

## Seminarium Magazine

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Extracts from  
HAH Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

### Listening to the Voice of Creation

The natural environment provides a broader, panoramic vision of the world. In general nature's beauty leads to a more open view of the life of the created world, somewhat resembling a wide-angle focus from a camera which ultimately prevents us human beings from using or abusing its natural resources in a selfish, narrow minded way.

In order however, to reach this point of maturity and dignity toward the natural environment, we must take the time to listen to the voice of creation. And in order to do this, we must first be silent.

Indeed, silence is critical in developing a balanced environmental ethos as an alternative to the ways that we currently relate to the earth and deplete its natural resources. If we are silent, we will learn to appreciate how "the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament proclaims the creation of His hands" (Ps. 19.1). ...

St. Gregory of Nyssa believes that we can discern God's presence simply by gazing at and listening to creation. Therefore nature is a book opened wide for all to read and to learn. Each plant, each animal, each micro-organism tells a story, unfolds a mystery, relates an extraordinary harmony and balance, which are interdependent and complimentary. Everything points to the same encounter and mystery.

The same dialogue of communication and mystery of communion is detected in the galaxies, where the countless stars betray the same mystical beauty and mathematical inter-connectedness. ... The coexistence and the correlation between the boundlessly infinite and the most insignificantly finite things in our world articulate a concelebration of joy and love.

It is unfortunate that we lead our life without even noticing the environmental concert that is playing out before our very eyes and ears. In this orchestra, each minute detail plays a critical role, and every trivial aspect participates in an essential way. No single member – human or other – can be removed without the entire symphony being affected. No single tree or animal can be removed without the entire picture being profoundly distorted, if not destroyed. When will we begin to learn and teach the alphabet of this divine language, so mysteriously concealed in nature?

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