

## Resources within Spiritual and Mystical Christian Traditions for the Care of Earth—our Common Home

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### Summary

Research on the ecological crisis has revealed its global and total character, which implies that any attempts at overcoming it must take into account a wide variety of perspectives. It is not surprising, therefore, that for several decades the study of the ecological crisis has been undertaken by philosophers and religologists who seek inspirations for ways to shape an environmentally friendly lifestyle in various religious traditions. Notwithstanding the prevailing stereotypes as regards Christianity and its allegedly anti-ecological attitudes, there are many indications that this rich religious tradition has a lot to offer in the battle against the environmental crisis. The aim of this study is to present four Christian models of human relations with nature, which confirm the great ecological potential of Christianity. Those include: 1) Celtic animate model; 2) Benedictine custodial model; 3) Nuptial model of Hildegard of Bingen; and 4) St. Francis' fraternal model.

### Keywords

ecological crisis, Christianity, religion and ecology, Hildegard of Bingen, Francis of Assisi

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### Introduction

Serious reflection on the dramatic consequences of the ecological crisis that can nowadays be discerned in different parts of the world has for some time now made us aware that this crisis can only be overcome on the condition that we manage to create the broadest possible coalition in the pursuit of such an aim. Over the past few decades, at least, it has become clear that the crisis cannot be subdued through technical means alone; therefore, the group of specialists from the area of natural sciences and

engineering involved in dealing with the crisis was joined by politicians, economists, lawyers, philosophers, artists, theologians and even religious leaders. Since the 1990s, that group has been added to by representatives of diverse religious traditions as the 'ecological potential' of religions becomes increasingly apparent. Gary Gardner, in the Worldwatch Institute's annual report *State of the World 2003*, points out at least five strong properties of the effort to build a sustainable world: (Gardner 2003: 152).

1. The capacity to shape cosmologies (worldviews)
2. Moral authority
3. Large base of adherents
4. Significant material resources
5. Community-building capacity

Christianity, like other religions, has much to offer in the area of shaping attitudes of concern for the Earth—our common home. The latest phase of Christian reflection on the human relationship to nature commenced in the 1950s and is still gaining momentum. An important incentive that stimulated this reflection was Lynn White's article, *The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis*, published in 1967. This publication contributed to a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the Christian doctrine in the context of the human attitude to nature which, in turn, led to better recognition and highlighting of the message conveyed by the Christian tradition with respect to environmental care (Sadowski 2015).

The Christian doctrine on the relationship of humankind to nature is based on biblical sources and the writings of the Church Fathers, which throughout the entire history of the Church have provided it with inspiration in this regard. The Christian spiritual heritage, however, also contains some very special approaches towards humankind's relationship with nature that highlight the richness and diversity of this spiritual tradition. Among those, the following concepts deserve particular consideration (Berry, Didcoct 1984: 28-29):

1. The *Celtic animate model* emphasizes the idea of nature as a place where humankind experiences God;
2. The *Benedictine custodial model* points to humanity's responsibility for the transformation of the world entrusted to him by the Creator;
3. The *Nuptial model of Hildegard of Bingen* draws attention to the need to restore the harmonious relationship between humankind and the world's Creator who, by wedding Mother

Earth, fills the whole creation with the life force *viriditas*;

4. *St. Francis' fraternal model* emphasizes the kinship between human and non-human beings, which enables humanity to establish partner relationships with all members of the life community on Earth.

The models of the human relationship with the environment presented above are the most important examples of humankind's attitude to nature that can be found in the rich spiritual heritage of Christianity. Rediscovery and popularization of those concepts can have a significant impact on contemporary Christians with regard to concern for the Earth, our common home.

### 1. Biblical and patristic inspirations behind care for the creation

Since the beginning, the Christian tradition conceived of the world as a unique, valuable and important reality in which God reveals Himself to humanity. Consequently, Christian literature emphasizes the importance of human care for nature. This is confirmed by numerous writings of the Church Fathers, medieval and modern Christian thinkers and the contemporary teaching of the Church. Care for nature conveyed in that tradition derives from Christian doctrine, which defines two main objectives of creation. On one hand, the world was created to reveal God's glory; on the other, the world was created to serve man (Ps.148; Gen 1:28-29; Catechism of the Catholic Church 1997: No. 294). Additionally, the Bible clearly indicates the value of all creatures and does not limit this only to man: "God saw all he had made, and indeed it was very good" (Gen 1:31).<sup>1</sup> This is also confirmed by the covenant that God made with Noah and which comprised other creatures as well: "I am now establishing my covenant with

<sup>1</sup> All biblical texts are quoted from an online edition of the Bible available on the website: <[www.catholic.org/bible/](http://www.catholic.org/bible/)>, accessed: 3.12.2019.

you and with your descendants to come, and with every living creature that was with you: birds, cattle and every wild animal with you; everything that came out of the ark, every living thing on earth” (Gen 9:9–10).

The created world is important for Christians also because it is the work of God, by which humankind recognizes the existence of the Creator and His many attributes: “ever since the creation of the world, the invisible existence of God and his everlasting power have been clearly seen by the mind’s understanding of created things” (Rom. 1:20; see also Job 12:7–10, Isa. 11:9). St. Irenaeus of Lion (140–202) was one of the first to speak of God on the basis of the created world: “creation reveals Him who formed it, and the very work made suggests Him who made it, and the world manifests Him who ordered it” (Web-01). In turn, in the fifth homily *Hexaemeron*, St. Basil the Great (329–379) says: “I want creation to penetrate you with so much admiration that everywhere, wherever you may be, the least plant may bring to you the clear remembrance of the Creator” (Web-02).

Creation was considered such an important source of knowledge about the Creator such that Origen (185–254) stated that even creation and the Bible correspond to each other to such a degree that a person seeking answers to questions in the Bible and a person seeking answers to the same questions in nature will come to the same conclusions (Origenis 1862: col. 1079–1082). The Church Fathers claimed, on the other hand, that God left humanity two books: the book of Scripture and the book of nature (book of creation). The former was written by the Creator with letters, and the latter with creatures (St. Basili Magni 1885: col. 222c–223a; Glacken 1976: 203). Most likely, St. Anthony the Great, who lived in the third century AD, was the first to compare nature to a book (Mann 2004: xiii). Socrates Scholasticus (379–450) reports Anthony’s dialogue with a philosopher: “How can you endure, father, being deprived of the comfort

of books? My book, O philosopher, replied Anthony, is the nature of things that are made, and it is present whenever I wish to read the words of God” (Web-03).

The metaphor, “book of nature” recurrently appears in Christian literature. It can be found, among others, in the works of St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Augustine, St. John Cassian, St. John Chrysostom and Maximus the Confessor (Tanzella-Nitti 2005: 237). Some Christian writers also conceived of nature as a place where humankind can find *vestigia Dei* (traces/footprints of God) which allow man to recognize Him. Among those writers are, for example, St. Augustine, who rarely used the expression “the book of nature” (*liber naturae rerum*), (St. Augustinus 1845a: col. 509) but usually wrote about *vestigia Dei* present in nature (St. Augustinus 1845b: col. 302).

An important element of Christian doctrine on nature is the belief that God performed the act of creation according to a specified order and established laws that govern the functioning of the world (Huff 2006: 34–35). This is clearly stated in the following biblical passages: “You, however, ordered all things by measure, number and weight” (Wisdom 11:20) and “Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all shining stars, praise him, highest heavens, praise him, waters above the heavens. Let them praise the name of Yahweh at whose command they were made; he established them forever and ever by an unchanging decree” (Ps. 148:3–6). The assumption that the world was created according to specific laws allowed for dynamic development of natural sciences, which set themselves the goal of discovering the laws that regulate the natural world.

The Christian vision of man’s relationship with nature was also highly influenced by a conviction that nature, like man, was the work of the Creator. Although man surpasses nature, he is linked to it in a vital way. A significant impact on the Christian attitude to nature was also exerted by a belief that God imposed on man certain

obligations towards nature: “Yahweh God took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and take care of it” (Gen. 2:15). Many passages in the Bible point to those obligations. The Book of Leviticus presents humanity as merely a tenant, a resident of Earth, which is the exclusive property of God (Lev. 25:23). The Book of Ezekiel emphasizes that God condemns a lack of concern for animals and castigates cruelty towards them (Ezek. 34:2–4).

The Bible leaves no doubt that human use of natural resources is limited by God’s commandments (Isa. 24:5–6). Although humankind received the right to use the gifts of nature, he, at the same time, accepted responsibility for its condition. “I brought you to a country of plenty, to enjoy its produce and good things; but when you entered you defiled my country and made my heritage loathsome” (Jer. 2:7). The Book of Revelation emphasizes man’s responsibility for the destruction of nature and speaks of judgment and punishment for the betrayal of God’s will in this regard: “The nations were in uproar and now the time has come for your retribution, and for the dead to be judged, and for your servants the prophets, for the saints and for those who fear your name, small and great alike, to be rewarded. The time has come to destroy those who are destroying the earth” (Rev 11:18).

## **2. Celtic animate model**

Celtic culture provides one of the most interesting Christian concepts of the human relationship with nature. This concept emphasizes the important role of nature in both the natural and the supernatural life of man. Celtic sensitivity to creation in all probability originated from a faith in the presence of spiritual elements in nature. According to pre-Christian Celts, nature was inhabited by many gods and goddesses. After the adoption of Christianity, former beliefs were replaced by a faith in the presence of God, angels and saints in nature. Consequently, the Celts believed that

some natural places possess certain unique properties facilitating human contact with God (Sellner 2002: 119-121).

In the pre-Christian Celtic society, an important role was played by the druids. A druid was considered a “seer of great knowledge, whose closeness to the natural world put him or her in the position of a walker between the worlds of humankind and the unseen worlds” (Matthews 1995: 40). After the adoption of Christianity, the role of the druids was overtaken by Christian monks, whose monasteries were often founded in places of worship previously used by the druids (Avens, Zelle 2005: 157-162).

The Celtic Christian tradition constitutes a unique synthesis of ancient paganism and Christian faith, which is characterized by the simplicity of life led in small communities, a desire to acquire knowledge, the leadership of women, cooperation, a non-dualistic vision of reality, an assertion of the marginalized, a love of beauty and forbearance towards human weakness (Sellner 2002: 118).

Celtic Christianity developed a holistic vision of the world which was unique in the overall Christian tradition and which avoided dividing reality into the physical and spiritual realms. Harking back to a pre-Christian belief that man derives his strength from contact with nature, the Christianized Celts saw in Christ the archetypal druid or the “Lord of the Elements”, who was the embodiment of nature (Avens, Zelle 2005: 161-163).

The importance of nature for the Celts is well illustrated by a dialogue between St. Patrick and a daughter of one of Celtic kings, in which St. Patrick provides the following answer to a question about the Christian God: “Our God is the God of all things, the God of heaven and earth and sea and river, the God of sun and moon and all the stars, the God of high mountains and lowly valleys; the God over heaven and in heaven and under heaven. He has a dwelling both in heaven and earth

and sea and all that dwell within them. He inspires all things; he gives life to all things; he surpasses all things. Our God kindles the light of the sun and the light of the moon. He made springs in arid land and dry islands in the sea, and the stars he appointed to minister to the greater lights. He has a Son coeternal with Him and, like a son, very similar to His Father. But the Son is not younger than the Father, nor is the Father older than the Son. And the Holy Spirit breathes in them. Father and Son and Holy Spirit are not divided. I desire to unite you to the Son of the Heavenly King, for you are daughters of a king of earth" (Sellner 2002: 122).

St. Patrick is also the author of one of the most famous Celtic prayers, which emphasizes the spiritual power of nature. This prayer is known as *Lorica* (breastplate) or *Deer's Cry* (Web-04).

I bind to myself today  
 The strong virtue of the Invocation  
 of the Trinity:  
 I believe the Trinity in the Unity  
 The Creator of the Universe.  
 (...)  
 I bind to myself today  
 The power of Heaven,  
 The light of the sun,  
 The brightness of the moon,  
 The splendour of fire,  
 The flashing of lightning,  
 The swiftness of wind,  
 The depth of sea,  
 The stability of earth,  
 The compactness of rocks.

However, St. Patrick was not an exception in the realm of Celtic Christianity in highlighting the importance of nature and its role in the shaping of harmonious relationships between humankind and God or humankind and the world. Frequent references to nature can be found in all representatives of the so-called "holy trinity" of Celtic saints: St. Patrick (385-461), St. Brigid of Kildare (452-524) and St.

Columba of Iona (521-597) (Sellner 2002: 123).

The harmony between the human world and the natural world, which drew on the original harmony of all creatures in the Garden of Eden, is reflected in many legends about the friendship of Celtic saints with animals. One of these legends is a story of the blackbird and St. Kevin, the first abbot of Glendalough (498-618). One day, when St. Kevin prayed for hours in ecstasy with his hands raised, a blackbird made a nest and laid eggs in his palm. According to the legend, out of concern for the young birds, St. Kevin held out his arms until the chicks hatched and flew away (Bratton 2008: 62). Similar legends on the friendship of Celtic monks and animals were ascribed to many saints. According to another legend, St. Finian of Clonard was helped by deer, which carried his books for him and pulled his cart with firewood. Other legends tell about St. Molaisse of Devenish, who decided to write a book but did not have a pen. The problem was solved by a bird, which dropped a feather to the saint and helped him write down his thoughts. St. Ciaran of Saigir had a boar helper which helped him to dig a hermitage in the ground with its tusks. St. Cuthbert, in turn, after an all-night prayer in ice water was warmed up by two otters. The legend holds that birds and squirrels often visited St. Columban, while St. Colman of Kilmacdaugh was awakened to prayer by a mouse (Nash 1991: 83-84).

The monastery of St. Kevin in Glendalough, situated in a valley between two lakes which were considered sacred places in the pre-Christian period, provides an example of the Celtic, non-dualistic vision of the world. Monks from Glendalough usually prayed in the church or at the above-situated lake, which was their favourite place of contemplation. Following the example of St. Kevin, the monks often prayed while immersed in the lake or climbing the steep slopes of the valley, since they sought God's presence not in isolation

from nature, but in close contact with it (Bratton 2008: 63).

Situated above, the lake is not visible from the Glendalough monastery; nor can the monastery be seen from the shore of the lake. The dualism and tension between the world of humans and the natural world, so clearly pointed out in the ancient culture of Greece, is absent in Glendalough. For the Celts, the boundaries between the natural and the supernatural, as well as between man and nature, were insignificant. While the Hellenic conception of the world founded its harmony on dualism, according to the Celts, the reality was filled with countless degrees and shades dividing the two spheres (Bratton 2008: 63). Hence, the proposal that the Celtic model of the human relationship with nature, in which the natural and supernatural realities intermingle and fuse, should be called the *Celtic animate model*.

### 3. Benedictine custodial model

The Order of Saint Benedict is one of the oldest Christian monastic communities, which developed its own, original model of the human relationship with nature. An important role in the Benedictine approach to nature is played by agriculture, by which humankind transforms the world around him. The Rule of Saint Benedict, which constitutes the foundation for the life of the Order, deals extensively with work. Under the Rule, a monk—depending on the season and on the liturgical calendar—is obliged to spend many hours on manual labour. The life of Benedictine monks runs in the rhythm of prayer, reading, physical work and rest (Web-05). A significant part of that work consists of agricultural duties. Benedictine contact with nature, however, has a different character from that of the Celtic monks. Rather than seeking the presence of God in nature, Benedictines till the land—i.e. transform it—and thus fulfil God's call to cultivate and take care of nature (Gen. 2:15).

One of the greatest achievements of Benedictine spirituality was to create a sustainable model of life which harmoniously united various forms of prayer with study, rest and physical work and, especially, with farming. In his Rule, St. Benedict insisted that every Benedictine monastery should be self-sufficient thanks to the appreciation of work. So, the range of manual work included domestic chores, crafts, garden work, tilling the soil and caring for domestic animals (McDonagh 1990: 170-171). The motto of the Order, *ora et labora* (pray and work), is still present in our culture as a symbol of the balanced distribution of human activity. Until the time of St. Benedict, European culture did not combine intellectual and physical work. Physical work was entrusted to servants, while people of noble birth devoted themselves to intellectual work (Berry, Didcoct 1984: 28). By combining these two types of work, the Benedictines gained the necessary experience which allowed them to develop an innovative model of the human relationship with nature. Through education, they were able to analyse both difficult philosophical and theological questions and the issues of everyday life in which they were firmly rooted. The experience of physical work allowed them to realize its importance for human existence, providing them with the opportunity to observe nature and giving them the satisfaction derived from transforming it as well as a sense of responsibility before God for taking care of it.

The self-sufficiency and stability of monasteries recommended by St. Benedict demanded that Benedictine monks cultivated the land in a renewable way. Drawing on the biblical story of the Garden of Eden entrusted to the care of man, monks learned to take care of their fields in such a way as to carry out the order of the Creator, which consisted of taming the earth. The Benedictines introduced many new agrarian techniques which

modernized the contemporary European agriculture and significantly increased yields. The Benedictine model of the human relationship with nature was marked by gratitude for the harvest of the earth and respect for nature. This style of human presence in nature ensured its continued fruitfulness. It seems that in the context of the human relationship with nature, the Benedictine tradition omits the first chapter of Genesis, which tells of man's dominion over nature, and clearly draws on the second chapter, which tells us that the Creator placed man in the Garden of Eden not as a master but rather in a spirit of stewardship (Dubos 2006: 57).

Benedictine monks were convinced that man is called by God to be a faithful steward of the creation, one who does not abuse it, but who remains its custodian. The Benedictine model of man's relationship with nature, however, has a clearly anthropocentric character and works towards organizing and 'civilizing' nature, since 'raw' nature is unpredictable, capricious and dangerous. So, the drive to domesticate nature and to bring it under human control was very much at the centre of the Benedictine custodial model (McDonagh 1990: 171).

#### 4. Nuptial model of Hildegard of Bingen

A different, but equally gracious model of the human relationship with nature was developed by St. Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179). This outstanding figure of the late Middle Ages, similar to the Celtic tradition, saw the presence of the Creator in all creation. This idea is confirmed by one of her visions, where she ascribes the following words to the divine wisdom: "I am the fiery life of the essence of God: I flame above the beauty of the fields; I shine in the waters; I burn in the sun, the moon, and stars. And, with the airy wind, I quicken all things vitally by an unseen, all-sustaining life" (St. Hildegard of Bingen 1996: 47-49).

St. Hildegard presents an original model of the human attitude to the world, which points to the sacred relationship between

the natural and supernatural worlds. According to Hildegard, nature's fertility has its source in the supernatural world—i.e. God endowing Earth with life-giving kisses. That is why this particular model of man's relationship with the world is defined as a "nuptial model", according to which the Heavenly Father weds Mother Earth (Berry, Didcoct 1984: 28). The world, as it is conceived by St. Hildegard of Bingen, constitutes one great whole, created by God in the shape of a net stretching endlessly into space and time. Such a concept of creation implies that it is united by the bonds of God's love and, together with the elements of the world, remains in His heart. In this way, the whole work of creation bears the traces of kisses planted by God the Creator and God the Lover of Life (Łepko, Sadowski 2014: 18).

In this model of the human relationship, a crucial role is played by the life-giving force defined by Hildegard as greenness (lat. *viriditas*), by which term, however, Hildegard does not mean colour, but a state, a way of being. Referring to such a concept of greenness (*viriditas*), Hildegard attributes it both to God, who is its source, and to the creatures that live through it. St. Hildegard even claims that this greenness reflects the greenness of God's heart, human fertility and the beauty of womanhood, or healthy human existence. This greenness, according to Hildegard, finds its fullest expression in Jesus Christ, the giver of life, whose mother, Mary, is defined by her as *Viridissima Virgo* (St. Hildegard of Bingen 1987: 376-378). Due to such an approach, the term *viridissima* takes on a new meaning: it no longer means the greenest, but that which gives the most life. *Viridissima Virgo* is, therefore, the most fertile maiden who gave life to Jesus Christ, the source of life itself (Łepko, Sadowski 2014: 19-20).

Hildegard indicates the possibility of restoring the original harmony between humanity and nature. In her opinion, humanity, through repentance and penance, is able to renew the life-giving quality (*viriditas*) of

nature. When humanity adopts the attitude of repentance, *destitutio*—i.e. the fall of the world—will turn into *restitutio*—i.e. the restoration of the world—and this, in turn, will lead to the reestablishment of *constitutio*, or the original harmony of the world created by God (Bonn 1998: 8-9; Gresser 1998: 94-95). The nuptial model of humankind's relationship with the world is therefore based on the renewal of the relationship between humankind and God as a result of which the Creator, the bridegroom, weds Earth, the bride, thus restoring the harmony of nature and making it truly life-giving (*viridis*).

### 5. St. Francis of Assisi's fraternal model

St. Francis is the author of another Christian model of humankind's relationship with the world, which addresses the whole of creation with respect, care and brotherly love. St. Francis' love for nature was underlined by Pope John Paul II, who declared him the patron saint of ecologists. "Among the holy and admirable men who have revered nature as a wonderful gift of God to the human race, St. Francis of Assisi deserves special consideration. For he, in a special way, deeply sensed the universal works of the Creator and, filled with a certain divine spirit, sang that very beautiful 'Canticle of the Creatures'. Through them, Brother Sun most powerful and Sister Moon and the stars of heaven, he offered fitting praise, glory, honour and all blessing to the most high, all-powerful, good Lord" (Web-06).

The model of nature put forward by St. Francis is well known and widely accepted. It does not highlight the image of humanity as the "crown of creation" (Gen. 1), or even as the biblical gardener caring for the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2), since each of these concepts draws on the privileged position of mankind while, according to St. Francis, the relation of man to all beings should have a fraternal character—i.e. be affiliative and democratic (Sorrell 1988: 47). For St. Francis, all nature with man forms one great community-family of creatures. In this relationship, the sun is Brother Sun, the

moon is Sister Moon, the wind is Brother Wind, the water is Sister Water, the fire is Brother Fire and Mother Earth is Sister Mother Earth (Web-07).

The fraternal model of humankind's relationship with the world recommended by St. Francis of Assisi is the best known Christian concept of humankind's relationship with nature. It became even more popular thanks to the encyclical *Laudato si'*. Pope Francis took on from St. Francis of Assisi, among others, the emotional dimension of the relationship with nature, being delight in its beauty, respect for life and combining care for nature with care for the most needy, which includes both people and endangered plant and animal species (Sadowski 2016). Although the fraternal model of St. Francis and the custodial Benedictine model are congruous in highlighting the need for the care of nature, they are significantly different from one another. St. Francis' model emphasizes the relationship between human and non-human beings, and it holds them in admiration and great respect. It seems, however, that respect is insufficient in this case, because mankind has never been merely a passive admirer of nature but has always transformed it radically according to his needs and within his technical capabilities. It seems that the Benedictine model to a larger extent addresses the question of human activity and the need to transform the world. Although this approach is not deficient in admiration and respect for nature, it seems that responsibility plays a more important role in it. This model imposes restrictions on the ways in which man transforms nature since, ultimately, the Creator shall request that man account for his fulfilment of the obligations with regard to the world entrusted to him (Dubos 2006: 59)<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> The Franciscan approach to the relationship between man and the nature is discussed in greater detail by S. Jaromi in the book *Idea franciszkańska. Wielkie problemy współczesności i nasze małe odpowiedzi* [The Franciscan idea. Big problems of modern times and our small answers], Bratni Zew, Kraków 2018.



## Conclusion

The above presented examples of Christian models of the human relationship with the natural world point to the richness and diversity of the Christian spiritual tradition and its enormous potential in shaping the attitudes of care for Earth, our common home. The Scripture and patristic writings that are the foundation of the Christian tradition define a vast area in which there are very different models of man's relationship with creation, beginning with the *Celtic animate model*, highlighting nature as a place of experience of God; through the *Benedictine custodial model*, pointing to man's responsibility for the transformation of the world entrusted to him by God and the nuptial model of Hildegard of Bingen, which highlights the need to restore harmonious relations between humanity and the Creator of the world who, by wedding Mother Earth, fills the whole creation with the life force *viriditas*; to *St. Francis' fraternal model*, emphasizing the relationship between human and non-human beings, which enables mankind to establish partnership relations with all members of the Earth's life community.

All of these models combine appreciation of the world, which is the work of the Creator and His gift to mankind. All of them, moreover, indicate the need for care of the creation. Each of them, however, adopts a different perspective and emphasizes different aspects of individual issues. It is impossible to decide which of the models presented here provides the best response to contemporary environmental challenges and which raises hope for the development of the most effective pro-environmental attitudes among Christians. Most likely, all of these models of man's relationship with the world are mutually complementary and provide a comprehensive vision of the Christian relationship with the created world. Their inclusion in the pastoral activity, catechesis and spirituality of contemporary Christians brings hope for a major revision

of the Christian ecological mentality and a lasting change in our relationship with nature.

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## **Duchowe i mistyczne zasoby tradycji chrześcijańskiej na rzecz troski o Ziemię – nasz wspólny dom**

### **Streszczenie**

Badania nad kryzysem ekologicznym pozwoliły dostrzec, że ma on charakter globalny i totalny, a co za tym idzie, sposoby jego przezwyciężenia muszą uwzględniać bardzo różnorodne perspektywy. Nie dziwi więc fakt, że od kilku dekad w badaniach kryzysu ekologicznego włączają się filozofowie i religiolodzy, którzy w różnych tradycjach religijnych szukają inspiracji dla kształtowania prośrodowiskowego stylu życia. Pomimo panujących stereotypów na temat antyekologiczności chrześcijaństwa, wiele wskazuje na to, że ta bogata tradycja religijna ma wiele do zaoferowania na polu walki z kryzysem środowiskowym. Celem tego opracowania jest prezentacja czterech chrześcijańskich modeli relacji człowieka do przyrody, które potwierdzają wielki ekologiczny potencjał chrześcijaństwa. Wskazane tu zostaną: 1) celtycki model duchowy; 2) benedyktyński model opiekuńczy; 3) oblubieńczy model Hildegardy z Bingen; i 4) braterski model św. Franciszka z Asyżu.

### **Słowa kluczowe**

kryzys ekologiczny, chrześcijaństwo, religia i ekologia, Hildegarda z Bingen, Franciszek z Asyżu

### **Nota o autorze**

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