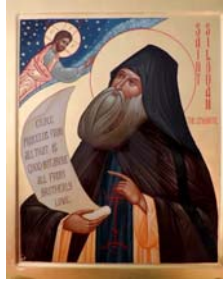


# Saint Silouan Orthodox Monastery

in cooperation with

## The Orthodox Fellowship of the Transfiguration



The Orthodox Church is widely recognized as possessing the most developed theology of creation of any religious tradition. This teaching is hugely needed in the modern world. Yet for the most part this traditional natural wisdom is no longer well taught in parishes.

## Opening the Book of Nature

### Reviving the Cosmic Dimensions of Orthodox Vision that are Needed in the Modern Church

May 19-21, 2022  
Sonora, California

The modern Orthodox Church has left much of its ancient natural wisdom in the past and its application in our day has largely become forgotten and discarded.

For historical perspective on this tradition, review the commentary from the saints and fathers of the Early Church as they depict the natural world as a teacher of Christian faith.

**St. Irenaeus of Lyons** says, “Creation reveals Him who formed it.... The universal Church has received this tradition from the apostles themselves.”

**Origen**, the Father of Biblical Theology, writes, “There is a parallel between nature and Scripture that is so complete that we learn the same things from one source as the other.”

**Saint John Chrysostom** declares, “Nature is our best teacher.”

**Saint Basil** observes “God teaches us through creation,” and “Creation is the supreme icon of Christian faith which leads to knowledge of the Supreme Artisan.”

**Saint Gregory of Nyssa** describes nature as “the great catechism.”

**Saint Maximos the Confessor** writes, “Creation is a bible whose letters and syllables are the aspects of creatures and whose words are the universal aspects of creation. Conversely, Scripture is like a cosmos constituted of heaven and earth and things in between.

**Saint Jerome**, historian of the early Church, says, “The desert fathers went to wild places to flee the corruption of cities, to wage war with their passions, but especially to encounter the holy. They went to wilderness to find a more transforming experience of Jesus Christ.

These statements reflect the cosmic vision and theological depth which historically characterized the Earth Christian Church and its comprehension of God’s creation.

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As a modern reminder of this legacy, **HB Patriarch Ignatius IV of Antioch** tells us, “The mystical way in Orthodoxy requires as a necessary stage the contemplation of nature.”

Another modern voice, **Saint Porphyrios**, adds that there is a secret gospel. “Nature,” he says, “is that secret gospel.”

**HAH Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew** elaborates on this forgotten potential. “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.”

**Professor Philip Sherrard**, scholar and translator of early Christian writings, maintains that “a restitution of ancient Christian sacred cosmology is essential.” Only when we recover an ability to “act towards the world with the awe and humility that we should possess when we enter a sacred shrine. Only in this way,” he says, “will we once again become aware that our destiny and the destiny of nature are one and the same. Only in this way can we restore the cosmic harmony.” For this to occur, “It is crucial that we learn to read ‘the book of nature,’ the *Liber Mundi*, in a way totally different from how we have been taught to read it.”

“We have to learn to look on the world of natural forms as the apparent, exterior expression of a hidden, interior world, a spiritual world: all the phenomena of the world of nature represent or symbolize with things celestial and divine.”

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Would you like to learn to see creation as a doorway into Christ’s wisdom and transformation? “Come and See.” This can help you to grow spiritually; it could also help your parish to grow.

St. Silouan Orthodox Monastery near Sonoma, California will host a two day introductory program on the practical dimensions of Orthodox theology as it relates to nature.

This will help you begin a recovery of this legacy through your own experience.

You are invited to attend this special program. There is no fee, but a donation covers costs. Respond soon for more information. Space is limited.

Reply via email to: [Fred@Ecostewards.org](mailto:Fred@Ecostewards.org)

or, by surface mail, to:

Opening the Book of Nature

c/o The Orthodox Fellowship of the Transfiguration (OFT)

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