

Thoughts on experiencing God's nature in nature

From the blog of Michael Haldas

“In the created world only the human being combines material and spiritual elements. Human existence is thus differentiated from non-human creation in a qualitative way. In light of this fact, the Church Fathers often speak of the human being as a "little world", a "microcosm" of the whole of the creation. Using this notion, the Church Fathers teach that the human body contains in it all levels of existence of the natural world which preceded it in order of the creation, and considered the physical elements which make up the human body as in no way different from those which constitute the physical world. This means that the natural world is fully integrated with the human being and the whole of the creation.” (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese)

“The best and most beneficial role that the natural world can play is to mediate between God and humankind in order to restore the relationship of communion.” (Apostolos Nikolaïdis)

“As much as the apologists were convinced that God’s fullest self-disclosure was in Christ they also recognized that God was known through creation. Athenagoras, a contemporary of Justin, wrote that “heaven and earth are filled with God’s beauty” and from what is made people can know that God “must be one.” But early Christian thinkers offer no philosophical argument for the existence of God drawn from the world of nature. When speaking of the revelation of God in creation they cite the Scriptures, usually Romans, “God’s invisible nature . . . is clearly perceived in the things that have been made” (Rom. 1:20), sometimes the psalm, “the heavens declare the glory of God” (Ps. 19:1). They did not argue that there is a God because there is order; rather, they saw design in the universe because they knew the one God. God was not a principle of explanation. In seeking God they sought to understand the God they already knew.” (Robert Wilkin)

“The distractions and disappointments of life can sometimes leave us wondering “is there a God?” Most of us are surrounded by man-made things all day long. In my office right now, I am surrounded with computers designed by people, furniture built by people, books written by people, in a building constructed by people. Out my window I see other buildings as well as cars. I see only a sliver of sky. Surrounded by man-made things, it would be easy to see man as the center of the universe. One great place to connect with God is in nature. Get away from all the man-made stuff for a little while and experience a natural environment. Put your feet in the ocean. Who made the water? How did it get cold? How did waves start? Look at the stars. There are more than we can count. Who put them there? Who created clouds? Who made rain? Who created planets? Who decided that the earth should rotate, or that the sun would shine in the day and the moon at night?” (Fr. Stavros N. Akrotirianakis)

“Nature alone will not give us a full understanding of God – for this we need the Scripture. However, Scripture does not reveal everything which can be known about the Creator or about the created universe – the study of science can help complement what we can know through the Scriptures because nature too is a revelation of God (Romans 1:20).” (Fr. Ted Bobosh)