



A theological and pastoral reflection to reconcile the heart of man with creation, beginning at the Eucharist

Introduction: What do ecology and the altar have in common?

In a world increasingly alarmed by climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, the word “*ecology*” has become urgent. People talk about recycling, reducing plastic consumption, protecting forests... but rarely is the altar, the Mass, or the Liturgy mentioned as key to restoring the created order. However, if we explore the roots of Christian thought, we discover something revolutionary: **authentic ecology begins not in nature, but at the altar of God.**

At first, this statement may seem strange. But as we unpack its meaning, we will see that there is no care for the common home (the *oikos*) without an ordered heart—and there is no ordered heart without true worship. This article aims to do precisely that: **to reconcile the Liturgy with Creation, to rediscover that Christian ecology is deeply sacramental.**

1. “Oikos”: The common home and its original meaning

The word “**ecology**” comes from the Greek *oikos* (οἶκος), meaning “house” or “home,” and *logos*, meaning “study” or “discourse.” In its original sense, ecology is the “discourse about the home.” But which home? The planet? Nature? Yes, but not only that. In the Christian view, the most fundamental *oikos* is **the house of God**, the place where man meets his Creator: **the altar.**

This is not a new idea. From the Old Testament, God dwells in the midst of His people: in the tabernacle, in the Temple of Jerusalem, in the tent of meeting. In the New Testament, this presence reaches its culmination: **God becomes flesh and dwells among us** (cf. Jn 1:14). The Eucharist, the source and summit of Christian life, is the new “home” where God lives with His people. There is no authentic ecology without recognizing this real, ordering Presence.



2. Liturgy: The restored cosmic order

The **Liturgy** is not simply a collection of religious rites. It is, in the words of the Catechism, “the participation of the People of God in the work of God” (CCC 1069). It is the entrance of time into eternity, of chaos into cosmos, of sin into redemption. When we celebrate the Liturgy—especially the Holy Mass—the **redemptive sacrifice of Christ is sacramentally renewed**, reconciling not only human beings with each other, but **man with all of creation**.

St. Paul speaks of this with great power:

“The whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now, and not only the creation, but we ourselves” (Romans 8:22-23).

This groaning creation awaits the redemption that begins at the altar. There, Christ offers His sacrifice, and with Him, all of creation is offered to the Father. In the Liturgy, bread, wine, water, incense, light, gestures, music... everything created is ordered toward its final end: **to give glory to God**.

3. True ecology: Restoring the heart of man

Today, much is said about sustainability, climate justice, respect for the Earth. But **without conversion of the heart, every ecological effort is doomed to fail or to fall into idolatry of the created world**. Ecology without God becomes paganism; care for the planet without a transcendent vision becomes worship of matter.

Catholic theology teaches that **sin disordered not only man’s relationship with God, but also his relationship with creation**. Selfishness, greed, pride... these do not only pollute the soul—they also pollute rivers, fields, and neighborhoods. That is why **true ecology is first and foremost an ecology of the soul**.

And that inner ecology is cultivated in prayer, watered by the Word, and blossoms in the Liturgy.



4. The altar as the center of the “oikos”: The Mass as the supreme ecological act

When a priest celebrates Mass, he offers bread and wine, fruits of the earth and human labor. **These natural elements are elevated, consecrated, divinized.** What appeared to be simple food becomes the Body and Blood of Christ.

There, **earth and heaven meet.** There begins the restoration of all things. Every Mass is an act of redemption not only for souls, but for all of creation. St. Francis of Assisi, patron of ecologists, did not love nature for its own sake, but **because he saw in every creature a reflection of the Creator.** And in the Eucharist, he found the highest expression of that cosmic communion.

5. Liturgy well celebrated, ecology well lived

When the Liturgy is celebrated with reverence, with beauty, with fidelity to the rubrics, with the heart centered on Christ, **the whole cosmos is ordered.** It is no coincidence that traditional sacred architecture, Gregorian chant, the use of incense, the liturgical calendar, fasting, seasons and colors... are all deeply connected to the rhythms of nature. **The Church lived in harmony with time, the seasons, the body and the soul.**

The liturgical crisis of recent times has also brought about an ecological crisis: the altar has been displaced, adoration forgotten, and with it, **man has lost his place in the universe.** He is no longer a mediator between heaven and earth, but merely a consumer of what was created.

6. Practical guide: How to live a liturgical ecology

a) **Rediscover Sunday as the Day of the Lord**



| *“Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8).*

Sunday is not just a day of leisure, but a day of **worship, rest, and family**. Returning to the rhythm of sanctified Sundays is the first step to ordering our lives and our relationship with the world.

b) Participate reverently in the Liturgy

Care about how you dress, how you respond, how you prepare for Mass. If you can, attend the traditional Latin Mass or celebrations where sacredness is preserved.

c) Venerate what is created, do not worship it

Love creation, but do not make it an idol. Use created things as a means to draw closer to God. Have plants, care for animals, recycle, yes—but always from a sacramental worldview.

d) Transform your home into a Christian “oikos”

Let your house have an image of the Sacred Heart, a home altar, an open Bible, times of silence, family prayer. Just as the temple reflects Heaven, your home should reflect the temple.

e) Make fasting and penance a way of life

We consume too much because we are empty inside. Fasting orders desire and frees the soul from the chaos of materialism.

f) Connect the Liturgy to your way of living

Do not disconnect Mass from the rest of your life. Live as you have prayed. Let your style of consumption, your work, your rest, and your relationships be impregnated by what you received at the altar.



7. An eschatological horizon: The New Jerusalem as the final ecology

The Liturgy anticipates what we hope for: **a new heaven and a new earth** (Revelation 21:1). It is not about preserving this fallen world forever, but about **preparing for its final transfiguration**. Every Mass is a foretaste of that heavenly Jerusalem, where the Lamb will be the light and there will be no more sorrow or pain.

That is why **Christian ecology is not just about conservation, but redemption**. It is not only about tending the garden, but preparing for the wedding between the Creator and His creation.

Conclusion: From altar to earth

Today's ecological crisis is not merely environmental—it is profoundly spiritual. And therefore, the solution will never be merely political, technological, or activist. The solution lies in the heart of man... and the heart of man is healed **at the altar**.

If we want to restore the order of the world, we must begin by restoring the order of the Liturgy. If we want to save the planet, let us begin by worshipping God with reverence. If we want to care for creation, let us celebrate the Eucharist with love.

Because there, at the altar, everything finds its center.

There is where true ecology begins.

There, the *oikos* becomes a temple.