help our neighboring countries outside the European Union in their struggle for the environment. It is not enough to talk about Europe. We need to address the world, and as Christians we have to be more than active in this. Therefore, let us commit ourselves in this Great and Holy Lent to give back Creation its freedom so that our Love in God will be expressed in the relationship with the Creation and bring forth the fruits of Christ's Resurrection.