

## Sins Against Nature 10-11-15 PM

Recently the head of the Catholic Church visited the United States and spoke to the US Congress and the United Nations. He warned against sinning against nature; *"With a passionate call from Pope Francis to choose environmental justice over a "boundless thirst for power and material prosperity," world leaders on Friday adopted an ambitious agenda to reset their own priorities, from ending hunger to protecting forests to ensuring quality education for all"*<sup>1</sup>. Many might ask "what is a sin against nature", and how can a Christian commit such a thing? The answer may be different than we think.

There is in the Bible the idea of abusing the land and sinning against it directly. The Israelites were commanded to let the land lie fallow for one year in seven (a Sabbath year). It seems that they did not, and when they were taken into captivity, the land *"kept sabbath until seventy years were complete"* (2 Chronicles 36:21). Such a command does not correspond to the New Testament, but there are still sins against nature. It is violating something that is part of the natural order; in Scripture we see expressions like "natural affection" or "natural purpose" to describe it.

In Romans 1:18-32 Paul discusses the place of nature to Christianity. He states that while the Gospel reveals the righteousness of God and the plan of salvation (righteousness by faith in God's word, Romans 10:17), nature reveals the wrath of God (1:18) by revealing the nature of God (1:19-20) and leaving man without an excuse. Meaning this: Nature testifies to certain things about God, and even about man, that we are expected to heed. Thus ignoring or acting contrary to these revelations is a sin against nature.

For example, Paul speaks to those who reject God for gods of their own creation or for the creation itself (1:21-23). We might describe this sin against nature as Atheism. In Acts 14:17 and Acts 17:27-28 Paul appealed to the creation to demonstrate that God exists. One who refuses to accept this sins against God and nature. Along that same line, the paganism of old has been replaced with the evolutionist of today, who sins against nature by denying that God has created all things with purpose (Isaiah 45:18).

Paul goes on to describe the degradation of men who sin against nature by rejecting the natural sexual desires God created for the unnatural. Homosexuality is condemned repeatedly in the Bible (Leviticus 18:22, I Corinthians 6:9, I Timothy 1:10). Here in Romans 1 Paul tells us that it is also a sin against nature. Along that same area we might follow up with the reversing of gender roles, something we are told in I Corinthians 11:14 goes against nature.

Finally, we might even consider Abortion as a sin against nature, as it rejects the natural affection of a mother and child for something unnatural. In I Kings 3:16-27 Solomon appealed to the nature of a mother's affection as the testimony of the genuine mother.

Many speak about sins against nature, but fail to realize that what it means is a sin that denies the testimony of the creation to the Creator. Thus man fails to honor God, and begins a descent into self-deprecation and debauchery that ends *"that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them"* (Romans 1:32)

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<sup>1</sup> *The New York Times*; Pope Francis Addresses U.N., Calling for Peace and Environmental Justice By SOMINI SENGUPTA and JIM YARDLEY. SEPT. 25, 2015