



BIBLE BIRDS

***A simple introduction to
a christian birdwatching***

... FORGIVE ME

Dear reader, before that you start reading this short book, I ask you forgiveness for the poor and childish English I have used. English is not my mother-language, so ... Please, forgive me.

PRESENTATION

Long time ago, when I was just a school boy, my boy-scouts leader gave to me a field guide to recognize the birds. [1]

I grew up in a countryside village, now almost completely united to the city suburbs, and I used to spend whole afternoons walking in the grass fields since my childhood.[2]

When I was about ten years old I already had made my first and only one collection of insects.

It happened so, that, that birds field guide was a Providence way to turn me from insects to birdwatching.

Since that time (I was about 12 years old in the early 1980) I have learned to know and to recognize many of the Europe birds species and some of the extra Europe.

Till now I write some notes on my priesthood prayer book about some birds I see, which are really interesting and significant for me. My priest life made me wandering through the country region where I live and birds are everywhere to be seen, if you have eyes used to observe them.

This short book wants to be a gift to you, dear reader : a gift from brother to brother, from a son of GOD to another son of GOD.

And if this book will disclose to you new horizons not seen before, or only dimly seen, it will depend upon your will and mostly upon Divine Holy Grace.

Enjoy this small text of mine and let Holy Grace disclose Heavenly horizons to you.

don Michele Lamberti



[1] It was BIRDS OF EUROPE by BRUNN e SINGER.

[2] The small village is Roncadelle, close to Brescia – ITALIA

INTRODUCTION

In this short text I write about one of my oldest and most joyful passions, using the perspective of the Holy BIBLE.

The BIBLE is the Word of GOD. It's the Word of my FATHER. It's the Word of our FATHER.

It's the Word of my Saviour: JESUS CHRIST the Saviour of all of us. And it's such a great joy for me to have discovered that birdwatching is nevertheless a concretization of a Gospel sentence: "Watch the birds" .[1]

A not lesser joy was for me to find in the BIBLE, in the Words of GOD, many quotations of different birds species.

These two facts are confirms till now that my passion for birding is a good thing; I should say a holy thing. A holy thing to do as long as you keep inside some simple attitudes. About these attitudes, these personal thoughts and feelings, I will write in the ending conclusion.

In the CHAPTER 1 I tell you something about the birds species mentioned in the Holy BIBLE, without having no claim of completeness.[2]

In CHAPTER 2 I tell you about the most evident and meaningful relationships among birds and men, always from the Holy Texts.

In CHAPTER 3, I speak about images, metaphors, parables, allegories, which have birds as subject.

In CHAPTER 4 I will tell you something about the CREATOR of these flying marvels.

In the end, after the conclusion, I give you a prophecy and an autobiographic detail.



Ferruginous duck – Aythya nyroca

CHAPTER 1 - BIBLE BIRDS * THE SPECIES

Birds (AVES) are one of the animals **CLASS**. Other well-known CLASSES are : cartilaginous fishes, bones fishes, amphibians, reptiles, mammals.

The CLASS of birds is then organized in ORDERS.

Every ORDER is classified upon some features that you can find in every bird belonging to it. The ORDERS of birds are now, in 2016, 29 or 33.

Birds ORDERS are then split in FAMILIES.

FAMILY in GENDERS and GENDER in SPECIES.

Sometimes we have also SUBSPECIES.

From CLASS (AVES) to SPECIES (eg. CERYLE RUDIS) or SUBSPECIES (eg. CORVUS CORONE CORNIX), you have a deeper and growing and progressive definition of the bird characteristics, features, which makes easier and more detailed the bird classification. Here is an example:

Pied kingfisher (common in ISRAEL lakes and waters)

species: *rudis* (dagger like bill – a rudis is an ancient roman wooden sword)

genus: *ceryle* (blue - maybe dark blue and black looked similar...?)

family : *alcedinidae* (strongbuilt, with long sharp pointed bill)

order : *coraciiformes* (syndactyly in third and fourth toe, strong bill, coloured feathers)

subclass or superorder : *neognathae* (bill with no teeth, normal feathers)

class : birds (feathers, warm blooded, wings, prehensile feet-legs, hollow-pneumatized and lightweight bones, superior eyes vision)

subphylum : *vertebrates* (internal skeleton made of bones or cartilaginous – backbones)

phylum or type : *cordata* (symmetric, with dorsal nerve cord at least in the beginning)

group or subkingdom: *eumetazoa* (animals with organized tissues and internal organs)

subkingdom: *metazoa* (animals with specialized cells and internal digesting chamber)

kingdom : *animalia* (living beings which eat organic food, with membrane cells, able to move)

A definition of “species” has been given in 1940 by ornithologist Ernst Mayr: species are groups of natural populations, which actually or potentially reproduce themselves and are instead genetically separated from other groups - “Groups of interbreeding natural populations that are reproductively isolated from other such groups”

Species are ecologically specialized (behaviour and food) so that they not get into competition with the other groups of animals of the same type in the same space.

The main reason of the formation of species is geographic isolation.[4]

In the BIBLE, the common name for bird [5] is OF or OF KANAF. When speaking about a single little bird the most used name is ZiPPOR.

The birds species of the BIBLE are here listed shortly and not following the scientific order but more or less according to the importance of that bird in the BIBLE. [6]



Turtle dove – Streptopelia turtur

COLUMBIDAE (PIGEONS, DOVES AND TURTLES)

Old Hebraic names “dove” (YONaH) e "turtle" (TUR), refer to different species (essentially genera *columba* and *streptopelia*).

You must remember that old BIBLE language was poor, and a very long time before our modern complex classifications. [7]

The dove appears from the beginning in the stories of the BIBLE and it is since the beginning a lovely and blessed bird, inspiring feelings of peace and joy.

“At the end of forty days Noah opened the hatch he had made in the ark, and he sent out a raven, to see if the waters had lessened on the earth. It flew back and forth until the waters dried off from the earth. Then he sent out a dove, to see if the waters had lessened on the earth. But the dove could find no place to alight and perch, and it returned to him in the ark, for there was water all over the earth. Putting out his hand, he caught the dove and drew it back to him inside the ark. He waited seven days more and again sent the dove out from the ark. In the evening the dove came back to him, and there in its bill was a plucked-off olive leaf! So Noah knew that the waters had lessened on the earth. He waited still another seven days and then released the dove once more; and this time it did not come back” GENESIS 8

YONaH is a good animal, pure and blessed, but it is however just an animal, and a very abundant bird in the BIBLE region and times. Because of this, the man of ISRAEL, who has a very clear view of the truth (of

the ontological stairs: GOD is much more than man, and man is much more than animals), he never considers the birds as gods, but he hunted and used YONaH, faithful to GOD commandments. [8] Much more than this: he used doves to make sacrifices to GOD. [9] Surely in the BIBLE, doves and turtles have a special meaning and we will find YONaH in the following chapters.

Personally, I have seen with a special joy, the laughing doves, during my trip in Holy Land



Hooded crow - Corvus corone cornix

CORVIDAE

If the “white dove” is the most famous bird of the BIBLE, it is not the first bird appearing in the Book of the Word of GOD.

The first bird named by the prophets is the crow (OREB). OREB means both crows and ravens. Noah let the crow fly away from the ark, but it always came back, because it could not find any land, meaning that the flood was still covering the world.

"At the end of forty days Noah opened the hatch he had made in the ark, and he sent out a raven, to see if the waters had lessened on the earth. It flew back and forth until the waters dried off from the earth" GENESIS 8

Starting from this event, told from the ancient times to new generations, came out the not true superstition that a black crow is bringing bad news.

But black ravens were not bad news to prophet ELIJAH, who was nourished by the crows.

"So he left and did as the LORD had commanded. He went and remained by the Wadi Cherith, east of the Jordan. Ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the stream water" 1 KING 17

And JESUS CHRIST himself never listened to superstitions, as HE was completely free from any idle prejudice:

"Notice the ravens: they do not sow or reap; they have neither storehouse nor barn, yet GOD feeds them. How much more important are you than birds!" LUKE 12.[10]

OREB is basically *corvus corax*, not excluding other corvidae. [11]



Common "European" pheasant - Phasianus colchicus

GALLIFORMES and PHASIANIDAE (Cocks, Quails, Partridges)

The most common and humble of the bird is in the BIBLE. This means that GOD does not depreciates human ordinary things and life:

"How many times I yearned to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her young under her wings, but you were unwilling!" LUKE 13 and MATTHEW 23

A cock did sing in the most terrible hour of human history: "Watch, therefore; you do not know when the lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning" MARK 13 and "Peter said to him, -Even though all should have their faith shaken, mine will not be- Then Jesus said to him, "Amen, I say to you, this very night before the cock crows twice you will deny me three times." MARK 14

So cocks and hens are written in the Holy BIBLE to indicate: the immense love of GOD for us (the hen with the little chickens) and on the other side our inability to answer, with our only strengths, to this love in a perfect way (Saint Peter's cock) [12]

After hens we have the quails (*coturnix*), the birds of PROVIDENCE, in old Hebrew SeLaW.

A strong wind makes a huge flock of quails land in the desert, during migration (seasonal migration of quails and freedom migration of ISRAEL from Egypt). This event, which took place in the 13th century before CHRIST, happened to MOSES and his people and was so amazing and marvellous, that is still now impressed in the historical memory of BIBLE people and it is written and mentioned many times in many texts: EXODUS 16, NUMBERS 11, PSALM 78/77, PSALM 105/104, WISDOM 16, WISDOM 19...

In the end we have the partridges (*alectoris and perdix*), mentioned in two metaphors.

One is by king DAVID about a hunted man: "Do not let my blood flow to the ground far from the presence of the LORD. For the king of ISRAEL has come out to seek a single flea as if he were hunting partridge in the mountains" 1 SAMUEL 26 and the other is by prophet JEREMIAH about thieves and corrupted souls:

"A partridge that mothers a brood not her own is the man who acquires wealth unjustly: in midlife it will desert him; in the end he is only a fool" JEREMIAH 17

Personally I have seen some partridges (KoRE) in the Negev region.



Common buzzard – Buteo buteo

FALCONIDAE

The common general name for raptors is AYIT or AYYAH.

In the BIBLE we find: *aquila*[13], *falco*[14], *milvus*[15], *accipiter*, *buteo*, *pandion*, *circus*, *haliaeetus*, *hieraaetus*, *circaetus*, *neophron*, *gypaetus*, *gyps*, *torgos*.

LEVITICUS 11 and DEUTERONOMY 14 are two chapters about pure and not pure animals.

Here we find the highest number of birds concentrated in few lines of words, although the etymology of the names is not sure and has given different translations trough centuries:

"Among birds, you shall not eat : NESHER (eagle, vulture), PERES (lammergeyer, vulture), OZNIYAH (osprey, sea eagle, vulture), AYAH (hawk, kite, buzzard), RAAH e DAYAH (every species of falcon), OREB (every kind of crows and ravens), BAT HAYA'ANAH (ostrich), TAHMAS (nightjar, little owl, kestrels), SHAHAF (gulls), NEZ (any kind of sparrowhawks), KUS (scops owl), YANSHUF (owls, ibis), TINSHEMET (swan, barn owls), QAAT (pelican), RAHAMAH (coot, egyptian vulture), SHLAKH (kingfisher, osprey, cormorant), HASIDAH (stork), ANAFAH (any kind of herons), DUKIFAT (hoopoe) and the bat" DEUTERONOMY 14 [16]

It is evident that for raptors, as for other species, we have come to our names and scientific classification following a reasoning based upon different factors: the Hebrew language, the birds species living today in ISRAEL, and the data collected by local ornithological tradition. And not only, you have to know that we have different versions of the Hebrew BIBLE (the same for the Greek BIBLE and for the Latin BIBLE). This means that there are ancient rolls of paper of the same texts, which are absolutely identical regarding the message, but that can have some different details and accents. And this is a sign of human work, human intelligence, human personalities.

The same we have for the four writers of the GOSPEL : Saint MATTHEW, Saint MARK, Saint LUKE, Saint JOHN are telling us the same identical story about JESUS CHRIST, but they are telling us the same events in different ways, because they are four different men, with four different personalities and different purposes.

I am sure that if four ornithologists go for a walk in the countryside, they will see and then tell more or less the same facts but with four different accents and details. It is normal, it is natural, it is human. [17]

About names translations from Hebraic words I want to trust and believe in the authors of books and researches made by other people before me, sure that they have been sufficiently accurate.

About ISRAEL raptors, I remember to have seen two species during my pilgrimage in the Holy Land: griffons and spotted eagles. The griffon vultures were soaring in the *Negev* desert along the *Mitzpe Ramon* canyon, south of *Beersheba*. While the spotted eagles (*clanga* or *pomarina*) were migrating in the green region of north between Galilee and Judea.



***Aquila clanga* young with *Pica pica* waiting for food**



STRIGIDAE

Any kind of owls : *asio, bubo, athena, otus, strix, tyto*. These are the nocturnal raptors species named in the BIBLE: YaNSHUF (eagle owl, or common owl or even sometimes translated into the "ibis"), SE'IRIM (little owl or scops owl), KUS (scops owl or little owl), TiNSHeMeT (barn owl or even sometimes translated in "swan" : both are white and both made hissing sounds when in danger), TaHMaS (little owl or some little falcon or maybe the nightjar).[18]

As you see, especially in the past, there was not a total certainty about the true meaning of the old name used in the BIBLE. Those books were written about 2.000 or even 3.000 or more years ago and something has been changed or maybe lost through the ages.

But we are sure about this: owls usually meant lonely places, lost buildings and somehow loneliness, solitude, waste, death. The reason is obvious for those who know the owls behaviors. They have always usually nested and today they still usually nest in rocks, buildings, walls, towers, houses, trees far from humans, so in "lonely" but really peaceful places. So tell us ISAIAH: "But wildcats shall rest there and owls shall fill the houses; ostriches shall dwell and wild goats will wander around there" ISAIAH 13

And again ISAIAH with more details: "But the desert owl and hoot owl shall possess her, the screech owl and raven shall dwell in her. The LORD will measure her with line and plummet to be an empty waste for satyrs to dwell in. Her nobles shall be no more, nor shall kings be proclaimed there; all her princes are gone. Her castles shall be overgrown with thorns, her fortresses with thistles and briars. She shall become an abode for jackals and a haunt for ostriches. Wildcats shall meet with desert beasts, wild goats shall wander there; There shall the lilith (little owl) repose, and find for herself a place to rest. There the hoot owl shall nest and lay eggs, hatch them out and gather them in her shadow; There shall the kites assemble, none shall be missing its mate" ISAIAH 34

Same kind of words we have in : PSALM 101/102, EZEKIEL 31.

Personally, when I went in the Holy Land I have listened the deep and low call of the eagle owl, resting in some rocks holes, on the cliff under the Mitzpe Ramon canyon observatory.

OSTRICHES

The ostriches (*struthio camelus*) appear in those texts about desolation and lost places: "Hence, wildcats and desert beasts shall dwell there, and ostriches shall occupy it" JEREMIAH 50

The ostrich is also used as a metaphor related to suffering cries: " For this reason I lament and wail, I go barefoot and naked; I utter lamentation like the jackals, and mourning like the ostriches" MIKAJAH 1

But it is in the Book of JOB that the real ostrich is described with its power and speed:

"The wings of the ostrich beat idly; her plumage is lacking in pinions. When she leaves her eggs on the ground and deposits them in the sand, Unmindful that a foot may crush them, that the wild beasts may trample them, She cruelly disowns her young and ruthlessly makes nought of her brood; For GOD has withheld wisdom from her and has given her no share in understanding. Yet in her swiftness of foot she makes sport of the horse and his rider." JOB 39

The old Hebrew word for ostrich is BaTHAYa'ANaH.



Common European sparrow – Passer domesticus – Partially albinus

SPARROWS

The name for sparrow is ZiPPOR o TSPOR.^[19] This name indicates almost every little birds similar to the sparrows (finches, buntings...). The ancient languages were always simple and with few words compared to our developed languages. ^[20]

Sparrows, finches and similar birds should have been very common and abundant in the BIBLE times and places and they are remembered with the swallows as familiar and close creatures: "My soul longed and even

yearned for the courts of the LORD; My heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living GOD. The bird also has found a house, And the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, Even Your altars O LORDS of hosts, My King and my GOD. How blessed are those who dwell in Your house! They are ever praising YOU" PSALM 84

We find again the sparrow and the swallow together in the proverbs: "Like the sparrow in its flitting, like the swallow in its flight, a curse uncalled-for [causeless - motiveless] arrives nowhere" PROVERBS 26

JESUS CHRIST too remembers the sparrows when speaking about GOD's PROVIDENCE[21]: "Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your FATHER's knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. Who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly FATHER" MATTHEW 10



Young housemartin – Delichon urbicum – a very common “swallow” in ITALY

SWALLOWS AND SWIFTS

Hirundinidae and *Apodidae* are named DROR (DeROR) and SUS, meaning the swallow and the swift. They are closely and familiar nesting birds (PSALM 83/84 and PROVERBS 26) with a very well known feature:

"Even the stork [crane] in the air knows its seasons; the turtledove, the swallow and the swift [or thrush] observe their time of return, But my people do not know the ordinance of the LORD" JEREMIAH 8

Apart migration, about the swallow is well known the “noisy” and constant call: "Like a swallow I utter shrill cries; I moan like a dove. My eyes grow weak, gazing heavenward: O Lord, I am in straits; be my surety!" ISAIAH 38



Common European crane – Grus grus

CRANES

AGUR is the crane, which like the swallows, flies regularly above us every years during the autumn and spring migration: "Even the stork *CRANE in the air knows it seasons; turtledove, swallow and thrush observe their time of return, But my people do not know the ordinance of the LORD" JEREMIAH 8 [22]



Some thirsty storks visiting my friends swimming pool - ITALY

STORKS

HaSIDaH the "pious one", because shares his food with his fellowship, is the migrating stork (JEREMIAH 8), a sacred bird not to be hunted or eaten (LEVITICUS 11 and DEUTERONOMY 14). The big nests of the storks were well known before CHRIST: "The glorious trees of the LORD, there the birds make their nests, and the storks make their homes in the cypresses" PSALM 103/104

The white stork (but we also find the black stork in our countries) is a very big bird, with large black and white wings, and we find it in the visions of the prophets: " Then the angel who spoke with me came forward and said to me, -Raise your eyes and see what this is that comes forth- Then I raised my eyes and saw two women coming forth with a wind ruffling their wings, for they had wings like the wings of a stork. As they lifted up the bushel into the air" ZECHARIAH 5



Common European cormorant – Phalacrocorax carbo

CORMORANT AND PELICANS

It's maybe the cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) the SHLaKH not to be eaten in LEV 11 and DEUT 14. In ISAIAH 34 and ZEPHANIAH 2 we find again the cormorant in some of the translations, indicating ruins and abandoned places:

"You too, unfaithful pagans shall be slain by the sword of the LORD. He will stretch out his hand against the north, to destroy Assyria; He will make Nineveh a waste, dry as the desert. In her midst shall settle in droves all the wild life of the hollows; The screech owl [some versions have CORMORANT or PELICAN] and the desert owl shall roost in her columns; Their call shall resound from the window, the raven's croak from the doorway"

Some translations in the different various BIBLE world languages have cormorant (SHLaKH) or pelican (QAAT) instead of owl. Actually some lonely places far from humans are inhabited by cormorants or pelicans. And maybe some old Wadi or oasis in the ancient desert had water enough to give life (food) to these birds.

Always remember that the BIBLE was born as an oral tale, told by generation to generation, before having been written by some writers. This is the main reason why we have different versions.



Glossy ibis – Plegadis falcinellus

IBIS

In some BIBLES YaNSHUF in LEV 11 and DEUT 14 is translated with "ibis". But this seems actually a wrong translation, being the YaNSHUF the eagle owl or the long eared owl. We find anyway the ibis in JOB 38 : "Who puts wisdom in the ibis, and gives the cock its understanding? Who provides nourishment for the ravens when their young ones cry out to GOD, and they rove abroad without food?" Here the ibis is TUHOT from THOT the Egyptian name for it. The "wisdom" of the ibis was supposed from their ability to predict the flood of the Nile river. While the cock (the rooster) was supposed to have the ability to predict the rain.



Sacred ibis – Threskiornis aethiopicus



Stone-curlew – Burhinus oedicnemus – pair quarreling with fox

GULLS

The gull (any kind of gull and probably of charadriiformes) is in the BIBLE too. This is the impure SHaHaF, not clean and then not to be eaten of LEV 11 and DEUT 14 . It was translated by Saint JEROME - HYERONIMUS as "larus". Among charadriiformes, but not mentioned in the BIBLE, there is a bird called stone curlew (*burhinus oedicnemus*). This bird I have seen many times in my life and also took photos and even participated to a long time research made by my local ornithological group: the GOM – GRUPPO ORNITOLOGICO MAREMMANO-. And a small group of stone curlews I have seen in the Negev desert next to an oasis bed and breakfast, to my surprise and joy.



Fox with quarreling herons – Ardea cinerea

HERONS

ANaFaH is the heron. Enlisted in the not edible it has a special feature: its name comes from the verb ANaF which means "to quarrel-to dispute". This means that ancient people saw the herons quarreling, for food or in their nesting colonies, as I saw in my life in ITALY.

As written before (old poor language...) it is obvious that ANaFaH is any kind of herons. In some greek version we have a detail: "nuktikoraka" (night herons).



Common European starling – Sturnus vulgaris – one of the best songbird

NIGHTINGALE

In the SONG OF SONGS, the Holy BIBLE love poetry book, we read:

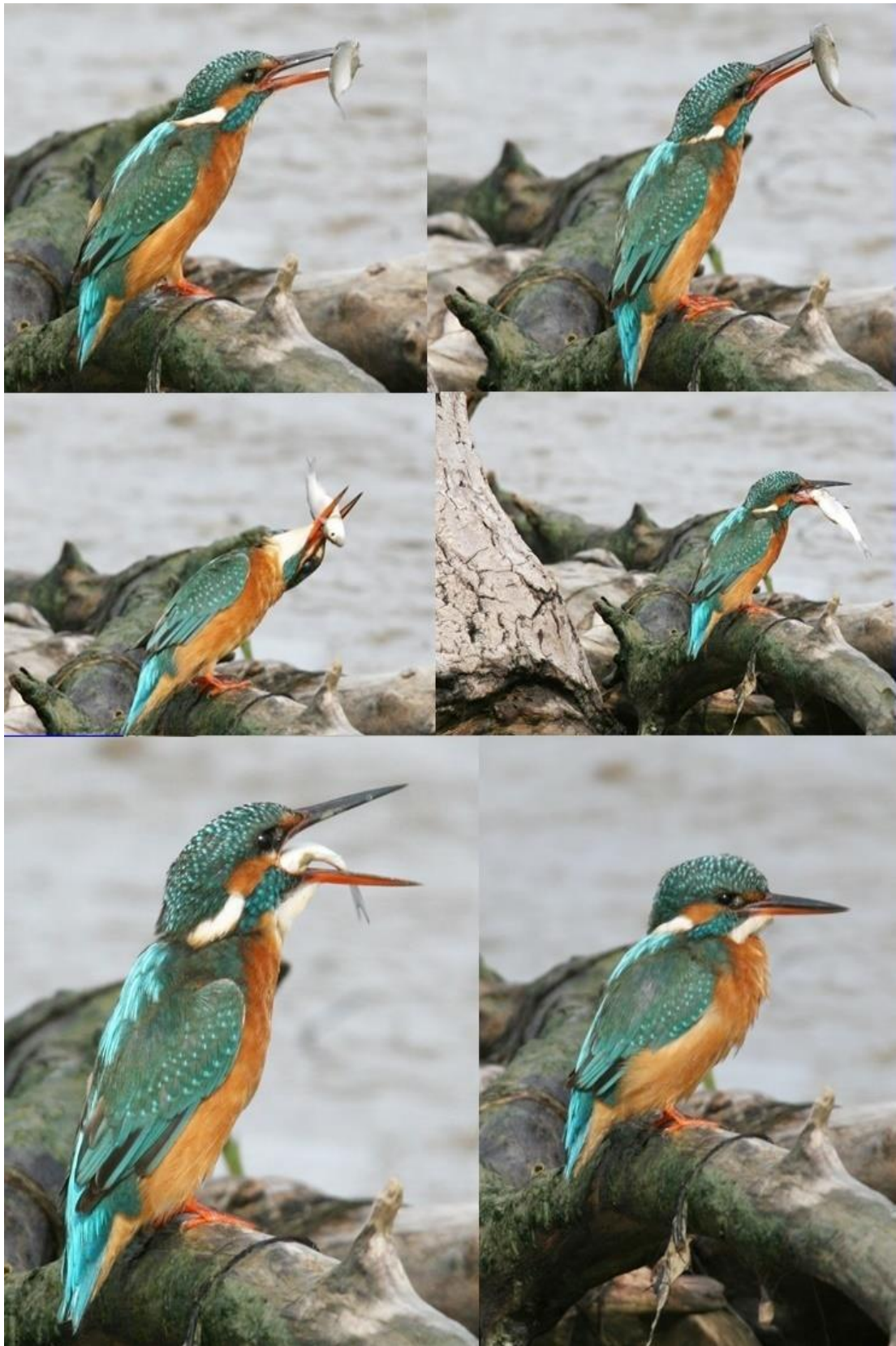
“My lover speaks; he says to me, Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one, and come! For see, the winter is past, the rains are over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of pruning the vines has come, and the song of the dove [NIGHTINGALE] is heard in our land”

Now the same word ZaMIR probably means both “song” and “songbird” (NIGHTINGALE).

So that some interpretations tell us that the BIBLE ZaMIR is not any song, but the nightingale summer song. So this could be a better translation: "Flowers are blooming in the fields and the season of the nightingale has come”

Although the nightingale song is so famous, because of his summer night long songs, surely it is not the best singer among birds. The common starling, for example, a rather depreciated bird, is very much better a singer: it has different songs, it can imitate other birds, its voice is louder and it flutters the wings while singing. This is also the opinion of some experts in bird-songs.





KINGFISHER – EUROPEAN COMMON - *ALCEDO ATTHIS*

KINGFISHERS

SHLaKH, the creature not to be eaten in MOSES laws is maybe a kingfisher. Surely it is a bird which lives next to the waters and catches fishes. In fact has been translated in different editions as: kingfisher, merganser, osprey, cormorant.

I have a wonderful memory about kingfishers of ISRAEL.

The first of them which I saw was a speedy green-light blue arrow flying along an artificial water duct among some desert hot and dry hills. I didn't recognize it at first. Which green and light blue bird would fly along a water channel in the desert? I obviously knew the Italian kingfisher, but that bird was bigger... I was thinking and reflecting about it when I found the solution of the enigma. When I reached the green region of the Galilee lake I saw kingfishers fishing almost everywhere. There were my kingfisher(our Italian small kingfisher), the pied black and white kingfisher and the smirnensis white throated .



Common European nightjar – Caprimulgus europaeus

NIGHTJAR

TaHMaS, the name after BaTHAYa'ANaH (ostrich) in LEV 11 and DEUT 14 has been translated: little owl, little falcon (kestrel, hobby, merlin...) and sometimes "nightjar". A very strange bird. Call like and engine sound. Really big mouth with "moustaches". Absolutely cryptic plumage feathers (invisible when in the nature right place). And other peculiar features. A bird which I saw many times in my places and that you really should know. Take a look on it and a ear in the internet...



A nightjar as you can see it normally , unless you find it resting during daylight



Mute swan – Cygnus olor

SWAN

TiNSHeMeT, another protected bird, is translated sometimes “barn owl” or “swan”. Although they are really so different, they share two features, which made the translators misunderstanding: they both are “white” and they both give an hissing sound when threat.



Coot – Fulica atra – resting coots with wild-boar

COOT

RaHaMaH, always in the famous list of not edible birds, has been also translated “coot”, but surely is the Egyptian vulture. Lost in translation ...



Hoopoe – Upupa epops

HOOPOE

No troubles at all with the hoopoe. DUKIFaT (LEVITICUS 11 – DEUTERONOMY 14) has always been hoopoe: "epops" (Greek text) and "upupa" (latin text). Some birds are so unique, typical, unmistakable that the identification has always been easy and easy will be till the end of the world.

THE GIANT PETREL (*Macronectes giganteus*)

The giant petrel is (or better was) in the BIBLE in a miraculous way. In fact how could ever been interested in eating a giant petrel the people of ISRAEL, being this bird a south pole vagrant?

Yet in some old BIBLE (Italian BIBLEs for sure) we find the giant petrel in the not edible birds lists. [23]

This last bird proves how much has been growing through the centuries our knowledge about animals and natural events. The name giant petrel comes surely from a misunderstanding. I could imagine the poor translator talking to a man of the Holy Land and listening these words: "Yes, it is that bird which grabs bones with its claws and let them fall from height. So that when the bones are broken it can eat the marrow inside of them". The translator coming back to his country (Italy for example) read in some book "OSSIFRAGA" (from OSSA-BONES and FRAGO-TO BREAK): "bones breaker". "Bonesbraker"! Yes, that's it! Surely it is that bird told me by the old man".

While instead, as modern and correct translations show us, that animal is the LAMMERGEYER. The lammergeyer (*gypaetus barbatus*) actually lives and surely lived in the Holy Land and it has habit of dropping bones from height to break them into pieces for eating their marrow.

Ossifraga (*macronectes giganteus*) is the Italian name for Giant petrel ... from "petrel" related to Saint PETER who walked on the waters of Galilee lake



Me and my friends teaching birdwatching to some children





CHAPTER 2 - BIBLE BIRDS ** INTERACTIONS WITH MEN

ORDINARY INTERACTIONS

Being the birds mentioned in the BIBLE so many times, it means that these animals were always abundant in the ISRAEL region and the people had often to do with them since the ages of NOAH and ABRAHAM.

The first and more common interaction between birds and BIBLE people is marked by the natural laws of surviving: **food and nest (alimentation and reproduction)**.

Natural laws, such as animal instinct, make birds fly looking for food, or nest in suitable places (building ruins, houses holes...). So we read a lot of verses about birds feeding, even on human corpses.

- "Do not deliver the soul of your dove to the wild beasts [TO THE KITES]; do not forget the life of your poor forever" PSALM 74

- "When the chief baker saw that JOSEPH had given this favourable interpretation, he said to him: "I too had a dream. In it I had three wicker baskets on my head; in the top one were all kinds of bakery products for Pharaoh, but the birds were pecking at them out of the basket on my head." GENESIS 40

- "And JESUS spoke to them at length in parables, saying: -A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up" MATTHEW 13

- "O Lord GOD," he asked, "How am I to know that I shall possess it?" He answered him, "Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old she-goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon." He brought him all these, split them in two, and placed each half opposite the other; but the birds he did not cut up. Birds of prey swooped down on the carcasses, but Abram stayed with them" GENESIS 15

- "Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather" MATTHEW 24

- "Then I saw an angel standing on the sun. He cried out (in) a loud voice to all the birds flying high overhead, "Come here. Gather for GOD's great feast, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of military officers, and the flesh of warriors, the flesh of horses and of their riders, and the flesh of all, free and slave, small and great." REVELATION - APOCALYPSE 19 [24]



Collared dove – *Streptopelia decaocto* - one of the strangest nest I have never seen

About nesting, we read verses about houses, temples and ruins or isolated building:

- "Then he said, "What is the kingdom of GOD like? To what can I compare it? It is like a mustard seed that a person took and planted in the garden. When it was fully grown, it became a large bush and 'the birds of the sky dwelt in its branches.'" LUKE 13

- "Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young- a place near your altar, LORD Almighty, my King and my GOD" PSALM 84

- "I am like a desert owl, like an owl among the ruins" PSALM 102

- "Wildcats shall rest there and owls shall fill the houses; There ostriches shall dwell, and wild goats shall wander around" ISAIAH 13 [25]



Blackbird – *Turdus merula* – another incredible place for nesting

Another aspect of ordinary interactions between birds and men, related to natural laws, is that of **migration** and **strange events**...

In the book of EXODUS we read about the huge migration of a quails flock, providentially landed among the tents of MOSES people (EXODUS 16) [26]

And some other texts in the books of the PROPHETS:

- "How could I give you up, o EPHRAIM, or deliver you up, ISRAEL? How could I treat you as Admah, or make you like Zeboiim? My heart is overwhelmed, my pity is stirred. I will not give vent to my blazing anger, I will not destroy Ephraim again; For I am GOD and not man, the HOLY ONE present among you; I will not let the flames consume you. They shall follow the LORD, who roars like a lion; When he roars, his sons shall come frightened from the west, out of Egypt they shall come, like sparrows, from the land of Assyria, like doves; And I will resettle them in their homes, says the LORD." HOSEA 11



A little blue-black swallow flying above huge cranes – both European migrating birds

- "Even the stork in the air knows its seasons; Turtledove, swallow and thrush observe their time of return, But my people do not know the ordinance of the LORD" JEREMIAH 8

One of the strange event is written in the book of TOBIT, in chapter 2. It's about birds defecation, making some damage, as we see nowadays in towns because of starlings and pigeons...[\[27\]](#). These facts should teach us that when birds are so abundant and dangerous for human health it is not a sin to control and reduce their populations.

HUNTING AND BREEDING

Edible birds are one of the oldest food for us. All the people around the world have hunted and eaten birds to survive and to live, making through the centuries an artificial selection of most useful species. When JESUS CHRIST walked on this EARTH, birds were caught and sold for eating or to be sacrificed on temples' altars to GOD:

"Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your FATHER's knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly FATHER" MATTHEW 10

Hunt is well known in the BIBLE, since the times of NOAH:

- "Dread fear of you shall come upon all the animals of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon all the creatures that move about on the ground and all the fishes of the sea; into your power they are delivered. Every creature that is alive shall be yours to eat; I give them all to you as I did the green plants" GENESIS 9

MOSES made some of the first hunt control laws, telling which species were not eatable and then not to be hunted (LEVITICUS 11 and DEUTERONOMY 14). MOSES also linked hunting to religion writing a sacred rule (basically about human health) for hunters:

"Anyone hunting, whether of the Israelites or of the aliens residing among them, who catches an animal or a bird that may be eaten, shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth. Since the life of every living body is its blood, I have told the Israelites: You shall not partake of the blood of any meat. Since the life of every living body is its blood" LEVITICUS 17



Red-legged partridge – Alectoris rufa

Also king DAVID was a hunter and he knew what birds were best and most tasting: "The king of ISRAEL has come out to seek a single flea as if he were hunting partridge in the mountains." 1 SAMUEL 26

Game fowls was of great interest for breeding and selling:

"Like fowlers they set traps, but it is men they catch. Their houses are as full of treachery as a bird-cage is of birds" JEREMIAH 5

They used traps and snares, ropes, wires and nets:

"Like a bird that rushes into a snare, unaware that its life is at stake" PROVERBS 7 [28]

About selling and breeding birds, the strongest words are from the GOSPEL, when JESUS tore down all the cages and tables in the sacred temple of Jerusalem:

"Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all those engaged in selling and buying there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves. And he said to them, "It is written: 'My house shall be a house of prayer'" MATTHEW 21



CONTEMPLATION

We may have never hunted birds, but surely we all have at least once looked and get amazed by the most wonderful feature of birds: the flight.

Watching the birds flying and using these images to describe some life situations is a common point of view also in the HOLY BIBLE:

So the flight becomes a metaphor of life itself [29], of GOD powerful salvation [30], of warriors strength [31], of the falling snow[32], of returning sons from exile [33], of other things and most of all the flying bird is a symbol of freedom:

"Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: See! I am coming at those bands of yours in which you entrap men's lives like birds: I will tear them from their arms and set free those you have caught. I will tear off your veils and rescue my people from your power, so that they shall no longer be prey to your hands. Thus you shall know that I am the LORD" EZEKIEL 13

This heavenly liberty is symbolized, prophesied, prophetized by the freedom of the birds since the first man saw a bird flying in the sky:

"I said, "If only I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and find rest." PSALM 54/55

Wisely, the men who wrote the BIBLE, they never forgot the real, objective, material and natural fact of the flight:

- "Bats and swallows fly on their bodies and on their heads; and cats [turn around the idols - statues] as well as birds" BARUCH 6

I am saying that sane and wise people, although they use symbols and metaphors, they don't forget the actual, real, material fact of the existing things which are used as symbols. They can think, see, tell the truth of the animal birds, discerning, recognizing, distinguishing what is objective, true, actual from what has been created, invented by our imagination and sense of poetry [34]



BLISSFUL COMPANY

A place (village, city, town) with no birds or other friendly animals is sad.

Animals (and birds too) could certainly be teasing and dangerous somehow, but, usually, also after having taken the right decisions and reached the right equilibrium, it is for sure that the presence of living creatures around us is pretty interesting and joyful . HOSEA, the prophet of actual love for GOD, to express a great desolation time says:

"Hear the word of the LORD, O people of ISRAEL, for the LORD has a grievance against the inhabitants of the land: There is no fidelity, no mercy, no knowledge of GOD in the land. False swearing, lying, murder, stealing and adultery! in their lawlessness, bloodshed follows bloodshed. Therefore the land mourns, and everything that dwells in it languishes: The beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and even the fish of the sea perish" HOSEA 4 [35]

In the SONG OF SONGS to express the joy of love :

"My lover speaks; he says to me, Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one, and come! For see, the winter is past, the rains are over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of pruning the vines has come, and the song of the dove [NIGHTINGALE] is heard in our land"

In this way, in the old times, the holy people of the HOLY BIBLE "enjoyed and had recreations with the birds of heavens"[36] and were delighted by "the melodious song of birds in the spreading branches" [37]



SACRIFICES

The first man of the BIBLE who celebrated a sacrifice using birds to glorify GOD is NOAH. NOAH (his name means "CONSOLATION" or "CONSOLER") after he came down from the Ark he "built an altar to the LORD, and choosing from every clean animal and every clean bird, he offered holocausts on the altar" GENESIS 8.

Before CHRIST the animals were sacrificed to GOD if they were beautiful, good, worthy to be offered to a GOD [38] The sacrifices belong to BIBLE (human!!!) spirituality and religion. The sacrifices express our adoration, union with GOD, expiation and they are related to natural and ordinary symbols and actions: the bread, the wine, the oil, the blood, the food, the gift, the offer, the renounce, the ask of forgiveness, the joy for the good harvest [39]

One of the main thought at the origin of the idea of sacrifice was this: GOD has given so much to me, to us, (life and everything else), so what could I give to GOD to express my love and gratitude? EUCHARIST in Greek means exactly this: act of thanksgiving.

Another thought, feeling, was this: what could I give, sacrifice, to GOD to be forgiven for my sins (to "expiate", to have my bad actions forgiven, deleted, forgotten) ?

EUCHARIST is also this: when a catholic priest celebrates the holy mass, in a mysterious way he renews to GOD the FATHER the unique, unreproducible, eternal sacrifice offered by JESUS CHRIST on the cross. The saints tell us that only one drop of the blood of JESUS CHRIST is enough to forgive and save every soul (if repented for their sins), because JESUS is not only a man, but he is the eternal SON of GOD (which means that HE LIVED, HE EXISTED, HE WAS right before the creation of the universe - "Before the existing of Abraham I WAS" JESUS says in the GOSPEL of SAINT JOHN chapter 8, one of the most revealing verses of the whole BIBLE).

That's why JESUS CHRIST tell us : "I AM YOUR SACRIFICE" - "THIS IS MY BLOOD GIVEN FOR YOU AND FOR ALL , FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF ALL YOUR SINS" - "BELIEVE IN ME AND YOU WILL BE SAVED".

But before CHRIST they used to sacrifice animals (and birds too).

Old sacrifices had three meanings: the holocaust ("all is burned" - so all the body of the animal is "given" to GOD to express adoration and submission), the communion sacrifice (half given to GOD and half eaten by the people offering the animal to express the will and desire of union and communion with GOD and with our brothers), the expiatory sacrifice ("the expiatory goat-scapegoat" - a "bad" animal upon which were sent

all the curses and sins, sent into the desert to die far away from the tents, to take away from the people every bad sins, thought and feeling, in order to not be punished by GOD).

The old sacrifices could be based upon blood (killing and offering living animals) or peaceful (offering fruits of the soil, such as bread or wine) . The offering things were brought to the temple proportionally to the richness of the people: rich people gave cows and bulls, middle class offered sheep and goats, poor people doves and pigeons and the lowest miserable people ("those who you have to be merciful with and help as you can") gave to the temple small handful of flour or some sparrows.

MARY and JOSEPH, being poor, for the presentation of their child to the temple (the circumcision) they offered two doves [40]

Religious rituals and liturgies and celebrations of old ISRAEL people are described in the book of LEVITICUS [41]

We all thank JESUS CHRIST for having set us free from all this bloody tradition. When he set in the heart and mind of human history the HOLY SACRAMENT of the EUCHARIST, he sent to us the idea, the invention, the most brilliant of human history. Focusing the attention of the whole world towards the bread and wine, JESUS converted humanity from blood to peace, from sacrifice to mercy, from separation to love. JESUS, being a man, has a human mind, like all of us: animated, enlightened by his human soul and by his Being the eternal Son of GOD. Jesus is a unique Person, that now, today, is risen and alive. His wisdom shines in the way he deals with people, in his words, his actions and above all in the EUCHARIST.

In the beginning JESUS threw literally away the animals' sacrifices, because they had become purpose of injustice and money business instead of religion [42], and then he started the new, unique and everlasting way of sacrifice, really wanted by GOD: that of bread and wine. [43]



Swallow - Hirundo rustica - visiting its Creator

PROVIDENCE

If we consider the relationships among birds and men in the BIBLE, we must think about an event which is extraordinary and full of deep and love meaning: the PROVIDENCE. When we talk about PROVIDENCE ("Providence is the rule of GOD in this world" - Providence is what GOD makes happen in this world directly by HIMSELF or indirectly by using everything else) and birds we say: the quails of MOSES, [44], the crows (or ravens) of ELIJAH [45], the swallows of TOBIT [46]

We talk about PROVIDENCE when we are speaking about all those facts, events, interactions caused by HOLY GRACE (the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, whose name is female RUAH KADUSHA' in the original Hebrew

language and so in the original Aramaic words used by the CHRIST), WHO, by being everywhere, pervading all this universe, permeating all this space time in where we live, moves every creature SHE wants in order to do HER will [47]

JESUS CHRIST himself was involved in such HOLY GRACE' s PROVIDENCE event, when GOD chose a turtle dove to show the existence and presence of the HOLY GHOST above his beloved SON [48]



Lesser grey shrike – Lanius minor – Providentially standing close to wind-energy



PROVIDENCE will and action : a bright future for humankind and for birds

CHAPTER 3 BIBLE BIRDS *** ICONS, METAPHORS, PARABLES

Our language was born and was shaped in a human context. Life shapes the language, and language shapes life. Today we use in our common speech some words related to the computer and informatics world, which are common technologies of our lives. In the same way people who lived before us used words related to their common life facts and environment.

The new words which are most clear, simple and meaningful enter in the universal language and last generation after generation.

The BIBLE environment : the context is that of people living in close and direct contact with creation, with nature, with natural creatures. That's why obviously we have many texts using the birds while speaking about human things.



GOD

The main message of the HOLY BIBLE is this :

GOD IS - GOD EXISTS - GOD LOVES US - GOD IS OUR FATHER

GOD does exist and GOD is the best of all fathers, to all who choose and want to know him and to love him [***ROMANS 8.28 ***]. So the main obstacle against religion and faith is idolatry [49]

All the prophets and apostles sent words of fire and destruction against idolatry, by condemning the idols of their age [50] About false idols the BIBLE says :

"For like a scarecrow in a cucumber patch, that is no protection, are their wooden, silvered gods. Just like a thorn-bush in a garden on which perches every kind of bird, or like a corpse hurled into darkness, are their silvered and gilded wooden gods. From the rotting of the purple and the linen upon them, it can be known that they are not gods; they themselves will in the end be consumed, and be a disgrace in the land. The better for the just man who has no idols: he shall be far from disgrace!" BARUCH 6

When put in front of GOD, the people who follow false idols are like those sons described by the prophet JEREMIAH:

"Even the stork in the air knows its seasons; Turtledove, swallow and thrush (or swift) observe their time of return, But my people do not know the ordinance of the LORD" JEREMIAH 8



Song-thrush – Turdus philomelos

GOD ' s love is infinitely much larger than our human love. Because GOD has created every soul. Every single soul of every single human being, has been created from nothing by GOD in the moment of the human body conception (when the zygotes takes form from the two mother and father cells and a new life begins).

So GOD is really, actually, exactly our FATHER. It is not something we say for saying. And because GOD our FATHER loves all his sons (saints and sinners), He sowed in this world his words (His KINGDOM of HEAVEN), like a man who is sowing his good seeds in the land, knowing that the good land (good people) is much more than the bad (evil people), so the holy words will produced a lot of holy fruits:

" And he spoke to them at length in parables saying: -A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirty-fold. Whoever has ears ought to hear." The disciples approached him and said, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" He said to them in reply, "Because knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven has been granted to you, but to them it has not been granted. To anyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; from anyone who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because 'they look but do not see and hear but do not listen or understand.' Isaiah 's prophecy is fulfilled in them, which says: 'You shall indeed hear but not understand you shall indeed look but never see. Gross is the heart of this people, they will hardly hear with their ears, they have closed their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and be converted, and I heal them.' "But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear. Amen, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it. Hear then the parable of the sower. The seed sown on the path is the one who hears the word of the kingdom without understanding it, and the evil one comes and steals away what was sown in his heart. The seed sown on rocky ground is the one who hears the word and receives it at once with joy. But he has no root and lasts only for a time. When some tribulation or persecution comes because of the word, he immediately falls away. The seed sown among thorns is the one who hears the word, but then worldly anxiety and the lure of riches choke the word and it bears no fruit. But the seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirty-fold." MATTHEW 13

Why GOD wanted to talk to us ? Because **GOD wants us to participate to HIS own eternal life, HIS own glory, HIS own heavenly joy, so that we say:**

"In the shadow of Your wings I sing for joy" PSALMS 16, 61, 63

Some people think GOD does not exist, some people think GOD does not care about us, some people may even think GOD is our enemy. But the real truth is that GOD exists, GOD always takes care of us, GOD is the PERSON who loves us more than everyone else, even immeasurably much more than our parents. And everything in this world is in HIS hands (like the song: "He got the whole world in his hands...") and whenever HE wants, GOD uses everything to help us and to lead us to the highest and greatest happiness. This I experienced so many times, and that's why I believe it, I know it for sure. And I wish you may experience the same.

"Like hovering birds, so the LORD of the universe shall shield you, protect and deliver, spare and rescue" ISAIAH 31



For those who have faith it is clear and experienced that the FATHER (JESUS called HIM "DADDY" as a child, as a beloved son), the CREATOR bless our lives for the happiness of the soul and of the body (spiritually and materially):

"Praise the LORD, my soul, and not forget all the good things HE had done for you, GOD who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's" PSALM 102/103) and "Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength, they will soar as with eagles' wings; They will run and not grow weary, walk and not grow faint" ISAIAH 40 [51]

I imagine GOD like a FATHER, who is waiting for the unmeasurable flying flock of his children:

- "What are these that fly along like clouds, like doves to their cotes ? All the vessels of the sea are assembled, with the ships of Tarsis in the lead, To bring your children from faraway with their silver and gold, In the name of the LORD, your GOD, the HOLY ONE of ISRAEL, who has glorified you" ISAIAH 60

The relationship between GOD and us includes also the divine omniscience:

- "Even in your thoughts do not make light of the LORD, because the angels, like the birds of the air may carry your voice, a winged creature may tell what you say" ECCLESIASTES 10



HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

The BIBLE not only speaks about GOD and men, but also about the relations among human beings. Here we write only the words with birds metaphors. Thus : some good advice to young people to avoid the traps in their life [52], communications about how to maintain friends[53], on how to deal with material goods [54], about how to keep on, continue in the right decisions[55], how to speak wisely[56], about how much is really worth being faithful, honest, loyal [57]

The BIBLE (GOD) tells us that good people will live a good life while the evil ones will disappear, because:

- "Every living thing loves its own kind, every man a man like himself" SIRACH 13

Situations of fighting, persecution, war are described with birds allegories too:

- "They have hunted me like if they were hunting partridges in the mountains." 1 SAMUEL 26

- "We escaped like a bird from a hunter's trap. The trap is broken, and we are free!" PSALM 123/124



JOY AND SORROW

In chapter 2, writing about the "blissful company", I have already told how much the flying and singing birds were signs and reasons of joy for the people of the SACRED TEXT.

Now let's see how birds become metaphors of human pain, suffering. Let's start with EZEKIJAH, one of the few holy kings of ISRAEL [\[58\]](#), which, being ill, prays to GOD who heals him:

- "Like a swallow I utter shrill cries; I moan like a dove." ISAIAH 38

MIKAJAH too, the prophet, crying for his wasted people (a ruin caused by the idolatry) says:

- "I utter lamentation like the jackals, and mourning like the ostriches" MIKAJAH 1

MIKAJAH become the consciousness and the voice of ISRAEL calling for repent and conversion to the LORD:

- "Make yourself bald, pluck out your hair, for the children whom you cherish; Let your baldness be as the eagle's, because they are exiled from you" MIKAJAH 1

Desolation and sadness are expressed with birds images in the PSALMS too:

- "I resemble a pelican of the wilderness; I have become like an owl of the waste places. I lie awake; I have become like a bird alone on a roof" PSALM 101/102



NATURAL PHENOMENA

The HOLY BIBLE is often poetry. And in poetry we often find birds, as in the world narrative and writings [\[59\]](#) Poetry springs out from SACRED TEXTS when the authors contemplate the natural phenomena like snow and sky changings:

- "GOD sprinkles the snow like fluttering birds" SIRACH 43

- "At it the storehouse is opened, and like vultures the clouds hurry forth" SIRACH 43



A sort of common and little EAGLE of Europe countries – BUTEO BUTEO

THE EAGLE

Among all the birds species, there is one bird that always left a particular impressive effect on men: the eagle. Legends, stories, tales, symbols, metaphors, flags, emblems, allegories ... I don't want here to spend my time in such a huge matter, neither I want to explain the details for which the eagle is so famous, being those reasons evident for those people who know the birds of prey. Here I am writing my thoughts about

the SACRED TEXTS, which, although is a religious book, speaks of the eagle very much more than any other bird. Only maybe the dove is remembered so frequently in the BIBLE.

First of all the eagle is named among the not edible (and then not to hunt for) animals. These animals must not either be killed or sacrificed to GOD (LEVITICUS 11 and DEUTERONOMY 14).

The eagle is a powerful being and so it is perfect symbol of a vigorous health full of energy:

- " Praise the LORD, my soul, and not forget all the good things HE had done for you, GOD who always heals you and satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's" (PSALM 102/103),

- *"Those who* hope in the LORD will renew their strength, they will soar as with eagles' wings; They will run and not grow weary, walk and not grow faint" (ISAIAH 40).

The eagle also is, like in all the traditions of the nations, a fighting, army symbol, used to express the speed and the power of the warriors:

- " Swifter than leopards are his horses, and keener than wolves at evening. His horses prance, his horsemen come from afar: They fly like the eagle hastening to devour; each comes for the rapine, Their combined onset is that of a storm-wind that heaps up captives like sand" (HABAKKUK 1).

- " Your followers [pursuers] were swifter than eagles in the air" LAMENTATIONS 4

- "Saul and Jonathan, beloved and cherished, separated neither in life nor in death, swifter than eagles, stronger than lions!" 2 SAMUEL 1

The eagle is a symbol not only of human power, but also of GOD ' s power, that sometimes acts, interacts in human history to punish, hit, strike the evil ones:

- "See! like an eagle GOD soars aloft, and spreads his wings over the enemies of His people" JEREMIAH 49

No-one can escape or hide from the judgment of GOD, as the prophet says when he threatens the arrogant and proud: - "Though you build your nest high as the eagle, from there I will drag you down, says the LORD" JEREMIAH 49

The eagle is not only the raptor most powerful, it is also the one flying higher and spending more time soaring and gliding to observe. This is why the eagle is a symbol of the contemplative people, persons who look at the world and find the meaning, the sense of reality. In the CHURCH the eagle become the symbol of Saint JOHN, the apostle who wrote the most theological and mystical gospel. Saint JOHN himself mentions the eagle when he describes the four beings who are around GOD in adoration:

- In my visions I saw "Four living creatures covered with eyes in front and in back. The first creature resembled a lion, the second was like a calf [ox – bull] , the third had a face like that of a human being, and the fourth looked like an eagle in flight" APOCALYPSE – REVELATION 4

Saint JOHN recalls this vision from the prophecies of EZEKIEL, about man, lion, bull and eagle [60]



CHAPTER 4 BIBLE BIRDS ***** THE CREATOR

One of the truth that the HOLY BIBLE tells us is that every existing thing has been in the origins created by GOD:

- "Son, have pity on me, who carried you in my womb for nine months, nursed you for three years, brought you up, educated and supported you to your present age. I beg you, child, to look at the heavens and the earth and see all that is in them; then you will know that GOD did not make them out of existing things; and in the same way the human race came into existence" 2 MACCABEES 7 [61]

In the BOOK of GENESIS we read the creation described with a process which has more or less the same steps supposed by the scientists: light (energy), sky (universe), earth (planets), sea (waters of the planets), grass (algae and soil plants), fishes (water living organisms), birds, terrestrial animals, MAN.

The last creature wanted by GOD is the man: the most new in chronological order and the most complete in ontological order. The human being has been created in GOD 's image [62].

The human being is then ontologically superior to minerals, to flora and to animal fauna. Because of this "EVERY MAN IS A KING" [63] and "EVERYTHING HAS BEEN CREATED FOR YOU" PSALM 119,91 [64]

Every plant, grass and animal are given to us, to be used according to our true needs, and first of all as food:

"All the animals of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon all the creatures that move about on the ground and all the fishes of the sea; into your power they are delivered. Every creature that is alive shall be yours to eat; I give them all to you as I did the green plants" GENESIS 9

This ontological inferiority of flora and fauna is underlined and emphasized also by JESUS CHRIST when he speaks to Saint PETER:

- "The next day, while they were on their way and nearing the city, Peter went up to the roof terrace to pray at about noontime. He was hungry and wished to eat, and while they were making preparations he fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened and something resembling a large sheet coming down, lowered to the ground by its four corners. In it were all the earth's four-legged animals and reptiles and the birds of the sky. A voice said to him, "Get up, Peter. Slaughter and eat." But Peter said, "Certainly not, sir. For never have I eaten anything profane and unclean." The voice spoke to him again, a second time, "What GOD has made clean, you are not to call profane." This happened three times, and then the object was taken up into the sky". ACTS OF APOSTLES 10

So, the first birds were created by GOD. During millions of years, the birds species were moulded and shaped by an interior, organic factor (the natural selection related to DNA and genetics) and by an exterior, transcendent factor (the work of GRACE and PROVIDENCE) [65]

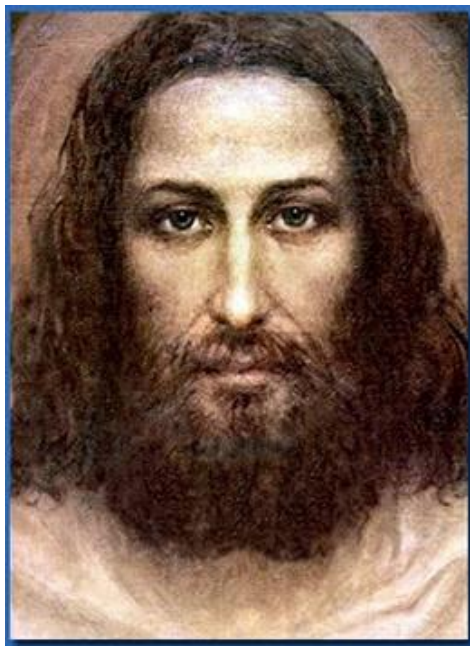




A buzzard found trapped, then well-fed, showed to the children and then let fly free

NOAH SAVES THE ANIMALS

The old story of the Ark is very well known. NOAH built a huge ship, let into the ship many pairs of animals and let them free when the flood was over. NOAH made a wise thing, because without animals neither our life would be so easy. But NOAH never considered the animals as gods, as idols. Inspired by GOD, he thinks and sees that animals are useful for the men, and he saves the animals because of their usefulness. NOAH is never an idolater. No way. Not even a small track of idolatry in him. That's why, after the flood, when the new life had become, NOAH took some pure animals and sacrificed them for glorifying and thanksgiving GOD because he had survived the flood. [66]



JESUS CHRIST

In theology there is a rule which says: *Omnia ad extra communia*. That is: everything the HOLY TRINITY does outside GOD, in the space-time universe, is done at the same time by the FATHER, the SON and the HOLY GHOST, in a total, complete *unum*, union, unity, communion, together.

When we say GOD created something, it means that the FATHER, the SON and the HOLY GHOST created something together.

So, if I say that GOD created the birds, it means that actually JESUS [being at the same time a true man and true GOD - JESUS CHRIST is a true mystery...] created the birds.

So, let everybody who likes and loves the birds and the birdwatching praise and thank JESUS CHRIST !!!

In the GOSPEL, as I wrote before, JESUS deals with birds some times. When he was circumcised (an 8 days child), his parents, MARY and JOSEPH, being poor, offered to the temple, as a sacrifice, a pair of doves or pigeons [67]

When he was about 30 years old, JESUS went to receive the baptism through the water by Saint JOHN, and the HOLY SPIRIT showed his presence by using a dove flying above JESUS [68]

After the baptism JESUS went into the desert to pray and fast. And while he is praying and fasting, the angels and the birds (and also other desert animals) stay around him [69] .

In the end, before going powerfully through his Passover [70], JESUS enters into the huge courtyard of Jerusalem temple and drives out all the merchants and money-changers and overturns the tables covered by the cages of birds [71]

And not only in his life JESUS deals with real birds, also in his speeches he mentions the birds eight times:

- "Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly FATHER feeds them. Are not you more important than they?" MATTHEW 6

- "Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head" MATTHEW 8

- "*Friends*, be shrewd as serpents and simple as doves" MATTHEW 10

- "Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your FATHER's knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows" MATTHEW 10

- "JESUS spoke to them at length in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirty-fold. Whoever has ears ought to hear." MATTHEW 13

- "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the 'birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches.'" MATTHEW 13

- "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who killed the prophets and stoned those sent to you, how many times I yearned to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her young under her wings, but you were unwilling! Behold, your house will be abandoned and desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.'" MATTHEW 23

- "Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather" MATTHEW 24



GOD - TRINITY ICON – JESUS and FATHER and DIVINE HOLY GRACE

DIVINE HOLY GRACE

"GRACE" is a name for the HOLY SPIRIT [\[72\]](#) In the BIBLE, SHE (original name for Holy Spirit is "Ruah Kadushà" feminine) manifests HERSELF by using especially: the wind, the light, the rain, the fire, the oil and the dove.

Among all the animals, HOLY GRACE (infinite, almighty, eternal GOD) did choose the dove to show HERSELF during the unique and glorious time of the earthly life of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. [\[73\]](#)

Why? The dove is a familiar, meek, docile, good bird [At least this is the way most of the people think at the dove, while the ornithologists know...]. The dove is a lovable and peaceful creature, inspiring sweet and peaceful feelings. Nevertheless the dove is the world symbol for peace. In the BIBLE the dove is present since the beginning, since the great flood ended and NOAH reborn to a new life with his family. The dove is used a national symbol for the whole nation of ISRAEL [\[74\]](#) This is why HOLY GRACE has chosen the dove.

THE CREATURES PRAISE THEIR CREATOR

The dove appearing above JESUS during his baptism in the Jordan river, is not only a sign of the living presence inside JESUS of the HOLY GRACE, but it is also a praise that the dove gives to his LORD. That turtle dove is telling: - I am a dove. You have created me. You have made me. And because of this I thank you-. It is like as the bird is saying – My GOD I love you -

In the HOLY BIBLE we read many times that the creation rejoices for the fact of existing and creatures loves the ONE who gave them the existence:

- "Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights above. Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts
Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars.
Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies
Let them praise the name of the LORD, for at his command they were created,
and he established them for ever and ever— he issued a decree that will never pass away.
Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths,
lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding,
you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars,
wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds.." PSALM 148

Also the animals join in to this cosmic praise to GOD:

-"Wild beasts honour me, jackals and ostriches, For I put water in the desert and rivers in the wasteland for my chosen people to drink, The people whom I formed for myself, that they might announce my praise" ISAIAH 43

The deep sense of these words is that there is an intimate interaction between GOD and his creation. This relationship is due to the HOLY GRACE - HOLY SPIRIT of GOD who is omnipresent, and at the same time immanent and transcendent [\[75\]](#) . To express this truth Saint PAUL says:

-"For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of GOD; for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it, in hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of GOD" ROMANS 8

In the BOOK of WISDOM we read the material consequences of this. For the righteous, the holy ones and the good people, the universe and the creatures are friendly and docile servants, while for the evil ones, the bad people, the enemies of GOD the universe is like an angel who punish to convert the souls to HEAVEN :

-"For your creation, serving you, its CREATOR, grows tense for punishment against the wicked, but is relaxed in benefit for those who trust in you" WISDOM 16



European common cranes flying across the moon during migration time



Red-footed falcon meeting Roller

CONCLUSION

I have been looking at the birds (not always of course and not every day and everywhere) for about 35 years. Now it is 2017 and I began in the 1980ies.

I think that the birdwatching is actually one of the least (but anyway good) fruit of the GOSPEL prophecies. The words of JESUS CHRIST [76], being them words of GOD, have guided, shaped, determined the human behaviors, activities. In fact when GOD speaks HE modifies, changes the reality, because GOD ' s words are also deeds, actions, SPIRIT that shapes the world. And this change, this modification, this shaping action is happening since the beginning in two ways: a direct, conscious, aware way and in an indirect, unconscious, unaware way. This second way is something mystical and very few people understand what I am saying... It is something somewhat similar to a FATHER who is guiding his little child (or children) without their aware and conscious participation. It is like in the GOSPEL words "The greatest in Heaven are those who are the most docile to the HOLY GRACE". MATTHEW 18.4But we are about birds now, so ...

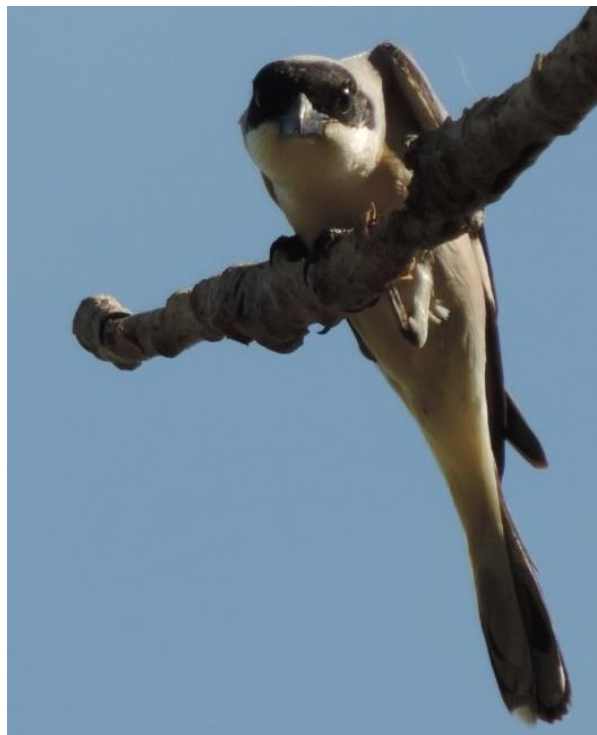
What is the highest and greatest way of birdwatching ?

I believe that this human activity (hobby, sport, interest...) that we call the birdwatching has its higher, greater and more noble expression when a man look at the birds with these feelings, this spirit, these attitudes as a part of him (simply, spontaneously, naturally) :



WONDER

A true birder is a man that, even tens of years after he has been observing the birds, does not depreciate what he sees, does not consider them as useless and indifferent. Yet when he looks at the creation and at flying creatures, he receives them as a gift, and he wonders for their perfection, beauty, efficiency. Amusement and gratitude.





KNOWLEDGE

The BIBLE says: “I KNOW EVERY BIRD OF THE SKY” (PSALM 50,11). Now, It is almost impossible to know every birds species of the world and to recognize them when you see them. But a good birder knows the species living in his region and is able to recognize them. And he also knows the main features of the birds of his land.





GENESIS

A holy birdwatching feature is the knowledge of the origins. While looking at the birds, he knows that *aves* are an animal *class* shaped by an evolution guided by the CREATOR. In millions of years the first flying dinosaur has been split into our 10.000 species of birds. It's about, it is concerning in viewing in the feather and the plume the result of an amazing process which has lasted a very very long time and so it is worthy of a special regard.

LOVE

The last and eternal criterion of judgment of every human life is love. It is the quality of his love. What will last forever of a man is most of all his true love and the things he had done and given for love. The birder who last forever is the birder full of charity.

A man who even when he watches the birds he loves. What and who he loves? First of all he loves GOD, the CREATOR and SHAPER of all birds species. First of all he loves the HOLY TRINITY, who made and shaped these wonderful creatures through the ages.

With the same love, he loves the humankind, because this love called CHARITY-CARITAS is one and same love, as said Saint AUGUSTINE [\[77\]](#).

So that while observing the birds, he loves also all the creatures made by GOD, of which we, the human beings (the only creatures who have a spiritual and immortal soul), will live forever.

A christian birder loves his fellows birders as friends and brothers. Friendship, brotherly love, kindness, sympathy, generosity, help, listening... the common attitudes and behaviors of friendly people. These are the features of a christian, holy birder. And he loves also the future generations. He is aware of the environment ecological issues, questions and solutions and he behave in the right way.



FAITH

Faith is in its heart the relationship with GOD. To have faith means to have some kind of relationship with GOD, which is different in quality and intensity from people to people. The stronger and bigger this relation is, the stronger and bigger is your faith. A christian birder is a man who keep praying (staying, living, talking with GOD) also when he is watching, contemplating, observing the birds. Birdwatching with faith means birdwatching with GOD [78]

THE PRAISE

Because of our faith we have love for GOD. A higher and holy birdwatching lead to praise the LORD. Obviously not always in the same way and with the same intensity, but usually, when we contemplate the perfection and wonder of the *aves*, a SPIRIT OF PRAISE springs out from our heart. How could we not praise the ONE who created and shaped these marvellous creatures, and HIS wisdom, HIS skill, HIS love ? [79]



FREEDOM

Eskatòn is a greek word which means “the last thing”. The GOSPEL says that at the end of every human life (mine, yours) there is something that will fulfil our seek for freedom. In the afterlife there is a higher and better quality of living. A new life prepared for us (JESUS says : “There are plenty of places prepared for you in HEAVEN”), without any fear, any suffering, any evil for ever.

“Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against your magic spells [ties-charms-bands] with which you ensnare people [you hunt the souls] like birds and I will tear them from your arms; I will set free the people that you ensnare like birds. I will let the souls whom you hunt go free, free souls like birds. I will tear off your veils and rescue my people from your power, so that they shall no longer be prey to your hands. Thus you shall know that I am the LORD” [80]

This heavenly liberty is symbolized, prophesied, prophetized by the freedom of the birds since the first man saw a bird flying in the sky: "I say - I wish I had wings like a dove ! I would fly away and settle in a safe place and rest in bliss ! Far away from the troubles and miseries of life !" PSALM 55 A mature birdwatcher is a new and free man, who has about freedom a right, true, good idea [81]



THE SIGN

When the prophet ELIJAH was alone and lost in the desert, GOD sent to him some crows to bring him some food, but those birds were most of all a material sign of GOD ' s love for him. By those crows GOD was telling to ELIJAH : "I AM HERE - I LOVE YOU MY SON" . When Saint FRANCIS from ASSISI arrived in La Verna mountain, the birds of the forest gathered close to him in a joyful singing chorus. By those singing happiness GOD was saying to FRANCESCO : "I AM HERE - I LOVE YOU MY SON" .

Well, it happens... It happened and it happens to many people and it could happen to you too that PROVIDENCE (GOD) would decide to give you, by using the birds, a material sign of HIS existence, HIS presence, HIS love for you (because always remember that you too are a son of GOD, because GOD created your soul).

If this will happen, and I pray GOD to let it happen to you at least once in your life, the good and holy part of you will grow and HOLY GRACE will carry you to further revelations, to deeper and higher truth, and this short text will be just a useful step for the beginning of your personal friendship with our CREATOR.

As for me, it was one of the strongest sign of PROVIDENCE to see and shot this photo about a Curlew (Numenius arquata) on the great feast of JESUS CHRIST KING of the UNIVERSE. I had desired for months to see this bird very nearly and to see its open wings and to take a nice photo of it. And in just one second, during my long walk around the river mouth, where the river flows into the sea, the curlew came out right next to me and flew away, and wonderfully, amazingly, absolutely providentially I took one of my best photo.



A PROPHECY

There is a relationship among natural events and human behaviours.

When the majority of humankind will be righteous, good, holy (filled with the HOLY GRACE) natural extreme events will stop. Those catastrophic natural phenomena will never happen again when most of us will be in state of grace.

The whole creation and all the creatures will be instead a continuous blessing for all the people.





THE ROBIN

Usually those people who go birdwatching (or birding) have some favourite species. These birds may change through life time. Some people not only have some preferred species, but they also have some symbolic birds about themselves. About me, if I have to choose a bird as a symbol of mine I would choose the robin [*erithacus rubecula*]. Having that “red” breast it reminds me those who are in love. IN LOVE WITH GOD



FOOT NOTES

[1] "Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span? Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was clothed like one of them. If GOD so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? So do not worry and say, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to wear?' All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom (of GOD) and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself." MATTHEW 6

[2] If you desire a more detailed and large research and knowledge about BIBLE BIRDS SPECIES look for ORNITHOLOGICAL TEXTS about HOLY LAND and MIDDLE EAST BIRDING.

[3] Birds classification is a not totally ended and closed question till now (2017). There are about 10.000 species of birds, which during the centuries have been classified more and more precisely. Recently the DNA science has shown us how to use a new classification factor, by enlightening some common origins of bird families belonging to the same order and excluding other species from their old orders.

[4] The many species of birds had been shaped through the centuries by a process well known as "natural selection". This process is based upon the fact that one pair of animals generates many individuals, different from each other, and the most adapt to the environment where they live survive and generate creatures with similar features.

This explanation has to be completed with GOD factor.

It is impossible and illogical that GOD, the ONE WHO created all these beings, all this universe, had been stayed out of HIS creation during the ages. For two reasons: one ontological cosmic reason and one ontological relationship reason.

That is: First reason: the space-time cosmos-universe subsists IN GOD (WISDOM 1,7 – ACTS OF APOSTLES 17,28 - COLOSSIANS 1,17). Every single material atom particle or wave is plunged, immersed, dipped, penetrated, stays inside the omnipresent, immanent and transcendental HOLY SPIRIT of GOD. It is like the old song "HE GOT THE WHOLE WORLD IN HIS HANDS". All the bodies, all the creatures, the whole cosmos ... everything could not be, could not exist without the immanent PRESENCE – SHEKINAH of the ETERNAL BEING.

The HOLY BIBLE says that without GOD the whole universe would collapse, implode, vanish.. (JOB 34,14). Second reason:

GOD IS LOVE and that's why GOD loves HIS creation and HIS creatures. (1 LETTER of ST. JOHN 4,8).

The many and faithful experiences of all the saints tell us that this presence of GOD in this world-universe-cosmos (the HOLY GRACE-HOLY SPIRIT pervades also your body, your soul, your electronic device on which you are reading these words and the air and everything around you) and they also tell us that GOD's love for us and for all the creatures becomes clear, evident, explicit with the events we call "miracles". Miracles, supernatural healings and all the other GOD epiphanies are simply modifications of waves, particles, atoms, cells, conditions (the physical matter) from inside. Because of the HOLY SPIRIT residing inside everything.

Some of the names-features of the HOLY SPIRIT are these: Former, Shaper, Moulder, Perfecter, Completer... Which names you can also think and mean in a female way, being the original BIBLE term for the HOLY SPIRIT, in the same language chosen and spoken by JESUS CHRIST, "RUAH KADUSHA", which is a feminine name (RUAH – SPIRIT is female in Aramaic language).

So HOLY SPIRIT may also be told HOLY GRACE with a female accent, being the THIRD DIVINE PERSON absolutely spiritual, without a male or female body. About this new horizons you could read some words of Saint Maximilian Kolbe, Saint Edith Stein and others who wrote that like JESUS is the true icon of GOD the FATHER, so MARY, the mother of JESUS, the Immaculate Blessed and Virgin, is in a certain way an icon of HOLY GRACE-HOLY SPIRIT.

But, returning to the relationship between GOD and evolution of species:

as everything has been created with a goal, a destination (COLOSSIANS 1, 15-17), having well hold in mind the two reasons above (immanent and transcendent continuous omnipresence of GOD and GOD's love for HIS creation), so it is logical and necessary that GOD was never (or "is never" - being GOD out of space and time...) outside, external, far from the formation of new species.

The BIBLE says something about "The hands of GOD which have shaped us" and of "an Earth "shaped for the goal to be a life-house" .

Conclusion: the variety of species has been decided, intended, wanted and done by GOD. GOD shaped the many species through the ages.

How ? By HOLY GRACE and by PROVIDENCE. HOLY GRACE is the THIRD DIVINE PERSON (the HOLY SPIRIT) and PROVIDENCE is the rule of GOD on this world.

PROVIDENCE is everything GOD does in this universe, everything happening in human history which is not only a consequence of other events and natural facts: the autonomous and independent natural laws (such as the gravity law), the human will (our decisions when not inspired by the HOLY GRACE), the evil one (the devil, from which we are protected, shielded, by the LORD JESUS CHRIST if we ask HIM to, as is written by Saint Paul apostle in 2 THESSALONIANS 3.3 "Remember that the LORD our GOD is faithful and will protect you from the evil one").

[5] From now b. will stand for birds –

[6] Some of best websites about HOLY LAND birds are on 2016 :

=www.israbirding.com=

=www.jewishencyclopedia.com=

You can also find some good books and bird-guides about them. There is also the WORLD CHECKLIST of ISRAEL BIRDS in AVIBASE

[7] For example the word AH meant all the close male relatives (not the FATHER *AV*AB*ABBA* and the SON *BEN*). So AH (BROTHER) stand for: cousin, uncle, nephew, son in law... The brothers of JESUS of which is written in the GOSPEL are not true brothers of HIM and sons of MARY, they are cousins and so on. Relatives from MARY and JOSEPH blood families. HAR is another good example. HAR meant : mountain, peak, hill, elevation ...any kind of soil height (natural and non-natural).

[8] " Be fertile and multiply and fill the earth. Dread fear of you shall come upon all the animals of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon all the creatures that move about on the ground and all the fishes of the sea; into your power they are delivered. Every creature that is alive shall be yours to eat; I give them all to you as I did the green plants" GENESIS 9

Same meaning in ACTS OF APOSTLES 10 : "The next day, while they were on their way and nearing the city, Peter went up to the roof terrace to pray at about noontime. He was hungry and wished to eat, and while they were making preparations he fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened and something resembling a large sheet coming down, lowered to the ground by its four corners. In it were all the earth's four-legged animals and reptiles and the birds of the sky. A voice said to him, "Get up, Peter. Slaughter and eat." But Peter said, "Certainly not, sir. For never have I eaten anything profane and unclean." The voice spoke to him again, a second time, "What GOD has made clean, you are not to call profane." This happened three times, and then the object was taken up into the sky"

[9] About animal sacrifices read CHAPTER 2.

[10] JESUS is speaking referring to an Old Testament text, as usually HE does when talking to ISRAEL people: "Sing to the LORD with grateful praise; make music to our GOD on the harp. He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills. He gives food to the wild animals and feeds the young ravens when they cry" PSALM 147

[11] OReB is also the name of a mountain, probably **Mount Sinai**. Not strange at all that a mountain is called "mountain of the crow", because crows (or ravens) usually nest in the mountains.

[12] Because of this , GOD the FATHER pours on us HOLY GRACE, HOLY SPIRIT: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you to cleanse you from all your impurities, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts. I will put my spirit within you and make you live by my statutes, careful to observe my decrees. You shall live in the land I gave your fathers; you shall be my people, and I will be your GOD" (EZEKIEL 36). This effusion of HOLY GRACE is given completely during PENTECOST for the CHURCH and by the seven sacraments for individual persons (BAPTYSM, CONFESSION, EUCHARIST, CONFIRMATION, ANOINTING OF THE SICK, MATRIMONY-MARRIAGE, ORDER-PRIESTHOOD)

[13] The eagle is often used as a symbol of strength, power, speed, and skill of flight: PSALM 102/103 (most of the PSALMS have double numbers... another evidence of human poverty and humbleness...) JEREMIAH 49, EXODUS 19, JOB 39...

[14] LEVITICUS 11 and DEUTERONOMY 14. These two chapters were really important for law-abiding ISRAEL people. Here it is written what animals they could eat or not eat. Most of the laws were actually about health rules, that is how not to become sick because of eating something not good for us.

[15] LEVITICUS 11 and DEUTERONOMY 14 . In the latin version of JEREMIAH 8 we also have milvus, a word missing in the Hebrew and Greek versions. This happens to indicate that details may change among different versions (the spirit, the heart, the main events, the message always remain the same) and to show the low knowledge of the birds species in ancient (and not only...) people.

[16] For those who want to compare old Hebrew text with the following greek and latin versions, here you are some of them:

GREEK

"Aeton, grypa, aliaieton, gupa, iktina, kai ta omoia autoi, koraka kai ta omoia autoi, strouthon, glauca, laron kai ta omoia autoi, ieraka kai ta omoia autoi, nuktikoraka, katarakten, ibin, porfyryona, pelekana, kuknon, glauca, erodion, charadriion kai ta omoia autoi, epopa kai nukterida".

LATIN 1

"Haec sunt quae de avibus comedere non debetis et vitanda sunt vobis aquilam et grypem et alietum, milvum ac vulturem iuxta genus suum et omne corvini generis in similitudinem suam, strutionem et noctuam et larum et accipitrem iuxta genus suum, bubonem et mergulum et ibin, cycnum et onocrotalum et porphirionem, erodionem et charadriion iuxta genus suum upupam quoque et vespertilionem".

LATIN 2

"Omnes aves mundas comedite, immundas ne comedatis aquilam scilicet et grypem et alietum, ixon et vulturem ac milvum iuxta genus suum, et omne corvini generis, strutionem ac noctuam et larum atque accipitrem iuxta genus suum, herodium et cycnum et ibin, ac mergulum porphirionem et nycticoracem, onocrotalum et charadrium singula in genere suo upupam quoque et vespertilionem".

"You may eat all clean birds. But you shall not eat any of the following: the eagle, the vulture, the osprey, the various kites and falcons, all the various species of crows, the ostrich, the nightjar, the gull, the various species of hawks, the owl, the screech owl, the ibis, the desert owl, the buzzard, the cormorant, the stork, the various species of herons, the hoopoe, and the bat"

[17] The formation process of the BOOKS of the HOLY BIBLE is usually this :

FACTS-EVENTS > TALES OF THE EVENTS > ORAL TRANSMISSION OF THE TALES >
REDACTION or WRITINGS OF THE ORAL ACCOUNTS

The heart of the events remains the same during all these steps, but there may be some small variations, differences, due to the action of the writer or to the historical circumstances.

Anyway if you compare the different versions of the texts, you clearly see that the differences are very few and that the heart, the meaning, the facts, the events are always the same.

HOLY GRACE (HOLY SPIRIT) and PROVIDENCE actually took care in a special way of this process of tradition-transmission (the latin word TRADERE-TRADITIO means to transmit, to communicate), by inspiring and acting directly on the writers of the BOOKS of the HOLY BIBLE.

[18] See once again the texts in LEVITICUS 11 and DEUTERONOMY 14. In ISAIAH 34 we read also QiPoZ and LiLiTH, old names for nocturnal raptors, used to nest and hunt in buildings ruins.

[19] From which the name ZIPPORAH or SEFORAH (sparrow), the name of MOSES' wife in EXODUS 2 - 4

[20] Already explained in footnote number 9

[21] PROVIDENCE, or THE PROVIDENCE of GOD is the rule of GOD in-on the world. It is all that GOD makes happen in this universe, in this world, directly or indirectly.

[22] A greek version says instead : "Kai é asidà...trugon kai chelidon, agrou, strouthia...". A latin version : "Milvus, turtur, hirundo, ciconia". Hebrew " HaSIDaH, TUR, SUS, AGUR"

[23] I understand now that in a certain way MOSES was the first animal protectionist of human history, having made the first law about hunting which has come to us in a so complete text form ...

[24] See also PROVERBS 30, ISAIAH 18 – 39, JEREMIAH 7 – 16 – 19 -34, EZEKIEL 29

[25] See also DEUTERONOMY 22 (laws on conservation of species), ISAIAH 34, JEREMIAH 50, EZEKIEL 31, MIKAJAH 1

[26] See also NUMBERS 11, PSALMS 77/78 and 104/105, WISDOM 16 and 19

[27] It's true too that birds' guano is very useful as a fertilizer.

[28] See also PSALMS 90/91, 123/124, SIRACH 22

[29] WISDOM 5 "Like a ship traversing the heaving water, of which, when it has passed, no trace can be found, no path of its keel in the waves. Or like a bird flying through the air; no evidence of its course is to be found - But the fluid air, lashed by the beat of pinions, and cleft by the rushing force of speeding wings, is traversed: and afterward no mark of passage can be found in it. Or as, when an arrow has been shot at a mark, the parted air straightway flows together again so that none discerns the way it went through"

[30] ISAIAH 31 "Like hovering birds, so the LORD of hosts shall shield Jerusalem, To protect and deliver, to spare and rescue it "

[31] HABAKKUK 1 "Swifter than leopards are his horses, and keener than wolves at evening. His horses prance, his horsemen come from afar: They fly like the eagle hastening to devour" 2 SAMUEL 1 "Saul and Jonathan, beloved and cherished, separated neither in life nor in death, swifter than eagles, stronger than lions !"

[32] SIRACH 43 "GOD sprinkles the snow like fluttering birds

[33] ISAIAH 60 " What are these that fly along like clouds, like doves to their cotes ? "

[34] EXTRA NOTE : While I am writing this short book, in the house close to the church in the parish of Arcille – Tuscany (it's a sunny and warm afternoon of July) , I got up to drink some fresh water outside the door in the backyard garden. Just in time to see a white-tailed buzzard landing in the neighbour's garden tree,

probably looking for some nestling of turtle doves. Strange event. Strange because it happened exactly in those few seconds I was there outside to drink water and strange because I had never seen before a buzzard coming down in a house garden so close to people.

[35] See also ZEPHANIAH 1, JEREMIAH 4, 9

[36] BARUCH 3 "Those who enjoyed and made sport of the birds of the heavens"

[37] BOOK OF WISDOM 17 "The melodious song of birds in the spreading branches"

[38] Dirty, ugly, bad (dangerous) animals, such as snakes, scorpions, dogs... they were obviously not worthy to be sacrificed to GOD. To GOD were sacrificed good animals like the oxes, the sheep, the doves, the sparrows ...

[39] Cfr *Nuovo dizionario di teologia biblica*, a cura di ROSSANO-RAVASI-GIRLANDA, Edizioni Paoline, Cinisello Balsamo, 1988, page. 841.

[40] LUKE 2 "Joseph and Mary, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord," and to offer the sacrifice of "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons," in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord.

[41] LEVITICUS 1 – 5 -14 -15 ...

[42] MATTHEW 21 "JESUS entered the temple area and drove out all those engaged in selling and buying there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves. And he said to them, "It is written: 'My house shall be a house of prayer'"

[43] "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins" MATTHEW 26, LUKE 22, MARK 14, 1 CORINTHIANS 11, JOHN 6.

The EUCHARIST is the greatest stroke of genius of whole human history. In the EUCHARISTIC SACRAMENT of BREAD and WINE we find the idea, the invention, the most brilliant of all. Focusing the attention of the whole world toward bread and wine, HE converted humankind from blood to peace, from sacrifice to mercy, from separation to love. Giving away all those bloody animals sacrifices, JESUS swept away a religious (and then social) education that formed people to violence.

Surely GOD let and maybe wanted this ancient preparation to the EUCHARIST, made of sacrificed animals, but it is clear and obvious that concentrating all the human spirituality upon bread and wine, GOD blew in the heart of all men a mystic wave of peace, of meekness, of mercy, that historically changed our mind, our cosmovision (the way we look at life, at ourselves, at people, at GOD himself). And blood? Where is all the blood gone? The blood, all the blood history of man really needed, to express the higher adoration, the complete communion, the total and eternal expiation for all the sins, was shed on that Holy Friday, most Holy, during the passion of the CHRIST from Gethsemane to Calvary.

[44] During their exodus in the desert from Egypt to the Promised Land, the people of ISRAEL, tired and hungry, complained to MOSES and prayed to GOD. When MOSES prayed to GOD, GOD answered his prayer. GOD made a strong wind blow over a big flock of quails, flying from Africa to their nesting sites (or maybe backward...vice versa). This strong wind exhausted the birds and made them land right in the middle of ISRAEL camp of tents. This event is extraordinary because it happened exactly in that moment and in that place. This fact was so sensational that it remained in the BIBLE memories for centuries and that's why we read about it in many texts: EXODUS 16, NUMBERS 11, PSALMS 78 – 105, WISDOM 16 – 19 ...

[45] ELIJAH is with MOSES the champion of Old Testament. ELIJAH with MOSES appeared (alive !!!) next to JESUS CHRIST, on the mount Tabor, in the presence of the apostles PETER, JAMES and JOHN. ELIJAH and MOSES spoke with JESUS as to a dear friend. The apostles were totally astonished and amazed. ELIJAH

is the man who left everything to prophesy and convert the people from idolatry. During his travel in the desert, GOD used the crows to feed him. (1 KINGS 17)

[46] To understand the story of TOBIT on whose head the swallows made their poop, you need to know SARAH. SARAH was a young woman who lived far from TOBIT, but close to his relatives. SARAH was desperate because she could not find a husband and she did pray a lot to GOD to give her a man. The man was the son of TOBIT, TOBJAH, who left for a journey to find the cure for his ill father. During that journey the son met SARAH. He married her and saved her from her situation. Their story is told in the BOOK of TOBIT.

[47] Recently we have the events of Saint FRANCIS in La Verna (warmly and joyfully welcomed by many birds), Saint ANTONY in Rimini ("listened" by so many fishes of the sea that all the people of the city came to listen to his preaching), Saint JOHN BOSCO (saved more than once by a big grey dog, named "the Grey", a dog belonging to no-one and that nobody knew).

[48] See MATTHEW 3, MARK 1, LUKE 3, JOHN 1

[49] Idolatry from the Greek words "eidòn" and "latreia" means "worshiping something". The idolater is someone who worships as a GOD anything which is not GOD.

[50] Money, sex, power, properties, women, men, animals, things...

[51] These merits, these blessings, these graces are mostly a gift from the ONE who makes HIMSELF poor for love "Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head." MATTHEW 8

[52] PROVERBS 7,23 "Like a bird that rushes into a snare, unaware that its life is at stake...so is a young man who let himself be trapped by an adulteress"

[53] SIRACH 22 "He who throws stones at birds drives them away, and he who insults a friend breaks up the friendship"

[54] PROVERBS 23 "Toil not to gain wealth, cease to be concerned about it; While your glance flits to it, it is gone! for assuredly it grows wings, like the eagle that flies toward heaven" JEREMIAH 17 "A partridge that mothers a brood not her own is the man who acquires wealth unjustly: In midlife it will desert him; in the end he is only a fool" PROVERBS 28 "He who increases his wealth by interest and overcharge gathers it for him who is kind to the poor" The real meaning of these words is this: as time goes by the PROVIDENCE of GOD makes the money, the richness and the wealth of the unrighteous, evil people go to holy persons.

[55] PROVERBS 27 "Like a bird that is far from its nest is a man who is far from his home".

[56] PROVERBS 26 "Like the sparrow in its flitting, like the swallow in its flight, a curse uncalled-for arrives nowhere" In other versions instead of "swallow in its flight" we have "ostrich in its run" being the Greek word STROUTHON translated in the past both ostrich or/and swallow.

[57] SIRACH 27 : "Birds nest with their own kind, and **fidelity** comes to those who live by it" Other versions say "Birds nest with their own kind, and **truth** comes to those who look for it".

[58] The monarchy system of government seldom has given good fruits, in ISRAEL past age as in all the other nations. GOD had already told the people not to have a king, through the voice of GIDEON (JUDGES 8,23), JOTHAM (JUDGES 9,8) and SAMUEL (1 SAMUEL chapter 8), but the people of ISRAEL they did not listen to the prophets of GOD. The result was they had only five good kings in 1.000 years... An almost total failure. The good kings reported by the BIBLE are: David, Solomon, Asa, Hezekiah e Josiah.

[59] "Flocks of black birds" by Giosuè Carducci, "The lonely sparrow" by Giacomo Leopardi, "The

albatross" by Samuel T. Coleridge, "The swan lake" by Piotr Tchaikovsky, "The Johnathan Livingstone seagull" by Richard Bach

[60] Ezekiel 1

[61] The Greek text is very clear and tells us that GOD created the whole universe **OUK EK ONTON : which means NOT FROM SOMETHING EXISTING before.**

[62] We, the men, the humankind, we, every one of us, we have an individual, spiritual and immortal soul. But the animals they don't have any spiritual soul. They are just organic and living matter. So tells us ISAIAH "**The Egyptians are men, not gods, their horses are flesh, not spirit**" chapter 31

Every man has (or better : **IS**) a spirit (a **SOUL**) and is able to pray GOD.

Praying is surely and absolutely the most human activity.

Praying (having a true relationship with GOD) is maybe the only thing that men share only with the angels and with nothing else (nor animals, neither the most intelligent computer, robot or A.I. - Artificial Intelligence).

Praying is then, in a certain way, what makes a man a human being.

[63] As don ZENO from NOMADELFIA told me

[64] Look PSALM 118/119

[65] See footnote number 6 of the first chapter . What I believe is simple: as we can modify the life of animals in order to change their features by transferring them in particular places, making artificial selections, modifying the DNA genetically, so GOD can do and did . WHO IS LIKE GOD ? Do you really think that we can do something that GOD cannot do ? This is absurd...

[66] GENESIS 7-9.

[67] LUKE 2: "When eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named JESUS, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the LORD, just as it is written in the law of the LORD, "Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the LORD," and to offer the sacrifice of "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons," in accordance with the dictate in the law of the LORD.

[68] Reading the four texts speaking about this fact (MATTHEW 3, MARK 1, LUKE 3, JOHN 1) you can deduce that a dove really flew over JESUS. And we know that some doves and turtle doves (and mostly the raptors birds) use to fly in a special way which is named "hovering" and in neolatin languages "FLYING IN HOLY SPIRIT WAY" ("Volo a SPIRITO SANTO" "Hacer el ESPIRITU SANTO") . This is a flying way with vibrating wings, which let the birds staying up still in the air in the same place for a long time, looking for something. The HOLY SPIRIT FLIGHT is typical of raptors, for example: the kestrel, the osprey, the short toed eagle... Sometimes this H.S. Flight is hold for very long time, especially when the wind is blowing and so for the birds is very easy and not expensive in terms of energy.

[69] MARK 1 : "The HOLY SPIRIT drove JESUS out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels served to HIM.

[70] EASTER, in Latin PASCHA, Hebrew PESAQ, from the word *pesaq* which means "to pass" , in the meaning of "*TO PASS FROM THIS WORLD TO THE FATHER*" and "*THE LORD OUR GOD IS PASSING*"

[71] MATTHEW 21: "Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all those engaged in selling and buying there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves. And he said to them, "It is written: 'My house shall be a house of prayer,' but you are making it a den of thieves." The blind and the lame approached him in the temple area, and he cured them"

[72] When they say that someone is “In GRACE of GOD” or that is “Outside the GRACE of GOD”, it is meant to say truly (and this is the original and precise meaning) that a man (or a woman) is filled with the HOLY SPIRIT (HOLY GRACE). It means that inside him (her) there is the living presence (whether knowingly or not consciously) of the HOLY GHOST. Or, and I pray GOD never this to happen to us, that someone is excluded, outside the HOLY SPIRIT-the SPIRIT of GOD. The theological definition of GRACE is right this “In-habitation of the HOLY SPIRIT inside a man”.

[73] MATTHEW 3, MARK 1, LUKE 3, JOHN 1. A very important event, as it is said by all the four evangelists. Some people say that HOLY GRACE really did shown HERSELF “as a dove should do” and not “by using a dove”. My opinion is that SHE did use a dove, a turtle dove.

[74] HOSEA 7,11, PSALM 68, ISAIAH 60...

[75] See footnote number 6 in the first chapter

[76] "Look at the birds" (MATTHEW 6,26 and LUKE 12,24). That is said also "Watch the birds" (birdwatching!).

[77] "Two in fact are the main commandments, but one is the LOVE: “You shall love your GOD and you shall love your neighbour as yourself”. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments . One love, but two commandments... The same love loves the humankind and GOD. There is not two different love. It is the same LOVE by which we love our neighbour and GOD” SAINT AUGUSTINE – SERMON ON THE ASCENSION 265, 8.9)

[78] So of the FATHER, of HOLY GRACE (HOLY SPIRIT), of JESUS CHRIST (**who is really risen and alive**, although the common and ordinary human natural point of view). Faith is also a gift from HOLY GRACE, faith is like a supernatural light which enlighten the spiritual (and not only spiritual) senses of the human soul and let you see, hear, feel the presence and the action of GOD. You can ask this gift. You can ask GOD the gift of faith. By making an act of faith saying to GOD words like these: “ GOD, please, give me the gift of faith. Amen”

[79] "Now if out of joy for their beauty (of birds and other creatures) they thought them gods, let them know how far more excellent is the CREATOR than these; for the original source of beauty fashioned them. Or if they were struck by their might and energy, let them from these things realize how much more powerful is GOD who made them. For from the greatness and the beauty of created things their original author, by analogy, is seen. ... WISDOM, the artificer of all, taught me. For in HER is a spirit intelligent, holy, unique, multiple, subtle, agile, clear, unstained, certain, not baneful, loving the good, keen, unhampered, beneficent, kindly, firm, secure, tranquil, all-powerful, all-seeing, and pervading all spirits, though they be intelligent, pure and very subtle. For WISDOM is mobile beyond all motion, and SHE penetrates and pervades all things by reason of HER purity. For SHE is an aura of the might of GOD and a pure effusion of the glory of the Almighty; therefore nothing that is sullied enters into HER. For SHE is the refulgence of eternal light, the spotless mirror of the power of GOD, the image of his goodness. And SHE, who is one, can do all things, and renews everything while HERSELF lasting forever; and passing into holy souls from age to age, SHE produces friends of GOD and prophets. For there is nothing GOD loves, be it not one who dwells with GRACE. For SHE is fairer than the sun and surpasses every constellation of the stars. Compared to light, SHE takes precedence; for that, indeed, night supplants, but wickedness prevails not over WISDOM". From THE BOOK of WISDOM from the HOLY BIBLE WISDOM is a name for the HOLY SPIRIT, the HOLY GRACE, the DIVINE LOVE, the THIRD PERSON of the MOST HOLY TRINITY.

[80] EZEKIEL 13

[81] **Who are the saints ?** They are **the free sons of GOD**. Meditating these words by don ZENO from NOMADELFIA, you reach the highest and largest freedom. The freedom of the saints is actually FREEDOM OF INTERACTION (the freedom to interact within people, situations...). This power to interact is maximum

for those people who live in HEAVEN and participate – share some of the same freedom and power of GOD, for GOD 's GRACE . But remember that freedom is not the greatest, highest and best value :

LOVE – CHARITAS – CHARITY is the best and the highest value of all

LAST AND FINAL WORDS

If you usually pray, keep on praying

if you never pray, begin to pray
(the way you want, but pray)

If you want to have a synthesis about the GOSPEL, about JESUS teachings,
look for “THE CHRISTIANS PYRAMID by MICHELE LAMBERTI”

You find it in the web, for example in the website: JESUSHOLYMIND

*Come HOLY GRACE
and enlighten our souls*

*Come JESUS CHRIST
our LORD
and rule over us*

*Come FATHER of us
and stay with me*



JESUS CHRIST talking with people

