

A Poetic Approach to Ecology



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Reviews

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(Timothy Johnson DVM)

A POETIC APPROACH TO ECOLOGY



Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University October 2004, 2004. Paper Back. Book Condition: New. To the contemporary mind, Father Peter Milward could hardly be classified a scientist, yet he seeks and conveys-as did Francis of Assisi in his Canticum of the Sun-an unmistakably true knowledge of the natural world. Intent on restoring the science of ecology to a more comprehensive understanding of the interdependence of all living things, Milward turns from the Baconian concept of knowledge as power toward a wider and more literary consideration of knowledge as humility. Drawing heavily from a host of literary masters and poets, he ruminates on all matter of the natural world-earth, nature, heaven, animals, man, woman, knowledge, and life-and then contemplates humanity's need to listen to the earth itself through the voices of wind, fire, rain, river, flower, insect, and bird. At first glance, Milward's approach may seem more romantic than intellectual, but his literary and theological background is solid. His chapter 'Wuthering Heights' considers the dual nature of wind as both a still, small voice and a rushing torrent. 'How can two such different, even opposing images be used of the divine presence without contradiction?' asks Milward. His response references Elijah in the cave as the Lord passes by and the 'turbulence and turmoil' present both at the creation of the world and the Spirit's descent on the disciples at Pentecost. Increasingly cacophonous, man in the industrial world seems to conspire against Nature's harmony, and Milward contends only humility born of self-knowledge can restore what Wordsworth calls the 'still, sad music of humanity' which leads to prayer and praise.



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