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"Liturgy as a Practical Cosmology: Jenkins and Lonergan in Conversation"

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Abstract

This article introduces Bernard Lonergan to environmental ethics through a conversation with Willis Jenkins. Jenkins represents a ripe dialogue partner for Lonergan because of his attentiveness to methodological questions within environmental ethics, as in his incisive critique of Lynn White's influence. To pursue this conversation, this article examines Jenkins's critique of White and then turns to Lonergan's thought to supplement and refine this critique. From this engagement, the article identifies the need for a "practical cosmology": an ongoing Christian practice that can affectively motivate care for creation. It proposes that the Christian liturgy, through its rich symbolism and distinct cosmology, offers one such practice and thus can weave that care seamlessly within Christian identity. To test this conclusion, the article briefly considers the import of this conversation for contemporary ecclesial responses to the ecological crisis, such as in *Laudato si'*.

Keywords

Environmental Ethics, Lonergan, Bernard, Jenkins, Willis, Eucharist, *Laudato Si'*

The thought of Bernard Lonergan, though far-ranging, has enjoyed only a marginal influence in Christian environmental ethics. Heeding what the Canadian Jesuit dubbed the functional specialty of "dialectic," students of Lonergan have begun to facilitate encounters of horizons between Lonergan and specific environmental theologians to rectify this lacuna.[1] This critical sifting of interpretations and judgements, both conflicting and complementary, has produced and will

[1] See Anne Marie Dalton, *A Theology for the Earth: The Contributions of Thomas Berry and Bernard Lonergan* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 1999); and Gerard Whelan, S.J., "Communitarian Solutions to the Ecological Crisis: Michael Northcott, Bernard Lonergan, and Robert Doran in Dialogue," in *Everything Is Interconnected: Towards a Globalization*

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continue to generate constructive conclusions that inevitably challenge one's own horizon.[2] This essay follows those previous efforts by placing Lonergan's thought in conversation with that of Willis Jenkins, a promising and prolific Christian environmental ethicist at the University of Virginia. Jenkins's concern for methodological questions, especially his incisive critique of Lynn White's influence on the field, distinguishes him as a ripe dialogue partner for Lonergan.

My study proceeds in four parts. First, I rehearse Jenkins's twofold methodological critique leveled towards the field of environmental ethics. Second, I propose how Lonergan's work, aided partly by the work of Robert Doran, might advance and refine those two critiques. Third, I demonstrate how this conversation intimates the need for a "practical cosmology," an exigency quite naturally answered through the Christian liturgy. Fourth, before concluding the essay, I include a brief case-study that considers the import of this conversation for contemporary ecclesial responses to the ecological crisis, particularly *Laudato si'*.

Willis Jenkins and Christian Environmental Ethics after Lynn White

In 1967, Lynn White published a famous lecture entitled, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis."[3] There, after insisting that the blame for and solution to that crisis are not found simply on the level of science and technology, White blames Christianity: "[e]specially in its Western form, Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen."[4] He points to the opening chapters of Genesis to suggest that they "not only established a dualism of [humanity] and nature but also insisted that it is God's will that [humans] exploit nature for his proper ends."[5] Since, according to White, "what people do about their ecology depends on what they think about themselves in relation to the things around them," he urges Christians to "rethink our axioms" in a non-anthropocentric key.[6]

While church historians and biblicists alike question many of White's premises, his protest has shaped the field without

with a Human Face and an Integral Ecology, eds. Joseph Ogbonnaya and Lucas Briola (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University, 2019), 97-116.

[2] For a description of "dialectic," see Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 235-266.

[3] Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967): 1203-1207.

[4] White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," 1205.

[5] White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," 1205.

[6] White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," 1204-1205.

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question.[7] For instance, Michael Northcott in his groundbreaking 1996 book, *The Environment and Christian Ethics*, even while critical of White, still bases his typology of Christian environmental ethics on anthropocentric, biocentric, and theocentric approaches.[8] Heeding White's call for revised non-anthropocentric "axioms," Thomas Berry tells a "new story" of origins and purpose, one beyond a "scientific rhetoric" and a "redemption rhetoric" and one that situates human persons within a more inclusive "cosmic-Earth process."[9] John Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker, two of the most prominent Christian environmental ethicists in the United States, likewise narrate less-anthropocentric cosmologies, which they define as "stories or understandings that orient humans to the unfolding of the cosmos in relationship to a larger context of life."[10] White's clarion call still resounds throughout the field of environmental ethics today.

Willis Jenkins, however, fears that White's critique has overdetermined Christian discourse on the environment. He expresses two reservations. First, following a critique begun in the late 80s by thinkers like Christopher Stone, Jenkins worries that understanding the environmental ethicist's task principally as narrating a non-anthropocentric cosmology ignores the profoundly *social* character of the ecological crisis.[11] "Of particular importance for considering methodology after White," Jenkins tenders, "is the question of whether ethics faces a singular ecologic crisis generated from some root corruption or multiple environment-related social problems."[12] He continues:

> Christian environmental ethics rarely tarries over this initial decision, perhaps because it often fails to recognize White's legacy in defining its notion of the environmental task. The introductory catalogs of ecological distress appear to adumbrate a shared sense of crisis. However, in the specific issues they list they implicitly do more: they signal the set of issues that the ethicist considers representative of crisis and thus the kinds of problems that an ethic must adequately address. Biodi-

[7] For a critique of White's reading of history, see Elspeth Whitney, "Lynn White, Ecotheology, and History," *Environmental Ethics* 15 (1993): 151-169. For a response to White's biblical exegesis, see Richard Clifford, "Genesis 1-3: Permission to Exploit Nature?", *The Bible Today* 26, no. 3 (May 1988): 133-137.

[8] Michael S. Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University, 1996).

[9] See Thomas Berry, "The New Story," in *Teilhard in the 21st Century: The Emerging Spirit of the Earth*, eds. Arthur Fabel and Donald St. John (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2003), 77-88.

[10] Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, *Ecology and Religion* (Washington, D.C.: Island, 2014), 183.

[11] See Christopher Stone, "Moral Pluralism and the Course of Environmental Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 10, no. 2 (1988): 139-54.

[12] Willis Jenkins, "After Lynn White: Religious Ethics and Environmental Problems," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 37, no. 2 (2009): 283-309, at 291.

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> versity loss may appear in most lists, but what about sustainable city planning or public health? Could poverty count as an environmental issue? Those lists therefore stake a position (however unwitting) in the secular field's methodological debates over what counts as an environmental problem. One of the first points in that debate considers whether the field forms around a single crisis, allowing for a monist project of values, or around a set of particular problems, requiring pluralist and contextual engagements.[13]

To borrow Jenkins's example, appeals to human dignity and justice as an ethical response to racist and classist distributions of environmental waste appear anthropocentric if one employs White's criteria.[14] In other words, Jenkins believes that today's ecological crisis does not reside simply in distorted anthropocentric worldviews, but rather a whole array of social questions. Indeed, on this point, he praises Leonardo Boff's yoking together of the cries of the earth and the poor.[15] For him, Boff grasps the social dimensions of the ecological crisis quite well.

Jenkins follows this broader path in his own work. In *The Future of Ethics*, he discusses climate change, globalization, sustainability science, environmental racism and classism, economic scale and inequality, and intergenerational justice. As he comments in the book's introduction, "[d]istinguishing social and environmental problems obfuscates the moral task, so ethics must invent ways to confront the hybrid problems of integrating systems."[16] This interdisciplinary methodology, he believes, affords a broader perspective than does a White-determined project.

Jenkins's second reservation concerns the (im)practicality of overemphasizing cosmology as a reaction to Lynn White.[17] Jenkins cautions against the "cosmological temptation"; as he submits, "[w]hile often compelling, cosmological critiques pose a practical trade-off: they make our inherited moral world seem incapable of facing difficult problems. In my view, cosmological critiques defeat the ethical task before it begins."[18] Efforts to cultivate a more biocentric cosmology belie the strategies actually employed by Christian communities and, as a result, isolate environmental concern from the seemingly more central commitments of those communities.[19]

[13] Jenkins, "After Lynn White," 291.

[14] Jenkins, "After Lynn White," 292, 297.

[15] Jenkins, "After Lynn White," 299; cf. Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, trans. Phillip Berryman (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997), esp. 104-114.

[16] Willis Jenkins, *The Future of Ethics: Sustainability, Social Justice, and Religious Creativity* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, 2013), 3.

[17] Willis Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace: Environmental Ethics and Christian Theology* (New York: Oxford University, 2008), 11.

[18] Jenkins, *The Future of Ethics*, 4, 8. See also *Ecologies of Grace*, 11.

[19] Jenkins, "After Lynn White," 301-302.

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Excessive fears of anthropocentrism subvert the pragmatic need to motivate human persons to care for creation. Jenkins instead aims to locate environmental care within preexisting frameworks of Christian communities since these are the narratives and strategies that actually engage Christians and form the essence of their religious identities.

Jenkins accordingly turns to soteriology, a cornerstone of Christian identity, despite, as he admits, post-Lynn White criteria judging this turn as "too individualist, too dualist, too anthropocentric, too otherworldly, too hierarchical, or too gnostic to relate to ecological matters."[20] This suspicion comes despite the paramount importance of these narratives of grace for Christian communities. As Jenkins observes:

> Being Christian undoubtedly involves worldviews, but adherents would unlikely first turn to cosmology if asked, "why be a Christian?" They would likely talk about experiences of grace or spiritual vocation or biblical narrative or the way of Jesus . . . . By interpreting the way spiritual practices incorporate nature into Christian experience, soteriological investigations can illuminate productive sites of practical reason and human reform. The White-shaped concentration on worldviews cannot do that as effectively, for its criteria for religious reform can snarl internal debates less immediate to the practical issues at hand.[21]

In *Ecologies of Grace*, Jenkins surveys the soteriologies of Thomas Aquinas, Karl Barth, and Sergei Bulgakov to "show how the environmental crisis amounts to a crisis in the intimacies of God's salvation."[22] Jenkins believes that this soteriological turn can demonstrate that authentic Christian discipleship necessarily entails concern for creation.

Jenkins similarly hopes to position care for creation within the concrete responses of Christian communities to contemporary exigencies. He states, "[a]s opposed to a view of ethical change that focuses on cognitive worldviews, I argue that ethics needs a pragmatic view of culture in which morality is learned in bodies, carried by practices, and formed into repertoires that teach agents how to see and solve problems . . . . Working from [faith-inspired] projects allows my account to offer what pragmatism usually lacks: a way to begin from the problems of the world as it is, yet still expect deep transformation."[23] Actualizing the ecological potential of those practices, despite being often the products of "imperfect concepts and incompetent communities," can begin to reverse that imperfection and incompetence.[24]

[20] Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 14.
[21] Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 16.
[22] Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 17.
[23] Jenkins, *Future of Ethics*, 11.
[24] Jenkins, *Future of Ethics*, 4, 8; and "After Lynn White," 296.

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In his work, Jenkins hopes to have "sketched a role for Christian environmental ethics that arises out of the gap between the capacities of theological traditions and the demands of difficult problems—a tensive disparity that produces theological creativity for the sake of practical strategies."[25] Care for creation becomes an essential dimension of Christian discipleship not by imposing an alien cosmology onto a Christian community but instead by adapting and expanding preexisting soteriological narratives and ecclesial practices in response to contemporary signs of the times, like the ecological crisis. The methodological assumptions born from White's critique, meanwhile, hinder this integration, since these narratives and practices frequently appear anthropocentric.

A Response from Bernard Lonergan

A. The Ecological Crisis as a Multifaceted Problem

Jenkins's two methodological critiques lay fertile ground for imagining how Lonergan might respond. First, Jenkins favors a broader approach to the ecological crisis, striving to understand it not just as "some root corruption" but rather as "multiple environment-related social problems." Lonergan's project sheds light on such an approach, while also endowing the multiplicity of these problems and their required responses with some order. In his own work, Lonergan sketches a theology of history, one that, as he declared as a precocious Jesuit scholastic, "will throw Hegel and Marx . . . into the shade."[26] This explanatory framework elucidates the dynamics of history, the interplay of decline, progress, and redemption. More recently, Robert Doran has used what Lonergan calls the "scale of values" to substantiate this framework.[27] Doran models the relations between vital values (food, water, shelter), social values (economies, politics, technologies), cultural values (the assumptions behind human living), personal values, and religious values as well as how progress, decline, and redemption shape these relations. Lonergan and Doran would agree with Jenkins that decline, in all times and places, is a multifaceted reality.

[25] Jenkins, "After Lynn White," 304.

[26] Bernard J.F. Lonergan, "Letter of Bernard Lonergan to the Reverend Henry Keane, S.J.," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies, n.s.* 5, no. 2 (Fall 2014): 23-40, at 33. See also Joseph A. Komonchak. "Lonergan's Early Essays on the Redemption of History," in *Lonergan Workshop* 10 (1994): 159-179.

[27] Robert M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1990).

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Indeed, environmental ethicists minding Jenkins's admonitions can interpret the ecological crisis through this explanatory model provided by Lonergan. The overlap between maldistribution of vital values and environmental degradation, the twin "cries" of the earth and the poor, signals decline: corrupt social institutions (social values), technocratic cultural assumptions (cultural values), short-sighted personal decisions (personal values), and even privatized religious practices (religious values).[28] Adequately resolving these distortions and responding to the ecological crisis thus requires a far-ranging program of social, cultural, personal, and religious transformation.[29] The breadth and complexity of Lonergan's schema of history therefore matches the breadth of the "multiple environment-related social problems" that, according to Jenkins, constitute the ecological crisis.

At the same time, Lonergan's understanding of history can sharpen how Jenkins relates these multiple social problems to each other. Reacting against an overreliance on cosmologies and shaped by his pragmatist background, Jenkins tends to rely almost exclusively on transforming social structures for redemptive change. Lonergan and Doran provide a fuller perspective. Read through their lens, cosmologies—as narratives of purpose and origin—function on the level of cultural values, of worldviews, and thus remain indispensable within the broader communal fabric. As Lonergan notes, "[f]or [people] not only do things. They wish to understand their own doing. They wish to discover and to express the appropriateness, the meaning, the significance, the value, and the use of their way of life as a whole and in its parts."[30] The belief that one can enact historical transformation only by changing social institutions ignores the constitutive role of meaning and value in society; to limit transformation in this way ironically perpetuates the technocratic roots of the environmental crisis. Lonergan's theology of history, meanwhile, accounts more clearly for change through both social institutions and cultural worldviews. As Doran highlights, while social structures shape certain cultural assumptions "from below" so too can alternative cultural assumptions heal social structures "from above."[31] The latter is most important when myopic technologies, economics, and politics (social

[28] See Lucas Briola, "Hearing and Answering the One Cry of Earth and Poor: An Integral Ecology, Eucharistic Healing, and the Scale of Values," in *Everything Is Interconnected*, 119-131.

[29] See Neil Ormerod and Cristina Vanin, "Ecological Conversion: What Does it Mean?" *Theological Studies* 77, no. 2 (2016): 328-352.

[30] Bernard J.F. Lonergan, "The Absence of God in Modern Culture," in *A Second Collection* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974), 102.

[31] See Neil Ormerod, *Re-Visioning the Church: An Experiment in Systematic-Historical Ecclesiology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2014), 78-82; cf. Bernard J.F. Lonergan, "Healing and Creating in History," in *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick Crowe (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985), 100-109.

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values) epitomize the problem, as is the case with the environmental crisis.[32] Cosmologies and "new stories," as cultural worldviews, can transform and heal those "multiple environment-related social problems." Lonergan's theology of history adds both substance and clarity to the broad approach to the ecological crisis for which Jenkins sagely calls. The more constructive role of cosmologies for which Lonergan provides room will become clearer in the next sub-section.

B. Engaging Human Subjects and Christian Communities

In lieu of imposing entirely revised cosmologies on Christian communities, Jenkins proposed a more practical turn to soteriological narratives and ecclesial practices. Lonergan too recognizes the importance of engaging persons as they are. For his part, Lonergan worries that certain philosophical currents of modernity both "neglected" and "truncated" human subjects.[33] As an alternative, he invites people to a penetrating self-examination of what they are actually doing when they are knowing, choosing, and acting.[34] This project subsequently yields an understanding of the human person truer to experience.

This self-appropriation includes attending to the affective side of being human. In *Insight*, Lonergan introduces the category of "mystery," an affect-laden, sensitive analogue to the limitless wonder of the human mind. As he describes it, "[one]'s explanatory self-knowledge can become effective in [one's] concrete living only if the content of systematic insights, the direction of judgments, the dynamism of decisions can be embodied in images that release feeling and emotion and flow spontaneously into deeds no less than words."[35] The "unrestricted openness of our intelligence and reasonableness . . . is accompanied by a corresponding operator that deeply and powerfully holds our sensitive integrations open to transforming change."[36] Understood as such, mystery plays an essential role within human authenticity.

Lonergan's later notion of symbol specifies how mystery functions within a world mediated by human meaning. In *Method in Theology*, he observes how feelings form "the mass and momentum and power of [one's] conscious living, the actuation of [one's] affective

[32] See Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 94, 208, 395, 403, 410, 416-17, 474.

[33] Bernard J.F. Lonergan, "The Subject," in *A Second Collection*, 69-75.

[34] Bernard J.F. Lonergan, "*Insight* Revisited," in *A Second Collection*, 269.

[35] See Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan (CWL), vol. 3, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2005), 570.

[36] Lonergan, *Insight*, 570.

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capacities, dispositions, habits, the effective orientation of [one's] being."[37] From this awareness, Lonergan defines a symbol as "an image of a real or imaginary object that evokes a feeling or is evoked by a feeling."[38] It "does not prove but overwhelms with a manifold of images that converge in meaning."[39] Symbols are an inescapable feature of human living; "[y]ou can't talk to your body without symbols."[40] Symbols express meaning in ways that stir one's bodily being, that to which mystery communicates. Precisely by engaging human affectivity, symbols play a profoundly formative role within human living.

Doran has expanded Lonergan's consideration of human affectivity through his notion of "psychic conversion." Emerging from his dialogue with depth psychology, for Doran, this concept refers to the need to transform "the psychic component of what Freud calls 'the censor' from a repressive to a constructive agency in a person's development."[41] Psychic conversion names the need to integrate psychic-neural movements with the demands of human authenticity.[42] This type of conversion prompts one to attend to and appropriate symbolic meaning in one's own life. Moreover, this type of conversion helps one overcome what Lonergan labels "dramatic bias," the suppression of certain neural images that would otherwise generate authentic insights.[43] To transform the psyche from a repressive to a constructive force in one's development is to entertain all relevant questions that arise for understanding, no matter the discomfort that they might cause. Through his work, Doran further highlights the value that Lonergan grants to affectivity for any adequate understanding of the human person.

These anthropological insights carry key theological implications. Lonergan speaks of doing theology on the "third stage of meaning," the realm of human intentionality and interiority.[44] In articulating the mystery of God's saving work, theology must attend to the particularities of the human person in her knowing, choosing, and acting.

[37] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 65.

[38] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 64.

[39] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 67.

[40] Lonergan, "An Interview with Fr. Bernard Lonergan, S.J.," in *A Second Collection*, 225.

[41] Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 59. See also See Robert M. Doran, *Subject and Psyche: Ricoeur, Jung, and the Search for Foundations* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1977); *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981); and *Theological Foundations, Volume One: Intentionality and Psyche* (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 1995).

[42] Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 185, 211, 251.

[43] For Lonergan's treatment of "dramatic bias," see *Insight*, 214-27.

[44] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 267-333.

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What Lonergan names as "religious conversion" necessarily includes an affective component in a world mediated by meaning.[45] Thus, mystery features prominently as Lonergan outlines a "heuristic solution to the problem of evil" in *Insight*. There, he speaks of the need for "a mystery that is at once symbol of the uncomprehended and sign of what is grasped and psychic force that sweeps living human bodies, linked in charity, to the joyful, courageous, wholehearted, yet intelligently controlled performance of the tasks set by a world order in which the problem of evil is not suppressed but transcended."[46] Lonergan articulates elsewhere the "just and *mysterious* Law of the Cross," which through its continual resymbolization and reimagining, evokes religious conversion, affectively engages Christians in God's ongoing work of redemption, and dramatically models the shape that salvation necessarily takes in a history pierced with sin.[47] Psychic conversion, meanwhile, better allows people to hear the voices of victims, both within themselves and within history, voices that dramatic bias so frequently represses.[48] As William Loewe demonstrates, by attending to the anthropological question of "what generates the story and makes it a saving story?", Lonergan and his interpreters offer a soteriological account that befits the third stage of meaning.[49] It is this very practical attention to the various dimensions of being human that enables a compelling account of how Christians undergo redemption and enact God's saving will in history.

Both Lonergan and Jenkins's practical bents intersect with their soteriological agendas. Nevertheless, Lonergan shows that any soteriological approach that neglects human affectivity misses the mark. This claim questions the opposition that Jenkins appears to erect between soteriology and cosmology. Cosmologies, as stories, arouse human affectivity through the imagery, art, mystery, and drama that they employ. They need not be opposed to soteriology; instead cosmologies complement soteriology. Cosmologies convey symbolically an account of salvation cosmic in scope as well as one that *inspires* ecological conversion. Still, Jenkins rightly directs focus on weaving care for creation into preexisting frameworks and

[45] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 105.

[46] Lonergan, *Insight*, 745.

[47] See Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *The Redemption*, CWL 9, trans. Michael G. Shields, eds. Robert M. Doran, H. Daniel Monsour, and Jeremy D. Wilkins (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2018), 197, 205.

[48] Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 252. See also Matthew L. Lamb, *Solidarity with Victims: Toward a Theology of Social Transformation* (New York: Crossroad, 1982); and Kate Ward, "Scotosis and Structural Inequality: The Dangers of Bias in a Globalized Age," in *Everything Is Interconnected*, 39-56.

[49] William P. Loewe, Lex Crucis*: Soteriology and the Stages of Meaning* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2016), 6.

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practices of Christian communities. These conclusions thus raise a new question—which preexisting narratives and ongoing Christian practices furnish such a cosmology that can generate this needed affective transformation and enable one to participate in God's work of salvation? A "practical cosmology" is needed.

An Opening to Liturgy?

Liturgy is one obvious answer. It stands as a cornerstone of Christian identity; indeed, for Catholics, it is "the source and summit of Christian life."[50] So too has the liturgy provided productive common ground for ecumenical efforts to inspire care for creation.[51] Responding to concerns over how to link ecological concerns to Christian praxis, Walter Grazer suggests that "[p]rayer, liturgy, and scripture are primary experiential vehicles for Catholic engagement. Worship of our Creator, our life in Christ, and creating a spiritual underpinning for ecological and environmental concerns are the entry points and foundation for any effort to engage lay Catholics in addressing this concern."[52] Grazer names liturgy as an especially promising point-of-contact between environmental care and the everyday fabric of Christian living.

Jenkins acknowledges this point himself. Once, he cites Grazer's proposition to justify his own work.[53] He commends theologians such as James K.A. Smith, William Cavanaugh, and Alexander Schmemann for viewing the liturgy as a site of Christian moral formation.[54] So too does he appreciate this formative character of liturgy as it pertains to environmental concern; at one point, he lauds Gordon Lathrop for "direct[ing] attention to the everyday practices of liturgy as the place where Christian cosmologies are produced, enacted, and

[50] Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium* [Dogmatic Constitution on the Church], November 21, 1964, §11; and *Sacrosanctum Concilium* [Dogmatic Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy], December 4, 1963, §14.

[51] See "Heaven and Earth Are Full of Your Glory: A United Methodist and Roman Catholic Statement on the Eucharist and Ecology," United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue, Roman Catholic and U.S. Methodist Church Dialogue Round 7, *Origins* 41, no. 47 (May 2012).

[52] William Somplatsky-Jarman, Walter Grazer, and Stan L. LeQuire, "Partnership for the Environment among U.S. Christians: Report from National Partnership for the Environment," in *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humans*, eds. Dieter T. Hessel and Rosemary Radford Reuther (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2000), 581. Grazer similarly stresses the need to embed care for creation "within the spiritual and sacramental context of Catholic theology" (574).

[53] Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace*, 15-16.

[54] Jenkins, *The Future of Ethics*, 306-316.

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inculcated."[55] In Jenkins's estimation, the Christian liturgy narrates a preeminently practical cosmology.

After all, the ritual symbolism of liturgical celebration—art, gestures, sounds—engage participants' intellects and affectivities alike. Through such a holistic engagement, the liturgy forms its participants in distinct worldviews.[56] Lonergan adds how "rituals and common worship" allow Christians "to be recalled from our waywardness, to be encouraged in our good intentions" and how the Eucharistic sacrifice symbolically instills Christians with the proper "sacrificial attitude" such that Christ's paschal grammar becomes their own.[57] Formed through this liturgical horizon, the church becomes a "distinct community of meaning and value."[58] As such, not only is the liturgy a central, recurring concrete practice, but, as liturgy, it can generate worldviews that dramatically locate Christians within the redemption of the cosmos. The Eucharistic liturgy enacts a distinct cosmology; in the words of Kevin Irwin, the liturgy is "*integrating* in that it articulates our relationship with all of humanity and with all that lives and moves on this earth, and with the earth itself."[59] That God communicates Godself through materiality—bread and wine, water and oil—reveals the capacity of creation to bear the divine presence.[60] The gift of creation celebrated in Mass rouses wonder

[55] Jenkins, "After Lynn White," 302; and *Ecologies of Grace*, 99-100. See Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy Ground: A Liturgical Cosmology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003): "Gatherings for worship will certainly imply some cosmology. That is, Christian rituals are also among the human rituals that construct a sense of world. Who and what we pray for, how we image earth and sky and all their creatures, what roles human beings are seen to have, how our social organization is seen to matter, how we share food, where God 'is'—all these will leave us with a sense of 'world,' even if no mention is made of 'cosmos'" (13).

[56] See, e.g., Philip Kenneson, "Worship, Imagination, and Formation," in *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics*, eds. Stanley Hauerwas and Samuel Wells (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 53-67, esp. 59-61.

[57] Bernard J. F. Lonergan, "The Future of Christianity," in *A Second Collection*, 157; and "The Notion of Sacrifice," Latin text with translation by Michael Shields in *Early Latin Theology*, CWL 19, eds. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2011), 29-31, 37. See also Stephen Happel, "The Sacraments: Symbols That Redirect Our Desires," in *The Desires of the Human Heart: An Introduction to the Theology of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Vernon Gregson (New York: Paulist, 1988), 237-254; and Christopher McMahon, "Cruciform Salvation and Emergent Probability: The Liturgical Significance of Lonergan's Precept," in *Approaching the Threshold of Mystery: Liturgical Worlds and Theological Spaces*, eds. Joris Geldhof, Daniel Minch, and Trevor Maine (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 2015), 198-212.

[58] Joseph A. Komonchak, *Foundations in Ecclesiology* (Boston: Boston College, 1995), 185.

[59] Kevin W. Irwin, *Models of the Eucharist* (New York: Paulist, 2005), 41. Emphasis original.

[60] John Habgood, "A Sacramental Approach to Environmental Issues," in *Liberating Life: Contemporary Approaches to Ecological Theology*, eds. Charles Birch, William Eakin, and Jay B. McDaniel (New York: Orbis, 1990), 46-53.

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and grateful receptivity for God's gratuitous blessing.[61] The cosmic scope of the Eucharist, whereby all creation joins together in praising God, orients the human person within a more inclusive context of a *uni*-verse.[62] Nevertheless, as today's crisis indicates, these meanings and values remain painfully absent in everyday living; thus, liturgical symbols contain within them "dangerous memories" that unleash insights or questions about the ecological crisis, and one's role in it, that dramatic bias otherwise suppresses.[63] And, as Lonergan's "Law of the Cross" illustrates, reconciling oneself with this role sets the conditions for conversion, a transformed dying to the many ways in which one disrupts and even undermines this cosmic story. A liturgically-inspired cosmology is not one imposed from a foreign source, but one that springs naturally from the bedrock of Christian identity and life as well as one that can inspire conversion to environmental responsibility.

Since the Christian liturgy does supply a preeminently practical cosmology, it is strange then that, apart from the few references given above, Jenkins pays liturgy so little attention in his work. As he explains his worry, "[w]hile interpretatively powerful . . . liturgical therapy threatens to undermine real responsibilities for the definite risks of climate change. By making worship the content of practical obligation to the future, the model can diminish the significance of practical policies to protect the future of life from climate risks."[64] Another consequence of his pragmatic bent, Jenkins worries that a liturgical focus can evade concrete change.

Lonergan echoes a similar concern. In an early spiritual writing, while affirming Pope Pius XII's 1943 prayer intention that "from the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass be drawn the power to save human society," Lonergan adds:

> One must make no mistake. One is not to think that human society is going to have its endless cultural, social, political, economic problems solved by some astonishing series of miracles. If problems are to be solved, they will be solved by [people] who have taken the time and the trouble to discover their nature, who possess the talent to think out

[61] Kevin W. Irwin, "Sacramentality and the Theology of Creation: A Recovered Paradigm for Sacramental Theology," *Louvain Studies* 23 (1998): 159-79, at 175.

[62] See "Heaven and Earth Are Full of Your Glory," §15-19.

[63] As Kevin Irwin states: "The very liturgical use of what has been regarded as central bearers of divine revelation—water and food—may in fact bear the bad news that the goods of this good earth are no longer 'very good.' It is hard to sing the praises of 'brother sun and sister moon' when one's vision is clouded (literally) by urban pollution and smog" (in "Sacramentality and the Theology of Creation," 167-168).

[64] Jenkins, *The Future of Ethics*, 309.

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> solutions, who are gifted with the judgment necessary to proceed from abstract theory to concrete policy.[65]

The broad approach introduced earlier through Lonergan's theology of history outlines the contours of this creative task. Focusing on the liturgy—as a "practical cosmology" able to situate care for creation within Christian identity—must also incorporate an account of *how* it evokes the social, cultural, and personal transformations required by the multi-faceted nature of today's ecological crisis. The church's worship and work for justice, its *ora et labora*, must sustain each other if neither is to be impoverished. Lonergan's theology of history, especially as interpreted through the scale of values, explains how religious values, incarnated most evidently in the Eucharistic liturgy, set the conditions for ecological conversion (personal values), along with renewed cultural worldviews and social structures (cultural and social values), and thus answer the cries of the earth and of the poor (vital values). Rather than undermining them, the liturgy demands real environmental responsibilities.

A Brief Case-Study – A "Practical Cosmology" and *Laudato Si'*

The results of this conversation between Jenkins and Lonergan deserve application, however brief, in the life of the church today. No ecclesial statement on the ecological crisis has made the impact that *Laudato si'* has. With the release of *Laudato si'* and his introduction of an integral ecology, Pope Francis has infused a publicly religious energy into the environmental movement never before seen.[66] Jenkins himself has offered a most insightful commentary on the encyclical.[67] On the one hand, the pope confirms Jenkins's broad approach in recognizing that, "since everything is interconnected," there is "one complex crisis which is both social and environmental" (*LS* 139), spanning economics, politics, technology, culture, daily life, and religious practice.[68] As has been shown, Lonergan's theology of history can explain how these various features of the crisis, as well as their corresponding solutions, relate to each other.

On the other hand, in the last chapter of *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis also affirms that "the Eucharist is . . . a source of light and motivation

[65] Bernard J.F. Lonergan, "The Mass and Man," in *Shorter Papers*, CWL 20, eds. Robert C. Croken, Robert M. Doran, and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2007), 97.

[66] Francis, *Laudato Si'* [Encyclical on Care for Our Common Home], May 24, 2015. In text, *Laudato si'* will be abbreviated *LS*.

[67] See Willis Jenkins, "The Mysterious Silence of Mother Earth in *Laudato si'*," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 46, no. 3 (2018): 441-462.

[68] See also *Laudato si'*, §49.

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for our concerns for the environment, directing us to be stewards of all creation" (*LS* 236). *Laudato si'* is unique among Catholic social encyclicals for both its doxological framing (*Laudato si'*!) and its extensive discussion of the Eucharistic liturgy (*LS* 235–237).[69] In fact, Jenkins recently identified Pope Francis's doxological-liturgical qualification of human dominion as the most noteworthy development of *Laudato si'*, wherein "[r]einterpreted through the figure of Saint Francis, the dominion mandate refers to a uniquely human ability to learn the songs of other creatures and restore harmony in creation by joining in the ways creatures praise God."[70] However, at the same time, Jenkins laments that the encyclical does not "say more about what sort of practices allow persons to recognize the goods of other creatures and the role of those practices in shaping an 'authentic humanity.' It needs to say more, that is, about how to hear the songs of other creatures and the cries of sister earth."[71] In light of above conversation, it is now apparent that the liturgical focus of *Laudato si'* does highlight one such practice that amplifies the cries of the earth and the poor, inspires us to respond to them, and allows us to join in creation's praise of God. For its part, Lonergan's theology of history can express how the Eucharistic liturgy in fact transforms the cries of the earth and the poor, along with the splintered relationships that compromise an integral ecology, into a song of praise to our Triune Creator.

Conclusion

Bernard Lonergan and Willis Jenkins are unlikely dialogue partners. Nevertheless, as an exercise in "dialectics," this essay has shown that introducing them to each other generates insights that go beyond either one to shape our own horizons. On the one hand, concerned with other questions of his day, Lonergan spoke little on environmental matters, and so Jenkins's extensive work on these questions offers a way to bring Lonergan's thought to bear on these contemporary concerns. On the other hand, due to his pragmatist tendencies, Jenkins risks neglecting the need for affective engagement and worldviews that catalyze ecological conversion, and so Lonergan's attention to

[69] In his official presentation of *Laudato si'*, Cardinal Peter Turkson (a chief architect of the encyclical) names this feature as "the attitude upon which the entire Encyclical is based, that of prayerful contemplation . . . " ("Conferenza Stampa per la presentazione della Lettera Enciclica «Laudato si'» del Santo Padre Francesco sulla cura della casa commune: Intervento del Card. Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson," *Bollettino: Sala Stampa della Santa Sede*, June 18, 2015, https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2015/06/18/0480/01050.html#eng).

[70] Jenkins, "The Mysterious Silence of Mother Earth in *Laudato si'*," 448.

[71] Jenkins, "The Mysterious Silence of Mother Earth in *Laudato si'*," 451.

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anthropology, especially affectivity, offers a complement to Jenkins's otherwise insightful proposals. So too can Lonergan's systematic approach place the ethical proposals of Jenkins in a broader explanatory framework so as to better understand them. For both Jenkins and Lonergan, liturgical reflection plays only a marginal role; reading the two theologians together, however, showcases the rich potential of framing Christian ecological concern liturgically and doxologically. So too does it provide a helpful lens for implementing recent ecclesial responses to the ecological crisis, such as in *Laudato si'*. Lonergan and Jenkins share a common hope to engage us *in media res*; as this essay has shown, the Eucharistic liturgy offers an especially fruitful setting to begin caring for our common home. Now, it is time to realize that potential.

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