



*Encountering Earth
as Sacred:
the heart of the
matter*

*This ancient land was here
In the silences and its sounds of life
Long before history was written
Held carefully in its dreaming.
We acknowledge the traditional owners
and custodians of the land and water
of our various areas.
We pay our respects to them
and honour their links with all creation.
May we walk gently on this land.*



Sacred Is...

Sacred means that, sacred, that's a place where spirits rise,
With the rainbow wings of sunset, on the edge of paradise,
Sacred, that's my father, that's my daughter, that's my son,
Sacred,... where the dreaming whispers hope for everyone.

Denis Kevans, from the book: "Ah, White Man, Have You Any Sacred Sites?," 1985 [ISBN0 9593 073]



... Sacred Encounter

“the experience of a reality within or beneath the immediate material reality, and the experience of a oneness that includes and encloses everyone and everything.”

Larry Rasmussen, *Earth-Honoring Faith, Religious Ethics in a New Key* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013), 286



*Sense of Place, they told me
as I was standing there
and I was taken back
through the heat and the glare
to when I was, oh, so small,
barefoot and unaware,
that wherever I am in Australia
Sense of Place is there.
I love this land, Australia,
land of my birth.*

*My ancestors had sense of place
when they were here on earth.
I roam around Australia,
bushland that I know.
With me is sense of place
wherever I may go.
The love of being Aussie is
not the colour of your face.
It's the feeling deep within
that gives you
Sense of Place.*

Elsie Bancroft, Goori woman of the Gumbaingerr nation in the mid-north coast of New South Wales.



First, wonder is an emotion linked with approach and affiliation rather than avoidance. Wonder motivates attention and motivates a quest for increased connection and belongingness with the putative source of unexpected displays of life, beauty, or truth. Wonder is thus somewhat rare among the emotions in its functional capacity to motivate persons to venture outward into increased rapport with the environment.

Second, wonder awakens our mental capacity for abstract, higher-order thought. Indeed, wonder seems to direct our cognitive activities to identify causality, agency, and purpose in ways that are not directly connected with our biological survival.

Robert Fuller, "Wonder and Spirituality," *The Journal of Religion*, 86, 3 (2006): 370



... Gaians-Animate Earth

...Sacred Earth

...Pantheists

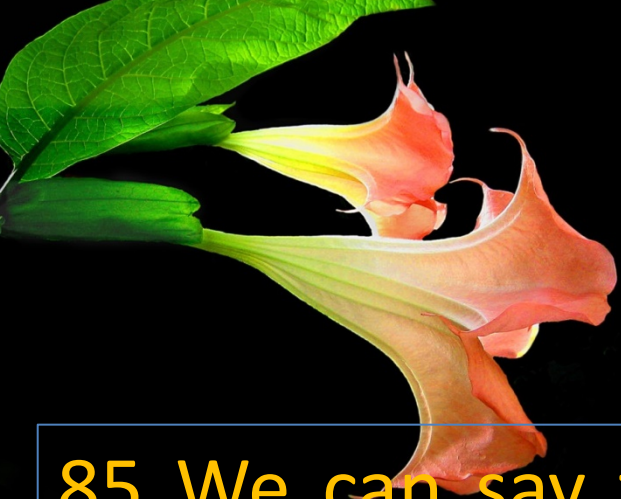
...Earth honouring Faith

...Earth deprecating Faith



89... “God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement”.

Apostolic Exhortation [*Evangelii Gaudium*](#) (24 November 2013), 215: AAS 105 (2013), 1109.



85 We can say that “alongside revelation properly so-called, contained in sacred Scripture, there is a divine manifestation in the blaze of the sun and the fall of night”.⁽¹⁾ Paying attention to this manifestation, we learn to see ourselves in relation to all other creatures: “I express myself in expressing the world; in my effort to decipher the sacredness of the world, I explore my own”.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ ID., *Catechesis* (2 August 2000), 3: *Insegnamenti* 23/2 (2000), 112.

⁽²⁾ PAUL RICOEUR, *Philosophie de la Volonté, t. II: Finitude et Culpabilité*, Paris, 2009, 216.

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

Human activities and aspirations

determine

whether or not the integrity of ecological systems should be protected.

ECOLOGICAL LAW

The need to protect the integrity of ecological systems

determines

human activities and aspirations



*We need to
fall in love with
Earth.*