

Review of: "How can Ecological ethics assist in the progress of man? Towards a reflection on the Encyclical letter Laudato si'" data-bbox="58 104 926 184"/>

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The work extensively and properly describes the environmental problems that are leading to the planetary crisis characterised by the Anthropocene. In doing so, the author includes human beings as a part of the environment. He claims that religious (Catholic) principles can help fix many of the XXI Century ecological problems, including their consequences on societies.

Understanding why the author uses 'sin' in a very Catholic sense, his approach could be broadened by using more universal ethics principles (considering that most of them agree with those pointed out in the paper). Although an important part of the world will feel comfortable with most of the ethical and moral principles detailed in the paper, the bias toward the so-called 'Catholic' environmental ethics could result in a handicap. Many of these principles are not just Catholic, even if appropriated in good faith by Catholicism; they are present, for instance, in Ancient Greece ethics and even in Eastern ancient and present cultures. The text is written so that it seems that Christianity (broadening the religious foundations) has no common ethical roots with other religious or secular Ethics. This problem diminishes the potential 'universality' of the conclusions.

Also, it is mentioned the need to depart from the moral and religious principles of Catholic Environmental Ethics from 'an anthropocentric point of view since it is necessary to have man as a reference point if we want to establish an environmental ethic really capable of proposing operational solutions'. This is a very complicated phrasing that needs deep review/reformulation or expressed in a much opinionistic/conditional format. It is obvious that changing the path that moves Planet Earth to an environmental crisis that is provoked mostly by societal behaviour is urgent. Actions to correct what can be corrected can only, as proof in contrary, be performed by humans (anthropos). We cannot ask other beings to do our job or ask any god for miracles. It is not fair; it is not ethics. However (and here is more or less in my opinion, to be fair), we cannot be confused with the Anthropocentric word (defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "the belief that humans are more important than anything else"). Many other definitions, less 'egoistic', can be found, but the problem persists because the polysemy does not help the explanation. The 'man' cannot be the reference point of wider environmental ethics but the agent of change in the right way (for the full Earth system). Obviously, we cannot ask ants, volcanoes, to say, or gods to do the job of fixing the mess we did, nor ask for ethical behaviours to monkey or whales. The reference point must be a healthy environment, not the (hu)man. I prefer an approach where it is used the need for earth-centric ethics, where the Anthropos, except for miracles, is the only living being capable of, by its own will, changing the path to

destruction of the environment that supports living and non-living pieces on Earth as we know today.