

TEILHARD DE CHARDIN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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Introduction

Three recent experiences of mine have, as it were, brought into focus a general feeling that has festered within me for some time now with regard to the issue of environmental pollution. All of them have to do with the pollution of the sea and have occasioned the writing of this essay.

The first experience took place on the second day of a Holy Week Retreat which I was conducting for a group of students at the Ateneo's Manresa-by-the-Sea Retreat House in Talomo, Davao City. That day also happened to be Good Friday. As I was walking along the veranda on the second floor of the retreat house, I just happened to look down at the sea. It was low tide and the whole front edge of the sea was blighted by a solid trail of garbage as far as the eye could see—both to the right and to the left. The image that came to me was that of Jesus being crucified again, this time by the garbage that I saw ravaging a significant part of what has become for me the Body of Teilhard's "Christ-Omega"—our Mother Earth. (I will elaborate more on this point in what follows;) Spontaneously, I felt great anger and pain as I beheld just one of the many ways in which I believe the contemporary Passion of Jesus is taking place all around us.

The second experience—similar to the first— took place on Easter Sunday, the final day of that same retreat. It has

become traditional for us to terminate our Holy Week retreat with a "Sunrise Liturgy" celebrated on the beach in front of the Retreat house. Since part of the Easter Sunday Liturgy calls for the renewal of our Baptismal Commitment, we make our renewal in the form of a triple immersion in the ocean, recalling the early tradition in the Church of celebrating our initiation into the Death and Resurrection of Jesus which is at the heart of that Sacrament.

This year, as I made my way into the ocean, I became painfully aware of how filthy and polluted the water there had become and I had a hard time deciding whether or not to proceed with our renewal rite of immersion in that murky mess. I really experienced, once again, deep anger and resentment at the degree to which pollution is slowly destroying one of God's most beautiful creatures and greatest gifts to us—the sea.

The third experience also involves the pollution of the sea but it took place at a later date at Villa Victoria in Dumoy, some distance from Talomo. For more than a year, this place has become my refuge from the pollution more obviously present at beaches closer to the city proper. However, on my latest trip there, I was disgusted to see and feel along the ocean floor all kinds of garbage invading my last sanctuary for engaging peacefully and joyfully and gratefully in my favorite form of exercise – swimming. Again, I felt so angry and helpless when brought face to face with the blatant and unabated irreverence, disregard, and destructive selfishness which is gradually transforming all the basic elements given us by God to sustain our life here on earth into one or other form of toxic material, especially the water we drink—and fish and bathe in.

So much has already been done by way of various scientific

studies to substantiate and re-inforce the warnings of concerned environmentalists with regard to the dangers we all face because of the extent to which we are destroying our environment that I do not feel the need to recount the available data here. What I would like to do is just share some thoughts, based on the writings of a well-known Jesuit priest, scientist, philosopher, and theologian—Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J.—writings which have helped in shaping my own attitudes towards and deep concern with regard to the issue of environmental pollution. It is my hope that these thoughts will also help foster similar attitudes and concern in those who might chance upon this essay.

Teilhard de Chardin, S.J.

Teilhard was a French Jesuit who was, besides being a priest and a religious, a well-known paleontologist. Owing to his deep commitment to God and the World, he felt deep down inside of himself a need to formulate a vision of reality which would enable him to integrate these two great loves of his life—for God and for the World—loves that, for him and for others like him, often seemed to be at odds with one another.

The “scientific” basis of this vision has been spelled out in his fundamental scientific work entitled **The Phenomenon of Man**. The practical implications of this vision for our spiritual life are in turn discussed in his more practical and spiritual work, **The Divine Milieu**. I will attempt to summarize here those basic elements in each of these two works that have contributed most significantly to my own attitudes with regard to environmental issues. A simple diagram of the basic elements in my own analysis of **The Phenomenon** can be found at the end of this essay.

The Phenomenon of Man is basically a detailed presentation of Teilhard’s “fundamental insights” into the nature of the evolutionary process that he believe is the key to understanding our universe and humanity’s place and role in it. To begin with, on the basis of the data he worked with, he points out that the first identifiable evidence pointing to the evolutionary nature of the universe is the increasing complexity observed as one examines and compares the external physical structures of older and newer species of beings. Thus, older forms of existing beings appear to be simpler while newer forms of being appear to be more complex.

He also observes, as all evolutionists do, that as one moves further and further back in time, one also moves from the realm of the human to that of the animals and then on to that of plants until one arrives at the realm of non-living beings. In the realm of non-life one moves in turn from the realm of highly complex molecules to that of more and more simple molecules until one arrives—through “downward extrapolation”—to the posited “existence”, at the first moment of “creation”, of an infinite number of undifferentiated particles which Teilhard calls the “Alpha Point” or starting point of the evolutionary process. This process—as envisioned by Teilhard—begins when these fundamental elements start to combine with one another to produce distinctive characteristics that distinguish them more and more from one another.

Three Basic Stages of Evolution

Teilhard characteristically designates the three basic stages of the revolutionary process as “Cosmogenesis”, “Biogenesis”, and “Noogenesis”. By “Cosmogenesis” he means the basic

organization of primal matter into the various existing planetary systems that make up our material universe. Within our own planetary system, he envisages the evolution of non-living matter into the fundamental chemical elements that we find at the heart of the material world.

“Biogenesis” is the term he uses with reference to the process of the evolution of Life along the path opened up by the appearance of organic compounds at the end of the previous stage of “Cosmogenesis”. This new stage begins with the appearance of cells which eventually, through the process of increasing complexification, take on the various forms of vegetative and animal life. The appearance of these living beings brings into existence along with them what Teilhard calls the “Biosphere” or complex of related realities which nurture the development of Life. At the same time it is here that Nature prepares the way for the final stage of evolution which he calls “Noogenesis”.

“Noogenesis”, or the birth of self-consciousness, marks the arrival of the human person. At this stage, a radical shift takes place with regard to the basic focus and fundamental dynamic of the evolutionary process. For it is here that we discover another key element in that process besides that of increasing complexification, namely consciousness. Because Teilhard believes in a basic unity-in-discontinuity prevailing throughout the evolutionary process, he sees in the appearance of self-consciousness in the human person a basis for affirming that all along the evolutionary path there has been a hidden, inner dimension of reality that has also been undergoing development—namely, primal consciousness. Thus he feels free to utilize the principle of “downward extrapolation”, once again, to establish his belief in the presence of some degree or form of

consciousness at every stage of evolution, no matter how primitive its state of development might have been at any given moment. This belief is crucial to Teilhard’s fundamental conviction regarding our basic rootedness in and solidarity with the material universe in which we live. But more about that later.

Basic Law of Evolution—Increasing Complexity-Consciousness

Another observation enables Teilhard to affirm in a more definitive way his growing belief in the fundamental inter-relatedness between complexity and consciousness. This observation is derived from the fact that the basic physical structures in the human body that are most intimately associated with the appearance and functioning of self-consciousness are also the most complex, i.e. the brain and the nervous system. This basic fact enables him to complete the formulation of the basic principle at the heart of his vision of evolution, namely, the “Principle of Increasing Complexity-Consciousness”. Implied in this formulation is his fundamental belief that increasing complexity on the external or physical level is both accompanied by and essential to a corresponding increase of consciousness on the internal or “psychic” level.

Evolution as Movement Towards Unity

Further reflection on the basic data available for the study of the evolutionary nature of the universe enables Teilhard to conclude that evolution can also be described as a steady

movement from multiplicity to unity all throughout the process. The significance of this insight lies primarily in the fact that it provides us with a clearer understanding of the path that evolution must continue to take if it is to achieve its final goal. This is crucial for us as it also points out the direction we must take in order to achieve the great task ahead of us. For, as Teilhard points out so insistently, with the birth of self-consciousness in the human person, a new dynamic comes into play within the evolutionary process itself.

Whereas in the earlier stages of evolution various "natural forces" of interaction and forward movement were at work, further developments in the process now lie within the realm of human freedom and responsibility. That is to say, we must now consciously move—within the "Noosphere" or network of human interactions that accompanied the birth of self-consciousness—from multiplicity to unity along the path of increasing complexity-consciousness until we attain what Teilhard envisions as the final goal of evolution. For him, that final goal is the birth of "Humankind".

By this he means the attainment of the highest possible degree of unity and consciousness which can only take place when all of us shall have, as it were, become one quasi-organic whole spread all over the face of the earth. In the light of this overall view of the evolutionary process, Teilhard actually calls the total process "Anthropogenesis" or the Birth of Humankind. Within this perspective, humanity is envisaged—singly and corporately—as being both the fruit of the "evolutionary tree" and at the same time the final responsible agent to whom has been entrusted the ultimate historical outcome of the very process that gave us birth. The future of evolution is, therefore, in our hands. Hence the need for a vision to guide us into that future.

Thus the stage is set for another—this time "upward"—extrapolation or projection of the basic principle of evolution into the future. It is here that Teilhard establishes the fundamental basis of what he believes to be the ultimate solution to his original "problem" of integrating his love for God and his love for the World. He finds that basis in what he calls the "Omega Point" or final element which he believes is crucial to his basic vision if we are to achieve the ultimate goal of evolution.

Omega-Point

The development of this aspect of his evolutionary theory takes place in the epilogue of **The Phenomenon of Man**. There he observes that if his basic vision of the evolutionary process is valid, there is need to affirm—initially by projection—another element in the process which will provide a "super-center" or universal focal point around and towards which humanity can organize and integrate its corporate effort to achieve its goal of maximum unity/complexity-consciousness.

In order for this reality to fulfill its basic function, Teilhard proceeds to identify some basic characteristics which he believes it must possess. We will take a brief look at these now.

First of all, since humanity in its most radical nature is personal—i.e., capable of knowing and being known, of loving and being loved—Teilhard insists that this center must also be personal. It must be a Who, not an It. Furthermore, since there must be a fundamental unity in the whole process—from beginning to end—this center must also have been present and active in some way from the very beginning. At the same time, it must be irrevocably present and active right up to the very

end. Again, since it is, as it were, the guiding force of the whole process, it must also be ontologically independent of the process and superior to it. This is to say, it must not only be immanent to the process; it must also be transcendent. Finally, if this being is to serve as the focal point of human striving towards it as a concrete goal, its existence must be capable of being known and ascertained.

In addition to this human need for some kind of a super-center to strive towards, a further consideration also arises from the obvious fact that, if all goes as envisioned and dearly hoped, a time will come when humanity—and therefore, evolution itself—will have reached its highest level of unity/complexity-consciousness and thus, in principle, be unable to progress any further. Such a situation leaves us with only two possibilities: either the termination of evolution at the very moment of the “glorious attainment” of its goal or a moment of break-through into the realm of the transcendent—beyond space and time.

Cosmic Christ/Christ-Omega

These two related but distinct issues lead Teilhard to turn his gaze to another arena of human endeavour, the realms of philosophy and religion where such issues as those just raised are most thoroughly and appropriately explored. Because of the nature of his attempt at a “scientific” presentation of his case for evolution, as he conceives of it, he makes it clear that his approach to philosophy—and especially to religion—is purely phenomenological, i.e. it in no way presupposes nor does it invite one to adhere to any specific philosophical or religious system as such. He simply wants us to look at these systems as they present themselves to an unbiased observer in order to see

if they can help us supply the missing piece of the evolutionary theory that he wishes to share with us.

In the process of identifying and critiquing the major religious and philosophical systems that present themselves to him, Teilhard singles out the phenomenon of the Christian religion as the only one that embodies in its basic belief system a center that manifests the very same characteristics as the basic characteristics which he claims are essential to “Omega Point”. Thus, he sees in Christianity—specifically as influenced by the “Cosmic Christ” of the writings of St. Paul—a phenomenological “confirmation” of the projected existence of “Omega Point”. With this discovery, he concludes that the process of evolution can best be described as a process of “Christogenesis” wherein the whole material universe becomes, as it were, the “Body”—i.e., the visible manifestation and agent of interaction with the evolving universe—of “Christ-Omega” or the “Cosmic Christ”. The latter, as envisioned by St. Paul, is the one through whom “God created everything in heaven and on earth, the seen and the unseen things...(For) God created the whole universe through him and for him. He existed before all things, and in union with him all things have their proper place” (Col. 1:16-17).

Again, in Ephesians 1:8b-10, Paul tells us that “in all his wisdom and insight, God did what he had purposed, and made known to us the secret plan he had already decided to complete by means of Christ. This plan, which God will complete when the time is right, is to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as Head.” It is texts like these, and the tradition built up around them, that led Teilhard to the conclusion that Christ is indeed the Omega Point of evolution that he was seeking.

The Divinization of Our Activities

Armed with the convictions derived from **The Phenomenon** regarding our basic rootedness and solidarity in the evolving universe which “gave us birth” and the centrality of the “Cosmic Christ” as the “soul” of this universe, we can now move on to a very brief overview of relevant parts of Teilhard’s spiritual classic, **The Divine Milieu**. In the first part of that work Teilhard leads us to the conclusion that our souls—which tradition has always taught us are made for God in Jesus Christ - cannot attain their goal apart from the material world which nourishes those souls. Here he reflects with us on the significance of that aspect of our human experience that we call our activities. For he invites us to be aware of the fact that it is precisely through our activities and encounters within the realm of the material world that our spirits are nourished.

We need only recall the extent to which our personal growth necessarily takes place precisely through our physical labors— whether it be scrubbing the floor, writing a letter, or sewing a hole in someone’s socks; through our artistic creativity; through our scientific research; through our encounters with the beauties of nature; and especially through our encounters with one another, encounters that always begin necessarily on the level of sense experience. He calls these efforts to sharpen our awareness of the spiritual implications of our earthly activities the process of “divinization” of those activities by finding God’s (Christ’s) presence in them. Or as St. Paul would say, “whether you eat or drink, do all for the glory of God” (cf. 1 Cor. 10:31) for “all things are yours and you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s” (Cf. 1 Cor. 3:22b-23).

The Divinization of Our Passivities

Teilhard attempts to do the same with the other dimension of our experience in this world—that of our “passivities”, i.e. of being acted upon. Thus, in his very beautiful meditation on “The Two Hands of God”, he invites us to enter deeply into our own inner core and to hear in the dark, unfathomable abyss that we find there the voice of God assuring us: “Be not afraid! It is I!” Then he urges us to rise from those inner depths, which bring us into contact with our common roots in the Divine within us, and to allow our consciousness to expand outwards into the furthest reaches of outer space until we encounter another terrifying form of Infinity outside of us wherein, once again, we are invited to listen for the same reassuring words: “Be not afraid! It is I.”

Thus, exploring these two dimensions of reality—the within and the without—we are brought into a conscious encounter with the ultimate Divine reality acting upon us in and through both of them. This enables us to sense God’s creative action and presence within us, filling us with Life and the myriad gifts and potentialities that are nourished by the universe in which we live and which we must develop through our actions and encounters in the material world entrusted to our care. But we are also enabled to see that Divine reality operative all around us in the immense variety of forces which sustain us in the concrete situation we find ourselves in at any given place in space and moment of time. This pervasive Divine presence and action—i.e., this “Divine Milieu”—reveals the universe to us as an “immense womb” in which we are empowered to become the persons we are called to be only in and through one or other kind of encounter with the material world of which we are a small but vital part. It must be noted, however briefly,

here that this process of becoming is not only individual but radically social or corporate. But more of that later.

Teilhardian Understanding of Matter

At the end of the second part of his essay, Teilhard attempts to redefine, as it were, some of the basic spiritual concepts at the heart of traditional Christian ascetical teaching and practice, which is precisely where his original problem of reconciling his "two great Loves" arose.

In the third section of this attempt he addresses the somewhat negative attitude that this tradition has nurtured with regard to the material world. In the course of his discussion Teilhard makes an important distinction between what he calls "carnal" matter and "spiritual" matter. The former would correspond to that aspect of our relationship with the material world which leads to the negative attitude referred to, while the latter would be more in keeping with his earlier reflection on the positive contribution of our activities—precisely in this material world—to the process of our spiritual growth.

Let us take a brief look at these two related but contrasting concepts. First of all, by "carnal" matter Teilhard understands matter that proves to be an obstacle towards spiritual growth in so far as it invites us to various forms of sloth and regressive self-indulgence. Included in this area of "carnal" matter would be excesses in the use, let us say, of food and drink or compulsive tendencies towards a consumerist lifestyle. The tendency to "rest on our laurels" and to give up the challenge of incessant growth in the development and use of our talents, which living in an evolutionary world demands, would also be seen as a

manifestation of this "carnal" aspect of matter.

"Spiritual" matter, on the other hand, would be just the reverse. It would refer to the material world precisely as the venue for those daily encounters with our physical environment and "wordly situation" which provide us with that endless series of opportunities and challenges for personal growth discussed in his earlier treatment of the divinization of our activities.

To concretize this distinction between "carnal" and "spiritual" matter, Teilhard characteristically makes use of a strikingly specific physical image, namely that of climbing a mountain. In this image, "spiritual matter" would be associated with the task of climbing laboriously up that mountain, a task that could obviously not be achieved without the materiality of the mountain. "Carnal" matter, on the other hand, would be envisioned as that part of the mountain that has already been traversed and which no longer serves as an incentive for personal, i.e. "spiritual" growth. That is to say that, what would have been acknowledged as "spiritual" matter yesterday is no longer of any real use to us. Teilhard insists here that it is the withdrawal from this aspect of matter, and only from this aspect of matter, that authentic Christian ascetism—or self-denial—calls us.

The Centrality of the Eucharist

The last element in Teilhard's attempt to "find God everywhere" in this material world of ours - which I consider to be essential for developing an authentically Christian attitude towards our environment - can be found in his treatment of the Eucharist which appears in the third part of **The Divine Milieu**.

At the beginning of this part of his essay, he explicitly acknowledges and clarifies the reason for the obviously

“individualistic” approach that pervades the first two parts of the same. He notes that this was unavoidable as a preliminary stage of his overall presentation, since it involved bringing us personally face to face with the basic issues of living out our own Christian lives in this world of ours. This only at this point that he feels we are ready to look at the social or corporate aspect of Christian life which is so central, not only to Christianity but also to his own radically communal view of reality as basically one of constant evolution towards the quasi-organic corporate reality of “Humankind” mentioned earlier. At the heart of this radically communal aspect of Christian life is the phenomenon of what he calls the “Great Communion”. Let us look at this for a moment.

Before looking at his treatment of the Eucharist in the **Divine Milieu**, it might be of help to note that in another of his important works, **The Hymn of the Universe**, Teilhard recalls a mystical experience he had one day as he sat gazing at the Blessed Sacrament exposed in a monstrance on the altar of a small chapel where he had gone to pray. As he contemplated that host, its edges seemed to melt and he envisaged the densely concentrated energy of Divine Love hidden therein as pouring itself out and permeating every particle of matter in the universe with its transforming power. Thus, a “Universal Host”, filled with the Divine “Eucharistic Presence” of the self-same Christ that he had envisaged as being at the heart of the evolving universe. Thus he became profoundly aware of a radical convergence between the Christ of the Eucharist and the reality of the Cosmic-Christ/Christ-Omega whom he had postulated as being central to that universe in the epilogue of *The Phenomenon of Man*.

This realization that in the Eucharist we encounter in a

very real and dynamic way the Christ-Omega of Christogenesis is at the heart of Teilhard’s reflections on the Eucharist in *The Divine Milieu*. But here he goes further by observing that this encounter binds us not only with the Cosmic Christ but also with each other, not only in the here and now but also in the past and in the future for, as he observes, there is really only one “Great Communion” that has been operative from the very beginning. Individual communions are thus to be seen only as momentary, personal experiences of the one overriding reality of the Eucharistic Christ drawing us all into Himself and, with us and through us, the whole of the material universe that continually nourishes us. Conversely, as we—and all creation through us—are drawn more and more deeply into the reality of the Cosmic Christ, his radiant energy of Love radiates back through us into the material world, making his Divine Eucharistic Presence a transforming force continually “sanctifying”, that world. In keeping with the flow of this reflection, he speaks of the whole world as one great “Universal Host” over which the Cosmic Christ himself will, upon his Second Coming, speak the traditional words of Consecration used at Mass, “This is My Body”, thus explicitly identifying it as his own true Body.

This perception of the Universe as being one immense “host” is very strikingly developed in another of Teilhard’s classic essays, “The Mass on the World”, where he recounts another experience regarding the Eucharist. It might be helpful to mention here. In this particular essay, he shares with us an experience which he found himself unable to celebrate Mass because of a lack of bread and wine. The thought then came to him that the universe itself was just one big host and cup of wine that he could “consecrate” and offer to God as his worship for that day. In this “Cosmic act of worship” he offered all the

experiences and forces of growth at work in the universe as the "Cosmic Bread" and all the suffering and pain and other forms of diminishment being undergone at the same time within the universe as the "Cosmic Wine" which he would offer to the glory of the Father in union with the Cosmic Christ whom he sensed as being present and active at the heart of it all.

In the light of these reflections it is easy to understand how he could claim at the end of his treatment of the Eucharist in *The Divine Milieu* that in leaving the presence of the localized Christ of the Eucharistic Bread and Wine at the end of the Mass to return to the world he was not leaving Jesus at all but moving from one form of Divine presence to another more Cosmic one, His dynamic evolutionary presence in the World that Teilhard loved so much.

Conclusion

Perhaps now that we have finished our rather cursory tour of some of the key ideas of Teilhard de Chardin with regard to this material world of ours and our relationship with it, we can draw a few conclusions with regard to our basic attitude towards our environment.

The first and most basic truth that Teilhard has helped me, at least, to become more aware of is the fact that we are an intrinsic part of this material world since we find the very roots of our being there. We are neither outside of it nor above it but a part of it. Our bodies contain the same basic fundamental elements that make up all the other beings which share this world with us. From the very first moment that the material world began to exist, the matter which constitutes the material aspect of our personal and corporate humanity also began its

* The Hymn of the Universe.

existence. For millions—maybe billions—of years it has undergone the general process of evolution, moving from the most simple to the most complex forms of matter until it has assumed the particular form that constitutes a part of our own being at this moment. Using one of Teilhard's favorite images, we are the fruit of the tree of evolution, its crowning glory. To destroy the material world in any way, therefore, is to destroy our very own selves; to exploit it senselessly and irrationally is to show our own fundamental ignorance of who and what we really are.

As we have seen also, through the eyes of Teilhard, our present existence and future destiny are no less dependent on a positive and reverential relationship with this material universe of ours. For our growth as persons—both materially and spiritually, both individually and socially, both actively and passively—takes place in and through our interaction with the world of matter. Our radical nature as relational beings who are, by definition, incarnate spirits—not bodies and souls—further affirms the inalienable bond that exists between us and our environment, not in a purely static way but in a radically dynamic way. We are and we become who we are called to be in and through and with our material world.

On an even deeper level, Teilhard's insights into ourselves and our relationship with the world in which we "live and move and have our being"—to steal a phrase St. Paul uses to speak of God (cf. Acts 17:29)—enable us to discover that it is not only in our love for one another, but also in our love for the Universe, that we show our love for God—or more specifically, for the Cosmic Christ. If John could say in his first letter that the person who says he/she loves God but doesn't love his/her neighbor is a liar (cf. 1 John 4:20), can we not say the same thing about our

love and respect for the material world? For how can we love the God we do not see if we do not love the created Universe which He has made for us and entrusted to our care and which we do see? As Teilhard's reflections in **The Phenomenon of Man** have led us to see, it is in Christ-Omega that we find the "inner soul" or ultimate identity, as it were, of our evolving universe. This, in turn, suggests that we can justifiably look upon this same Universe as the "Body of the Cosmic Christ-Omega".

Such a way of looking at the material world is further sharpened and developed, as we saw, in Teilhard's reflections on the Eucharist in both **The Divine Milieu** and his essay, "The Mass on the World". It is precisely this perception of the intimate relationship between the material universe and the Cosmic reality of Christ-Omega that conditioned my response to the massive pollution of the sea mentioned at the beginning of this essay—i.e., the sense of Jesus being crucified again and again in the wanton destruction of our environment in so many senseless and almost "sacrilegious" ways.

In bringing these reflections to a close, I would also like to share with you another experience of the religious implications, for me, of environmental pollution and exploitation. For it is also becoming more and more difficult for me to pray with the Church every Sunday morning when we are invited to sing a song of praise to God in behalf of all creation in the moving words of **Daniel** 3:57-86, words that Teilhard surely prayed with great love and affection during his life time but words which, today, would certainly have also caused him great anguish and pain. I would like to end this sharing by quoting several verses from that song in the hope that the day may come when we shall have come to our senses and have

learned to treat our world with the same love and care with which Almighty God continues to create and sustain it for the good of us all:

Let the earth bless the Lord,
 Praise and exalt him above all forever.
 Mountains and hills, bless the Lord.
 Everything growing from the earth, bless the Lord.
 You springs, bless the Lord
 Seas and rivers, bless the Lord.
 You dolphins and all water creatures, bless the Lord.
 All you birds of the air, bless the Lord.
 All you beasts, wild and tame, bless the Lord.
 You sons of men, bless the Lord. (Dan. 3:74-82)