

CONVERSATIO 2011



MONTH : JULY
NUMBER : 7
VOLUME : XLI

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

page 2

STATIO CONFERENCE LONGSUFFERING

By: Sister Daniela D. Romero, OSB

page 3

THE DEEPER NATURE OF TREES (continued...)

By: John Feehan

page 10

St. Scholastica's Priory
Manila

Dear Sisters,

Once again we celebrate the feast of our Holy Father Benedict. Something that may never have been mentioned in any book about St. Benedict is that he was a PROPHEMIC OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH. Remember he went to Rome as a teenager to study since all rich Italian families of that time sent their children to Rome. It was not long before he realized the state of corruption in the city not only in the state but in the Church as well. What did he do? He quit school! He turned down the great opportunity to be a learned person and to become a distinguished citizen of his society. He felt that corruption is infectious and he did not want to expose himself to its germs. But Benedict was not just an ordinary out-of school youth because his action was not prompted by laziness or irresponsibility but by a higher motivation. And unlike others who reject some aspects of society but did or do not do anything about it, he spent his life looking for an alternative model that he could offer to the world. And so he founded his SCHOOL OF THE LORD'S SERVICE. He developed a way of life that could be a model for society in its simplicity of life-style, its self-sufficiency, its service to God and society. And we are fortunate that we are in that School. As we celebrate the feast of St. Benedict let us internalize his uncompromising stance against corruption, even to the extent of giving up great opportunities for himself. We need to renew our commitment to the Benedictine ideals -- Ora et Labora, Service, Hospitality, Good Governance, Good Stewardship, Compassion, to name a few. We could share with our people to bring about a better quality of life for all.

Happy St. Benedict's day to all!

Sincerely yours,



Sister Mary John Mananzan, OSB

STATIO CONFERENCE

LONGSUFFERING

SR. DANIELA D. ROMERO, OSB

INTRODUCTION

LONGSUFFERING which is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is no longer an everyday word. When people hear this word, they immediately think that it means “*to suffer long*” or “*long on suffering.*” Certainly, this is an easy way to remember the basic concept. It is translated in many versions as simply “*patience*”, but this does not do justice to the full meaning of longsuffering – it is only **A PART** of it. The fullest understanding goes a long way further than the image of someone patiently waiting for an expected good thing to happen.

THE EXPLANATION OF LONG SUFFERING

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition defines longsuffering as “*patiently enduring wrongs or difficulties*”. WorldNet defines longsuffering as “*patient endurance of pain or unhappiness*” and “*capable of enduring hardship or inconvenience without complaint*” This is translated in Filipino as “*matiisin*” or “*hindi iniinda ang sakit o paghihirap*”. The essence of longsuffering here is “***how we bear and endure DIFFICULTIES and TRIALS***”.

Let us try to look at the Hebrew word for long suffering as Wikipedia presents it. The word is “*âreḵ*”- it means “*slow to anger*”. Its Greek counterpart, “*makrothumia*”, literally means “*being long-tempered*”; the “*opposite of short-tempered or having a short fuse*”. In Filipino we often hear people saying “*di agad napupundi*” or “*napakahaba ng pasensya*”. Vine’s Expository Dictionary notes that “*longsuffering is that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish. It is the quality that does not surrender to circumstances or succumb under trial; it is the opposite of despondency, and is associated with hope*”. Further, the Greek Analytical Lexicon notes that the concept carries with it the idea of the “*patient enduring of evil*” and the “*slowness of avenging injuries*”

Long suffering is a virtue needed more than ever when impatience, intolerance, oversensitivity and impulsive anger are prevalent. Without “*makrothumia*”, we lose our cool and tend to be temperamental and irritable, impulsive and excitable. **This helps us to be reminded how we are to behave. It is not blowing up and exploding with emotion in response to difficult situations. It is not snapping at people when we feel they are in the wrong or speak out of turn. It is not giving a litany of curses when things do not turn out the way we expect them to be.**

With these definitions we can therefore say that long suffering can be understood in two ways: a) the internal frame of mind that we possess or inward attitude (how we bear and

endure the trials we are going through) and b) the external demonstration in word and deed or outward reaction towards another (being long tempered in dealing with another's failings).

If we do not have the right attitude on the inside, then we are not able to display the right reaction on the outside. We can only be truly patient and long suffering through the grace of God because God, himself, is longsuffering.

LONGSUFFERING IS A MAJOR ATTRIBUTE OF GOD

Longsuffering is that quality associated with mercy, and is used of God. No greater demonstration of longsuffering can be found than that shown by God toward his people. The Lord, time and time again, throughout His Word, has shown longsuffering towards the Israelites. The Lord had miraculously and wonderfully made a way for them to escape the oppression of the Egyptians. But, right from the start, they complained and moaned about nearly everything! "We don't like the route you are taking us", "we don't like the food you have given us", "we are thirsty" and on and on it went. He could have struck them down in an instant, for questioning His wisdom and power. But, He did not. He was longsuffering. He gave them ways to repent and return to follow Him instead of their own ways. Time and again, He forgave them, and supplied their every need despite their complaining.

Ex. 34:6-7;

And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin."

How much sin the Israelites displayed, but YET, how longsuffering God was towards them, his people! The long suffering that God demonstrated is more than just waiting, putting up with. As Edward Bulwer puts it, "*Long suffering is not passive; on the contrary it is active; it is concentrated strength. It is enduring love.*"

LONG SUFFERING IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST

The ultimate expression of God's longsuffering is Christ's suffering and death on the cross. Christ himself was longsuffering in the face of persecution and ridicule. Throughout His years of preaching and teaching, he faced numerous assaults, both verbally and physically. His ultimate example of longsuffering was His final day of suffering. He was mocked, falsely accused, spat upon, and beaten. And His reaction – nothing! He did not say a word – "*and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth.*" (*Is. 53:7*) He did not react violently nor attempt to retaliate in any way. He just patiently endured His afflictions. What was His motivation? It was love – it was obedience to His Father's will – it was joyfully redeeming His people from their sins and bearing their punishment. Long suffering is indeed enduring love!

1 Peter 2:21-24

“For to this you have been called because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps: He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When he was abused, he did not return abuse, when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his in his body and on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness, by his wounds you have been healed”.

Blessed Pope John Paul II in his homily at Mass in Los Angeles Coliseum on September 15, 1987 said, *“Christ took upon himself the whole of human suffering and radically transformed it through the Paschal Mystery of his Passion, Death and Resurrection. The triumph of the cross gives human suffering a new dimension, a redemptive value.”* Jesus is the first to give manifest credibility to the notion that suffering can have salvific value, not in and of itself but placed upon it by the free decision of a person enduring it for a purpose. Paul Feider wrote, *“It seemed to be important to him that people experience the value of his decision to endure suffering before they proclaim him as the anointed of God”.*

THE STORY OF JOB, THE LONG SUFFERER

In the Book of Job, we see how Job endured the hardships that he would have to face. In other words, he showed that patient courage under affliction. Looking at Job’s life everything was great. He was a wealthy man and had achieved financial security. He wanted to live a life pleasing before God; he was a righteous man. So how did Job, a man of God, handle this issue of long suffering?

Job’s initial response was not to blame God. Though he wanted to plead his case directly with the Lord Himself because He wanted to hear directly from God why things were the way they were, he still trusted God throughout the calamity. Job witnesses to the reality of pain, but also to gaining a new sense of joy and freedom and restoration of soul.

In a Holy Mass I attended, a priest shared in his homily the lessons we can get from the life of Job. He gave the following points:

- Don’t react abruptly to the initial crisis
- Trust God throughout the calamity
- Learn from the situation because problems often provide us with greater opportunities to grow.

God did not allow Job’s suffering to go on indefinitely. If it is so, then, He won’t let us down if we turn to Him. Job’s story is a call to all of us to place faith and trust radically in God alone.

OUR SUFFERING

Nobody is exempted from suffering; it is a universal experience. Everyone goes through times of pains and sorrow, depression and darkness, stress and suffering. Every day we see on television the suffering of the poor, the anguish of those crying for justice, the affliction of those who are under the mercy of the powerful and influential, the agony of bearing the pain of an illness and the torments of standing for truth.

I had my own share of this suffering when just a month before my perpetual profession, I was diagnosed to have Cancer and had a radical surgery. I found myself questioning God for allowing this painful ordeal. I was at lower ebb, so low that I felt betrayed by my God to whom I was ready to be committed totally. Sr. Adele, my Directress, brought me to our community in Tagaytay to be able to cry and pray. I did nothing but to ask the Lord many **WHY'S**. "Why me? Why now that I am committing myself to you? Are you testing my love for you? Don't you want me to serve you?" In short, I started questioning God's love for me.

It was in the midst of my endless flow of tears inside the cave of Subiaco that I experienced a God who suffers with me; a God who carries my burdens and who has wept for me even before I started weeping. It was a concrete experience of the Emmanuel. The Paschal mystery became very real to me. I realized that what I was experiencing was only a small fragment of Christ's suffering and the suffering of all those who are in pain in various forms. That realization graced me with the capacity to befriend suffering and not to fight it.

I went back to the Priory House after some days of prayer with inner strength, with a readiness to undergo chemotherapy and bear all the side effects of the treatment with courage and positive disposition. I kept telling myself that there is a loving God who suffers with me and keeps me going. I may face situation beyond reserves but never beyond God's resources.

There is grace that comes along with getting sick or being sick. It has transformed me to become more sensitive to the sick, more compassionate to those who are suffering, more patient and tolerant with those who are weak, helpless and in pain. Suffering became a source of transformation and growth. It also led me to a deeper connectedness with myself and I discovered a God who is beyond the definitions I formerly had of Him. It was a call to a deeper level of trusting God's love for me and entrusting myself totally to Him.

"When we have striven to alleviate or overcome suffering, when like Christ we have prayed that "the cup pass us by" (Mt. 26:39), and yet suffering remains, then we must walk "the royal road" of the cross. Christ's answer to our question "why" is above all a call, a vocation. Christ does not give us an abstract answer, but rather he says, "Follow me!" He offers us the opportunity through suffering to take part in his work of saving the world. And when we do take up our cross, then gradually the salvific meaning of suffering is revealed to us. It is then in our sufferings that we find inner peace and even spiritual joy"

*Homily at Mass in Los Angeles Coliseum
September 15, 1987 (Blessed Pope John
Paul II)*

THE CHALLENGE TO BE LONG SUFFERING

Col. 3:12-13

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

We are all challenged to practice longsuffering in our own journey and daily encounter with people. May the following points below help us develop this virtue.

1. The purifying flames of trial and difficulties have the power to transform us from within and draw us closer to Christ. Through suffering, we- like Him- take part in saving the world. Let us unite our suffering with Christ, offer our pain for the salvation of all and find inner peace and joy.
2. When we become too immersed in our own sufferings, we fail to see the sufferings of others; that there are people who suffer more than we do. All concern for the sick and suffering is a part of the Church's life and mission. Mother Church has always understood herself to be charged by Christ with the care of the poor, the weak, the defenseless, the suffering and those who mourn. Let us turn our eyes to those who need our gentle but powerful comfort that brings strength in time of trouble and suffering.
3. We have to **"have compassion"** – if someone in our community is going through a trial, then be sympathetic. Sometimes people are not at their best when things do not go well, and it is a perfect opportunity to be patient with them.
4. **"Be courteous"** – we need to be gentle in the way we respond to others. Harsh words are never helpful. They only hinder us especially if someone is in a raging or cursing mood. We would be more effective if we talk in a polite manner to difficult community members, demanding students and parents and exacting teachers and employees. What we say and do should be done with kindness. We can live out our love by being forgiving towards others when they cause us suffering.
5. **"Or railing for railing"** – this is a term not in common usage today, but is with reference to WHAT we say – slander and bad-mouthing. If someone says something bad about us, let us be long tempered. Don't say something nasty in return. "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks" – what is in our hearts, is what will come out – get our hearts to the right place, and hopefully, we will not be tempted to speak in an unkind way.

CONCLUSION

Let me end with this story and reflection that Joann Chittister shared in the book *"Becoming Fully Human"*

There are two monks, one somber, one joyful, each belonging to a different tradition, living miles apart. The first monk prayed all day long in deep motionless silence. The second monk would sing and dance his praises to God near a huge tree in the monastery garden.

One day an angel appeared to the first monk and said, "I have come from God and you have been given permission to ask God one question. What is your question?" The somber monk looked up and said, "How many more lives must I live before I will attain self-realization?" The angel left him and reappeared miles away to the second monk who was singing and dancing before God. The angel said, "I have come from God and you have been given permission to ask God one question. What is your question?" Without hesitation, the joyful monk asked "How many more lives must I live before I will attain self-realization?" And with that the angel disappeared.

One week later the angel returned to the first monk and said "I have the answer you seek. You must live three more lives before you attain self-realization". With that, the monk fell dejectedly into heavy sobbing. "Three more lives, three more lives, Oh, no", he cried "three more lives!" The angel left immediately and appeared to the second monk. "I have your answer. Do you see that tree around which you have been dancing and singing your praises to God?". "Yes", said the joyful monk. "You must live as many more lives as there are leaves on that tree before you will attain self-realization". The angel said. The monk looked up the tree and said." Why, there must be ten thousand leaves on that tree. Only ten thousand lives? Only ten thousand more lives and I will attain self-realization". And he began to sing and dance joyfully before God. Suddenly a voice thundered from heaven. "My son this day, you have attained self-realization".

It is not always possible to rejoice in our struggles, in our sufferings, but it is always possible to trust them. Then we may surely give thanks not for the blessings we have but for the blessings we cannot see. In every struggle, in every suffering, there is a hidden blessing.

*Somehow in the midst of tears;
a gift is hidden.
Somehow in the midst of mourning
the first steps of the dance take place.
And somehow the cries that well up from our losses
belong to our songs of gratitude. (Henry Nouwen)*

Let us stay on the vine; the pruning process may make us scream, but the fruit that results is the sweetest in the land. I pray that if we are in the season of pruning; let us allow the fruit of longsuffering to come forth. May the Lord help us to be longsuffering to those around us.

That In All Things God May Be Glorified!

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Madelein L. Engele in her book, “The Irrational Seasons”, writes about the “NO’s of God” She says that God will sometimes say “NO” to us only to lead us to a greater “YES” later. We must learn, she says, to be calm when God says “NO”, confidently expecting a “YES” to come.

Looking back at your own life, can you discover times when God says “NO to provide you with a beautiful “YES” later? Did you find meaning in the suffering that led to a discovery of a deeper meaning?

2. Have you ever experienced a time where you became so confused, so discouraged and so disheartened that you just wanted to let go, give in and give up?

3. What are your present struggles or crosses that demand a practice of the virtue of longsuffering?

REFERENCES:

Bakalar, Nick. **The Wisdom of John Paul II**, New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995

Chittister , Joan. **Becoming Fully Human: The Greatest Glory of God**, USA: Rowman and Little Field Publishers Inc, 2005

Nouwen, Henri. **With Burning Hearts: A Meditation on the Eucharistic Life**, USA: Orbis Books, 1994

Feider, Paul. **Arise and Walk : The Christian Search for Meaning in Suffering**, Notre Dame Indiana: Fides Claretian, 1980

NRSV Exhaustive Concordance, Nelson Publishers, Nashville,1991

American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition

Expository Dictionary of the Old and New Testament

<http://wiki.answers.com>

[Http: wikiquote.org](http://wikiquote.org)

<http://www.intothyword.org>

bible-studyblessings.blogspot.com

John Feehan

*The Garden God Walked in: Meditations on the Spirit
of Trees*
THE DEEPER NATURE OF TREES
(continuation...)

‘Endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful’³

In my student days I trained as a geologist. And one day – one of the very few days in my life I can put an actual date on it: it was 12th May 1976 – I was studying and mapping the sandstone rocks in the bed of a river in Central Ireland when I came upon a layer of rock that wasn't sandstone: a grey mudstone, and when I split this open with my geologist's hammer, there before my eyes was the beautifully preserved impression of the twig of a species of Seed-fern, the veins of its wedge-shaped leaves still perfect, rather Gingko-like. But it wasn't a Gingko, because the alluvial system in which this mudstone formed, in which these leaves were preserved, flowed across the land 350 million years ago, at the very end of the Devonian period of earth history. And here they were, out in the sun for the first time since they were entombed all those ages and ages ago.

You all know what relics are.

This is a first class relic in the old official sense. It is not a picture of the Devonian forest, not something that touched the forest, it is a part of that forest. Through it, if I am of a proper mental and spiritual disposition, I can immerse myself *in the real forest* out of which this has come, of which it was a part all of 350 million years ago.

It is a forest like nothing you have ever seen: dominated by great trees as majestic as those that you find in the woods and forests of the world today, but you would feel very strange indeed if you could take a walk in it, because you would recognize nothing: not only not the species, but the groups to which the trees and shrubs belong are unknown to you: because they are long extinct, their descendants in our world banished to the ecological margins while other groups have come to dominate the ecological centre stage that is the forest of today.

Strange to you also because everything is green and brown – so little bright colour: and because in this world there is an unfamiliar silence. There is the wind in the trees and the familiar music of the river flowing over pebbles and rock, and there is a rustling in the undergrowth where disconcertingly large scorpion-like things are scurrying about, and you may catch the odd glimpse of a disturbingly large amphibian. There is no birdsong, and there are no flowers. The insects to pollinate them had not evolved to populate the riot of colour they would bring to the earth in their time: bees and butterflies, hoverflies.

But for all that, you recognize this as *forest*. In fact, you stand here in what is really the earth's earliest fully developed forest. Multicellular life evolved long before this, but there has been multicellular life on land only since the middle of the Silurian period 70 million years before this, 425 million years ago.

And just as the Oak tree in a forest of today supports hundreds of invertebrates and other animals, and a host of fungi, mosses, liverworts and other plants, so too did this Seed-fern in a forest long gone from the earth harbor its great cohort of other species: in a forest no human eye ever saw, no human spirit contemplated in wonder and admiration of that wondrous and strange biodiversity, so different from that of the forests of our age of the Earth.

And this meditation helps us perhaps to approach our question of the meaning and purpose of forest biodiversity from a different perspective. Because when we again ask question: 'what is it for; what is the purpose of all this burgeoning, bewildering beauty (not merely

sensual, but the multidimensional beauty of Being Achieved), what can the answer be, if our well-being is not part of the answer? Because in this Garden of the late Devonian, God truly walks alone in the cool of the evening. There is no human eye to look and wonder. There aren't even any mammals in this world. No human homes will be built of the timbers of these trees, no meals made of the plants and animals that live here. Because none of this glorious efflorescence of life on this ancient Earth, an Earth without us, is for us in the first place. Why were they created, why were they here, if not for us?

There has never been, I think, a more succinct articulation of the answer to that question about the ultimate meaning of biodiversity, of what it is truly all about, of what is going on in Creation, than this by Aquinas:

‘God cannot express himself fully in any one creature: and so he has produced many and diverse life forms, so that what one lacks in its expression of divine goodness may be compensated for by others: for goodness, which in God is single and undifferentiated, in creatures is refracted into myriad hues being’.⁴

And yet in Thomas' day people knew next to nothing about biodiversity. Albert the Great had just written his pioneering Encyclopedias of animal and plant life, but – altogether fascinating though they are – these were little more than anecdotal accounts of the flora and fauna familiar to medieval Europe. Almost nothing was known of the life of invertebrates or non-vascular plants; the microscope was still centuries in the future: and we didn't have the faintest idea of the kaleidoscopic magnificence of the overwhelming biodiversity of tropical forests or of the oceans. Had Thomas known any of this, or known of the biochemical and genetic mechanisms behind it all, what words could he ever have thought adequate?

This reflection of Aquinas must be the foundation of the sentiment and reverence we need to take into the forest with us as we look for the wood for our harp, or our house, for our fire, or the food for our table, the medicine for our illness.

Tress and the unfolding [ex-plication] of the living world

Trees have also profoundly permeated the human imagination since our beginnings, including our spiritual imagination. Back in the 5th century Augustine was fascinated by the natural process by which the entirety of a mighty oak tree could unfold from a tiny acorn. How enthralled he would have been if he could have known the sheer wonder of that process as modern plant science has enabled us to understand it! The unfolding of possibility wrapped up in a seed becomes the template for the even greater mystery whereby all of life has unfolded not only from an acorn sown on this earth of ours, but from a mustard seed of nothingness that contained all possibility within itself, at the beginning of all things 14.7 billion years ago. This is the Universe Story familiar in outline now to most of us, and how thrilled to bits Nicholas of Cusa would have been had he been alive today instead of in the 15th century, when his imagination conjured with images of all that is, all that (as we would say) evolution has achieved, as not just God's revelation of himself: but as the very unfolding of Godself. No day should pass, whether we walk in the forest or on the street, or carried on thought through a window from our bed. No day should pass without our reaching for that thrilling thought, that the tree my vision enfolds, and all that is growing upon it, and all the other species that people this

moment of Earth's time with us, are in a sense beyond human comprehension, each in its unique way a living ex-plication of an aspect divinity.

A call to action

We have reached a point in the history of the Earth where two critical developments have come together. On the one hand, our growing scientific understanding has given us as appreciation of the utterly marvelous creation that trees embody, the mesmerisingly complex and diverse ecosystems their woods and forests constitute, in ways no people before us could have had: and a deeper awareness of the values they represent: utilitarian, psychological, spiritual. And yet, as our understanding has grown, our appreciation has dimmed our sense of their worth.

And then on the other hand, such is the footfall of our species on the Earth, the result of the uncontrolled increase in our numbers and the determination of so many to live far beyond their means, beyond anything the Earth can support for us; such is our footfall that the great over- arching rainbow that is the diversity of Life on Earth is becoming ever dimmer and narrower.

This **Year of the Forest** is not just an occasion for more conferences and colourful commemorative stamps. It needs to be the call at midnight that hurried Five Wise Virgins into action because 'The Bridegroom is here'.⁵ We need to act, each in his/her own life, his/her own community, as best we may in our different lives. We need to act, both urgently and effectively. For most of us it will be at parish level. May each of you leave here with the firm resolve to plant a seed of initiative that will ensure the Recovery of Forest. May that seed that you will sow germinate, literally and metaphorically, until the branches of its maturity intertwine with the branches of other initiatives in Forest of the Future.

Conclusion

Our knowledge of evolution has opened to us the shocking, awful realisation – with consequences as yet barely grasped by our human philosophy and theology, let alone economics and politics – the shocking realisation that we and the trees – and all that lives – are related. Not metaphorically: genetically, The Oak is my cousin, in the same way Mary is my cousin, just that much more distantly: and yet not all that distantly either, because genetically speaking I am one-third Oak.

This does not mean that if we listen long and hard enough the trees will speak to us in the words we speak to each other, as the willow of Craiftine's harp spoke in the Hall of the King. In certain ancient cultures it is a ritual obligation to beg forgiveness of a tree whose life is to be sacrificed in the interest of our human lives. Trees that speak and are spoken to are to be found everywhere in the language of mythology. But it is only in the make-believe fantasy worlds of J.R.R. Tolkien's "Middle Earth" that trees talk. There are such traditions in every culture, seeking to articulate the intuitive knowledge that there is more to trees. But we in ours cannot do this because our concept of spirit has had to mature and be distilled through a scientific world-view. We cannot go back to being Druids any more than we can return through the one-way gates to the Garden of Eden.

Yet they do indeed speak to us. But in a language that goes far deeper than the superficiality of words. The word is also articulated in other than human speech. And it is in that communication between us that the spiritual function of the wood is exercised. Humanity will have lost its soul, Thomas Merton once wrote, when the trees are silent, when the trees say nothing.

The experience of trees is like a tuning fork that awakens harmonies in the genes that govern our mental well-being, in which are rooted aesthetic, psychological and spiritual creativity. Yet woods have been largely exercised from the body of human experience, leaving a void, a wound, we scarcely appreciate, until suddenly we stumble upon it in corner where it has somehow managed to survived, or to which it has been restored, and it takes our breath away. In the past everybody, children and adults, knew trees by their names. Today, they know the names of T.V. or cinema stars, the music charts and sport, but of no trees. Nevertheless anonymous trees people their dreams, and will people the dreams of their own children, even if the last woods have vanished from the earth.