



THE LIVING WORD IN A FRAGMENTED WORLD. CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES AND ORTHODOX HOMILETIC RESPONSES

Prof. PhD. Ioana STANCIU,

University of Bucharest, Faculty of Chemistry,
Department of Physical Chemistry, Bucharest,
ROMANIA

Email: istanciu75@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The mystery of the earth represents a concept that transcends the simple materiality of the soil, configuring itself as a symbol of creation, of the continuity of matter and of the cyclicity of existence. The study of this theme explores how the earth, through structure and composition, becomes a support for life and a vector of natural transformations. From the perspective of creation, the earth is a primary source, generating forms and structures that sustain life in all its manifestations. From the point of view of matter, it represents a complex substrate, in which the interaction of chemical, biological and physical elements determine both the fertility and the regenerative potential of ecosystems. Finally, the return to the earth symbolizes the inexorable cycle of existence: all created forms reintegrate into matter, emphasizing the intrinsic connection between life and the soil. This reflection on the earth, as a creative matrix and recipient of matter, offers a holistic vision of the interdependence between nature, life and regeneration, inviting awareness of responsibility towards the environment.

Keywords: *Earth; Creation; Life and death; Cyclicity;*

INTRODUCTION

The earth represents both the basis of biological existence and the profound symbol of the continuity and regeneration of life. In its apparent simplicity, soil hides a fascinating complexity: from its chemical and biological composition, to its fundamental role in supporting ecosystems. The mystery of the earth is not limited to physical matter, but extends into the symbolic, philosophical and spiritual spheres, illustrating the intrinsic connection between creation, existence and return.

Seen as a primary source, the earth is the matrix in which life forms are born, develop and transform. The matter it contains, rich and renewable, becomes support for life and for the natural processes that maintain ecosystem balance.

The return to the earth – either through organic decomposition or by the reintegration of matter into the natural circuit – underlines the inexorable cycle of existence and reaffirms the interdependence between life and the soil.

This exploration of the earth as a multidimensional phenomenon seeks to highlight both its material value and its symbolic meanings, inviting a deep understanding of how nature, life and regeneration intersect in a perpetual cycle. The study of the earth's mysteries thus offers a holistic perspective, combining science, philosophy and ecological sensitivity, reflecting our responsibility towards the environment and towards our own existence.



1. EARTH AS AN ARCHETYPE OF CREATION

The earth is not just one element among others, nor just an inert substance that man exploits, measures and exhausts. In the deepest layers of human consciousness, the earth appears as a beginning, as a matrix and as a promise of return. It precedes history, precedes articulate language and even philosophical reflection. The earth is man's first "home", before any cultural construction, before cities, temples or ideas.

In all the great traditions of the world, creation begins with a form of primordial matter: chaos, water, darkness or clay. Of these, the earth – as clay, dust, soil – takes on a special significance, because it is not only the support of life, but the substance from which life is shaped. Man is not placed on the earth as a stranger; he is taken out of the earth. This idea, simple and profound, marks a fundamental difference between a sacred vision of existence and a purely technical or materialistic one.

The archetype of the earth is, above all, a maternal one. The earth gives birth, nourishes, shelters and, ultimately, receives back. It is no coincidence that in many languages, the word "earth" is associated with the idea of mother: terra mater, mother earth, gaia. This archetype is not a simple poetic metaphor, but expresses a fundamental experience of humanity: total dependence on a soil that gives life and that can take it back.

In creation myths, the earth often appears as a passive matter, but full of potential. It does not create itself, but is worked, shaped, animated. This relationship between the earth and the creative breath – be it divine, cosmic or spiritual – is essential for understanding the human condition. Man is not just matter, but neither is he pure spirit. He is animated matter, animated clay, earth that has received breath. This vision implies an ontology of the limit. If man comes from the earth, then he carries within himself the finitude, fragility and transience of matter. Unlike mythical beings or immortal gods, man is bound to the cycle: birth, growth, degradation, death. The earth is not only his beginning, but also his measure. To recognize the earth as his origin means to accept that existence is not infinitely extensible, but situated, limited and conditioned. At the same time, the earth as an archetype of creation is also a symbol of order. From primordial chaos a stable soil is born, a terrain on which life can emerge. The earth offers resistance, consistency, form. It is the opposite of the volatile, of pure flux. In a world where everything flows, the earth remains. Even when it is eroded, destroyed or burned, it continues to be the support of a new form of life. Thus, the earth becomes a symbol of continuity beyond change.

In the biblical tradition, the act of creating man from the dust is not a secondary detail, but a major theological statement. Man is made "from the dust of the earth," and life is given to him by the breath of life. This double origin – material and spiritual – defines the drama and grandeur of the human condition. Without the earth, man does not exist; without the breath, he remains dead matter. Between these two dimensions, the entire history of humanity unfolds. The earth, as the archetype of creation, is neither good nor evil in itself. It is ambivalent, capable of giving life, but also of swallowing it. Earthquakes, landslides, droughts, and desertification are expressions of this ambivalence. But it is precisely this double capacity that makes it sacred. The sacred is not that which is merely beneficial, but that which is powerful, that which exceeds human control and commands respect. Modernity has tried to disenchant the earth, to reduce it to a resource, to an object of exploitation. In this process, the archetype of creation has been replaced by an economic calculation. The earth is no longer seen as origin, but as property; not as mother, but as raw material. This change of perspective is not only cultural, but ontological: it transforms man's relationship with his own origin. To forget that we come from the earth is to forget the limits of our own condition. It means living as if we were external to nature, as if we could exist independently of the soil, of natural cycles, of degradation and regeneration. But this illusion inevitably falls apart,



because the earth remains the silent witness of every civilization that believed it could definitively dominate it. Thus, the earth as an archetype of creation is not just a mythological or religious theme, but a key to interpreting human history. The way we relate to the earth reflects the way we relate to ourselves: as created beings, limited, but capable of meaning. To recognize the mystery of the earth means to recognize that existence does not begin with us and does not end with us, but encompasses us in a broader cycle, in which creation and return are two sides of the same truth.

2. MATTER: BETWEEN THE ORIGINAL SACRED AND DEGRADATION

Matter is one of the most ambiguous realities of human thought. It is, at the same time, what is closest to us and what seems most meaningless. We touch it, shape it, use it, but rarely contemplate it. In archaic and sacred traditions, matter is never neutral: it bears an original imprint, a memory of creation. In modernity, on the contrary, matter is emptied of meaning, reduced to extension, mass and utility. Between these two visions the drama of our relationship with the earth unfolds. In mythical and religious origins, matter is not the opposite of spirit, but its partner. Earth, water, fire and air are elements through which the cosmic order manifests itself. Matter is the place where the invisible becomes visible, where creative intention takes shape. That is why, in many cultures, working with matter – agriculture, pottery, construction – is accompanied by rituals. To work the earth means to participate, even if unconsciously, in an act of continuity of creation.

Clay is the symbolic material par excellence. Malleable, fragile, but capable of becoming a durable form through fire, clay reflects the human condition itself. Man is moldable, influenceable, subject to time, but can achieve a form of stability through trial and transformation. In this sense, matter is not an obstacle to meaning, but its medium of manifestation. Without matter, spirit remains abstract; without spirit, matter remains inert.

However, matter also bears the sign of the fall. In many traditions, the degradation of matter is associated with the distance from the sacred origin. Rotting, erosion, disintegration are perceived not only as natural processes, but as symbols of the loss of the original order. The human body, subject to disease and death, becomes the most obvious place of this degradation. Hence the profound tension between the desire for transcendence and the material reality of existence.

Classical philosophy has constantly oscillated between the valorization and contempt of matter. For some currents, matter is imperfection, a limit, a source of evil. For others, it is the necessary foundation of any real existence. This ambivalence is not accidental: matter connects us to the world, but also prevents us from being absolute; it makes us alive, but condemns us to death. It is, at the same time, but also a burden.

In the context of the earth, the degradation of matter takes on a historical and collective dimension. Exhausted soil, destroyed forests, land sterilized by chemicals are not just ecological problems, but signs of an ontological rupture. They show that man's relationship with matter is no longer one of collaboration, but of domination. Matter is no longer listened to, but forced; it is no longer respected, but exploited to the point of exhaustion. This degradation is not only external. It is reflected in the way man perceives his own body. The body becomes an object, an instrument, sometimes even an obstacle to the desired performance or identity. In an attempt to free himself from the limits of matter, modern man often ends up denying or violating it. But denying matter does not lead to liberation, but to alienation. To deny the earth is, ultimately, to deny our own consistency. However, degradation is not the last word of matter. The earth has a remarkable capacity for regeneration, if it is allowed to breathe. Even destroyed soils can be reborn over time, and decomposed matter becomes food for a new life. This lesson of the earth is deeply symbolic: what seems permanently lost can be transformed. Death is not annulment, but a transition to another form of material existence.



In deep spiritual traditions, matter is not abandoned, but transfigured. One does not seek to escape from the world, but to renew the relationship with it. The earth, as original matter, is called to become transparent again for meaning. This does not mean romantic idealization, but assuming responsibility for what sustains our existence. To respect matter is to recognize that it bears the traces of creation and history.

Thus, matter is between two possibilities: the original sacred and the final degradation. The direction is not dictated exclusively by natural laws, but also by the way in which man relates to it. The earth is not condemned to become sterile, just as man is not condemned to live without meaning. Between creation and ruin, matter remains a space of choice. Understanding this tension is essential for any reflection on return. For we do not return to an abstract earth, but to a matter that was once alive, worked, loved or destroyed. The way we treat matter today prepares the earth to which we will return tomorrow. In this profound sense, the relationship with the earth is also a relationship with our own death.

3. MAN: LIVING CLAY AND FLEETING CONSCIOUSNESS

Man occupies a paradoxical place in the order of existence. He is, at the same time, matter and consciousness, earth and question. No other known being seems to carry within himself this tension so visibly: a body subject to degradation and a mind capable of conceiving the infinite. To say that man is “living clay” does not mean reducing him to matter, but to emphasize his composite character, fragile and at the same time open to meaning. The clay from which man is molded is not a noble material in the classical sense. He is not gold, nor marble, nor precious stone. He is wet, unstable, easily broken. The symbolic choice of clay as the material of human creation expresses a true anthropology: man is not made for material permanence, but for transformation. He carries within himself the possibility of breaking, but also of remodeling.

Consciousness is what distinguishes living clay from inert earth. Through consciousness, man becomes able to relate to his own origin, to recognize his fragility and to problematize it. No other form of matter asks what it is and why it exists. This capacity for reflection does not remove man from the order of the earth, but rather deepens him in it, because it forces him to live not only biologically, but also symbolically.

The passage of time is felt by man in a painful way precisely because he is aware of it. The body ages, degrades, approaches the return to the earth, while consciousness continues to search for meaning, permanence, continuity. This discrepancy between the desire for duration and the material reality of finitude generates anxiety, fear, but also cultural creation. Art, religion, philosophy are, in many ways, responses to this fundamental tension.

Man, as living clay, is neither completely determined by matter, nor completely free from it. His freedom is situated, conditioned by the body, by the soil, by the context. He cannot choose not to be mortal, but he can choose how to live within this condition. This limited freedom is the source of moral responsibility. Because man is of the earth, his actions have material consequences; because he is conscious, he cannot claim absolute ignorance. The human body is the place where the earth becomes personal. Through the body, the earth acquires a face, a voice, a memory. Every scar, every wrinkle, every illness bears the traces of a history lived in matter. In this sense, the body is not a simple vehicle of consciousness, but the archive of an existence. To despise the body is to despise the concrete story of life.

However, modern man often finds himself in a conflictual relationship with his own materiality. On the one hand, the body is idolized, artificially perfected, subject to aesthetic standards. On the other hand, it is perceived as a limit, as an obstacle to a fluid identity or an increased efficiency. This ambivalence reflects a profound difficulty in accepting the condition of



living clay, with all that it implies: vulnerability, dependence, death. The transient consciousness of man is not only a source of suffering, but also of meaning. Precisely because he knows that he will die, man can value time, relationships, creation. The earth, which will receive him back, thus becomes not only a symbol of the end, but also a criterion of authenticity. What is worth doing, if everything is transient? What remains, if the body returns to dust?

In many spiritual traditions, the answer is not to flee from the earth, but to assume it. Man is not called to become anything other than what he is: conscious matter, thinking clay. This assumption does not cancel the desire for transcendence, but rather orients it. Transcendence is no longer escape, but the fulfillment of a given condition.

Death, seen from this perspective, is not an absurd accident, but the completion of a cycle. Living clay returns to clay, and consciousness – no matter how it is understood – ceases to be bound to the material form that supported it. This return does not erase the meaning of the life lived, but confirms it, because only what is finite can be truly precious. Man, as living clay and transient consciousness, is thus at the center of the mystery of the earth. He is the witness who can tell the story of matter, but also the being who must accept that his personal story will end. In this acceptance lies the beginning of wisdom: not the denial of the earth, but the recognition of it as origin, limit and destination.

4. EARTH IN MYTH, RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

The earth is not just a physical reality, but a symbolic one, loaded with meanings that precede individual experience. In myth, religion and philosophy, it appears as a constant presence, an ontological background without which reflection on man and the world becomes impossible. The way in which the earth is thought of in these traditions reveals not only a cosmology, but a certain vision of the meaning of existence. In archaic myths, the earth is often personified. It is a divinity or a living force, capable of creating, nourishing and punishing. The myths of genesis speak of an earth raised from the waters, stabilized by a cosmic act, separated from chaos. This stabilization is essential: the earth becomes the place where life can take place, where time begins to flow in a recognizable form. Without the earth, there is no history, but only amorphous eternity.

Religion takes up this symbolism and deepens it. In monotheistic traditions, the earth is creation, not divinity. It is not worshipped, but neither despised. It is a gift, a responsibility, and a place of testing. The earth is entrusted to man, not to be consumed without measure, but to be worked and guarded. This double commandment – to work and to guard – expresses the fragile balance between use and respect.

In religious rituals, the earth appears as consecrated matter. Tombs, altars, temples are anchored in the soil, marking the connection between the sacred and the place. Even in traditions that emphasize transcending the material world, the earth remains present as a starting point. Man prays while standing on the earth, kneels, prostrates himself, recognizing his condition as a created being. Philosophy, in turn, oscillated between valorizing and abstracting the earth. Ancient thought sought the ultimate principles of reality in the elements: earth, water, air, fire. These were not simple substances, but expressions of a cosmic order. The earth symbolized stability, weight, resistance. It was what allowed things to be what they are, to have form and duration. With the development of abstract thought, the earth began to be marginalized in favor of universal ideas. Sensible reality was seen as imperfect, and truth was moved to an ideal plane. This move had profound consequences: the concrete, material world became secondary, and the direct relationship with the earth was weakened. However, even in these systems, the earth remains an implicit point of reference, because thought cannot exist without a material support.



In the Middle Ages, the earth acquires a moral significance. It is the place of work, suffering, trial, but also of salvation. Working the earth becomes a form of spiritual discipline, a participation in the divine order. Monks cultivate the soil not only for food, but as an exercise in humility. The inclination towards the earth is, symbolically, an inclination towards one's own condition.

Modernity brings about a decisive rupture. The earth is desacralized and transformed into an object of scientific knowledge and economic exploitation. Myth is replaced by calculation, religion by technology, and philosophy by efficiency. In this process, the earth loses its symbolic voice. It becomes silent, inert, available. This silence is not without consequences: without a land that speaks, man risks getting lost in a world without ontological landmarks. However, in contemporary thought there is an attempt to recover the lost meaning. Philosophers, theologians, and ecologists return to the idea of the earth as the foundation of existence. Not as a divinity, but as a reality that conditions every form of life and meaning. This return is not a simple nostalgia, but a response to the multiple crises of the modern world: ecological, identity, spiritual. The earth, as it appears in myth, religion, and philosophy, cannot be reduced to a single interpretation. It is, at the same time, a symbol of stability and change, of life and death, of the sacred and the profane. This complexity makes it indispensable for any serious reflection on the human condition. To think about the earth is to think about our place in the world. Without this effort of thought, man risks becoming a stranger on his own soil. Without myth, without symbol, without philosophical reflection, the earth is reduced to the background, and existence to functioning. Recovering the meaning of the earth does not mean returning to archaic forms of belief, but rediscovering a relationship that has always been constitutive for humanity.

5. MODERN WANDERING: THE RUPTURE OF MATTER

The modern wandering does not consist only in an economic, political or moral crisis, but in a profound rupture with matter, with the earth as the founding reality of existence. This rupture is not accidental, but the result of a long process of transformation of the way in which man perceives himself and the world. Modernity did not begin by denying the earth, but by redefining it: from origin and limit, the earth became an object, a resource, a territory to be conquered. With the rise of rationalism and experimental science, the material world was subjected to an increasingly precise analysis. This analysis brought undeniable benefits: technological progress, increased life expectancy, comfort. But, at the same time, it produced an abstraction of matter. The earth is no longer experienced as living soil, but as a system of coordinates, as a deposit, as a measurable property. Man, no longer steps on the earth, but on a mapped surface.

This abstraction has profoundly affected man's relationship with his own body. The body, as an expression of matter, has been treated more and more like a mechanism. Functioning has taken the place of living, efficiency has replaced meaning. The body is repaired, optimized, sometimes modified, but rarely listened to. The direct connection with natural rhythms – fatigue, illness, aging – is perceived as dysfunction, not as a constitutive part of existence. The rupture of matter also manifests itself in urban space. Modern cities are built to isolate man from the earth. Concrete, asphalt, glass create an artificial surface that hides the soil. Direct contact with the earth becomes rare, mediated, controlled. Gardens are decorative, parks are delimited, nature is domesticated. In this separation, man loses not only his connection with the earth, but also his consciousness of belonging. On a symbolic level, modernity has promoted the ideal of absolute autonomy. Man is encouraged to see himself as the exclusive author of his own identity, independent of origins, body, limitations. The earth, as a symbol of determination and conditioning, becomes uncomfortable. To recognize that you are from the earth means to accept that you are not self-sufficient. Hence the desire for escape: in the virtual, in technology, in promises of overcoming corporeality.



This escape has a price. The lack of contact with matter produces a profound alienation. Man feels suspended, without an anchor, without stable landmarks. Identity crises, diffuse anxiety, the feeling of meaninglessness can also be read as symptoms of this rupture. Without the earth, existence becomes light, but also empty; mobile, but devoid of ontological weight. Contemporary ecology is, in this context, more than a movement for environmental protection. It is a sign of a consciousness that is trying to awaken. Soil destruction, climate change, loss of biodiversity are concrete manifestations of an unbalanced relationship with matter. The earth, reduced to a resource, reacts. The ecological crisis is, in this sense, a crisis of meaning, not just of management. Modern wandering is also manifested in language. We talk about “consumption”, “development”, “progress”, without asking ourselves what is being consumed and what is being lost. The earth becomes invisible in discourse, although it is omnipresent in reality. This invisibility allows exploitation to continue without confronting its existential consequences.

However, the rupture is not irreversible. The very intensity of the crisis indicates a limit that has been reached. Man begins to feel the weight of matter again, whether through natural catastrophes or through the fragility of his own body. These experiences, although painful, can become points of return. They remind us that the earth is not only the setting for life, but its condition. The modern wandering does not consist in knowledge or technology per se, but in the loss of a symbolic relationship with the earth. Without this relationship, progress becomes blind, and freedom turns into disorientation. To rediscover the earth does not mean to renounce modernity, but to anchor it again in a reality that cannot be eliminated. This re-anchoring prepares the theme of return. For return is not just a biological event, but an ontological necessity. Man cannot definitively detach himself from matter without losing himself. The earth, ignored or exploited, remains the place where all wandering seeks, sooner or later, its end.

6. DEATH AS A RETURN, NOT AS AN END

Death is perhaps the place where the relationship between man and earth is revealed in its most radical form. No matter how much man tries to ignore his material origin, death imposes the undeniable truth of return. The body, with all its history of desires, suffering and creations, dissolves and returns to the soil. From this perspective, death is not an accidental event, but the fulfillment of a condition.

In traditional cultures, death is rarely perceived as an absolute end. It is a passage, a reintegration into a larger order. Funeral rituals reflect this understanding: the body is placed in the ground with care, respect, sometimes with symbolic objects, as if the return were an act of reconciliation. The earth is not seen as a place of annihilation, but as a matrix that receives back what it has given. Modernity, on the other hand, tends to hide death. It is medicalized, isolated, moved to sterile spaces. Direct contact with the dead body is avoided, and rituals are simplified or emptied of meaning. This avoidance reflects the difficulty of accepting the return to the earth. Death becomes an error of the system, a failure of technology, not a constitutive moment of existence. Understanding death as a return does not mean denying the pain of loss. Suffering is real and inevitable. But this understanding changes the perspective: death is no longer just a violent rupture, but also a reintegration into a cycle. The body, which has been separated, individualized, returns to the fertile anonymity of the earth. Biological identity dissolves, but matter continues to participate in life. This material continuity has a strong symbolic charge. It suggests that nothing is lost definitively. Decomposition is not destruction, but transformation. The earth does not retain forms, but preserves substance. In this sense, the return to the earth is a form of radical equality: all social, cultural or historical differences fade away. All return to the same dust.



For human consciousness, this perspective is ambivalent. On the one hand, it can be reassuring: death is not an empty abyss, but a return to a whole. On the other hand, it can be disturbing, because it dissolves the idea of permanent identity. Accepting the return implies giving up the illusion of self-sufficiency and infinite duration. Religions offer different responses to this tension. Some affirm a personal continuity beyond death, others emphasize cosmic reintegration. In both cases, the earth remains present as a necessary stage. Even in the belief in resurrection or transcendence, the body is placed in the earth, thus recognizing the material reality of the human condition. The earth is not denied, but assumed.

Viewing death as a return has profound ethical implications. If we know that we will return to the earth, how we treat this earth becomes a personal, not an abstract, issue. Soil destruction, pollution, environmental degradation are no longer just individual facts, but affect the place of our own return. In this sense, ecology and mortality are closely linked. Death as return forces us to rethink the value of life. If everything ends in the earth, then meaning cannot be found in accumulation or domination. It must be sought in relationship, in care, in moderation. Life gains weight not by its duration, but by the way it fits into the broader cycle of existence. In the face of death, the earth is not an enemy, but a witness. It was there before us and will be there after us. This continuity can be perceived as indifference, but also as stability. In a world of rapid change, the earth offers an ultimate point of reference: nothing remains, but nothing disappears without a trace. Thus, death, understood as return, does not cancel the meaning of life, but deepens it. It reminds us that we are transient, but integrated into an order that surpasses us. Accepting this order does not mean resignation, but lucidity. It is the necessary step to rediscover the mystery of the earth not as an end, but as the fulfillment of a cycle.

7. THE RE-SACRALIZED LAND: MEANING, MEMORY AND CONTINUITY

After modern wandering and alienation, the rediscovery of the land appears as a profound, almost instinctual necessity. The land cannot be just an object of calculation or an exploitable resource; it must be revived through a re-sacralization, that is, through the recognition of its symbolic, spiritual and historical dimension. This re-sacralization does not necessarily imply formal religiosity, but an awareness of meaning: everything that touches the soil and matter becomes part of a larger continuity.

The memory of the land plays a central role in this reconnection. The layers of soil preserve the imprints of the past: settlements, ruins, fossils, secular tree roots. Touching the land is not just a physical contact, but a dialogue with what was. Man, as living clay, thus rediscovers the roots of his own existence and the responsibility to honor them. This memory makes the land alive not only biologically, but also culturally, spiritually, morally. The sacralization of the earth is also manifested in simple, everyday practices: gardening, organic farming, planting trees, caring for common places. Every action that respects the rhythms of nature becomes ritual, bringing back the lost meaning. Man, thus learns that life cannot be separated from matter and that any transformation must be in harmony with the cycles of the earth. This re-sacralization also implies a reinterpretation of time. In modernity, time is measured and fragmented for efficiency, but nature and the earth live in slow, rhythmic cycles that cannot be accelerated without consequences. Understanding these rhythms restores to man a respectful relationship with his own limits. Growing wheat, waiting for the harvest, watching the forest grow – all these are lessons about patience and continuity.

The re-sacralized earth also becomes a space of community and communion. By recognizing the common origin, people learn to see their neighbor and themselves as part of the same cycle. Property and domination are reduced to their place, and respect and responsibility gain weight. To



re-sacralize the land means to build a relationship that goes beyond individual interest, connecting the present with the past and the future.

This reconnection also offers an aesthetic dimension. The earth, viewed with contemplative eyes, becomes a scene of beauty, not just a support for life. Its shapes, textures, colors and smells acquire symbolic value. Matter becomes a language that speaks of origins, of cyclicity, of mystery. Man, who can read this language, participates in creation and understanding. The continuation of life through re-sacralized land also includes responsibility for the future. Each generation receives the land not only as a physical inheritance, but as a patrimony of meaning. Not respecting this continuity means breaking the cycle, violating the connection between creation and return. This awareness is a form of profound morality, which transcends legal and social codes, reaching the ethical dimension of existence. The re-sacralization of the earth also includes the acceptance of material return: death is no longer a terrible end, but part of the natural cycle. What returns to the earth is not lost, but participates in the regeneration of life. Feeling this continuity makes existential fears more bearable, and life acquires depth and coherence. In this light, the earth becomes a witness and guarantor of meaning. It is not only the substratum of life, but the family tree of all actions, the place where the past, present and future meet. Returning to the earth, recognizing matter and assuming responsibility for it thus become sacred acts. The re-sacralization of the earth does not mean naivety or idealization. It is a continuous work, a choice of awareness and respect, an invitation to live in harmony with one's own origin. Man learns to be part of the cycle, not the absolute master. In this sense, the mystery of the earth is fully revealed: it lies not only in our origin, but in how we choose to relate to it and to our inevitable return.

CONCLUSION

The mystery of the earth is not a secret hidden in laboratories or archives, but a reality that encompasses us all, regardless of beliefs, eras or cultures. It is revealed in the way in which man recognizes his origin, in the way he looks at matter, in the attention to life and in the acceptance of the inevitability of return. The mystery of the earth is simultaneously creation, matter and return, a cycle that defines our existence and brings us into contact with fundamental truths.

Creation, in its original sense, is not limited to an act of beginning, but is perpetuated every moment in which life is inscribed in matter. The earth is the beginning, but also the environment in which meaning continues to manifest. Man, as living clay, is the agent who gives shape to this creation and who, through consciousness, can contemplate it. The relationship with the earth is not passive: it implies responsibility, respect and awareness of one's own limits.

Matter, in its sacred dimension, is not a simple support. It carries within itself the memory of origin and the potential for regeneration. The degradation of matter, whether through ecological neglect or through the breaking of the symbolic connection with the earth, shows the vulnerability of man and the consequences of modern wandering. In contrast, respect for matter, care for the soil and awareness of the cyclical nature offer a way to reconnect with the meaning of life and our own condition.

Return is not only a biological reality, but also a symbolic one. Death, seen as a return, transforms the finality of existence into an act of reintegration. The body returns to the earth, participating in the wider cycle of life, and consciousness, even if ephemeral, acquires meaning through the way it has lived and related to matter. Accepting this return means understanding that life and death are not opposites, but two sides of the same truth. The re-sacralization of the earth offers a framework in which the whole of existence gains coherence. The earth is not only a support, but a witness to history, a repository of memory and meaning. In it, the past, present and future



meet, and the man who recognizes it in this complexity finds himself. This recognition is not a nostalgia for the past, but a lucid assumption of our role in the continuity of life.

The mystery of the earth teaches us that limits are not constraints, but conditions of meaning. We come from the earth, through matter we develop our lives, and to the earth we will return. This simple but profound sequence offers existential clarity: man is not the absolute master of the world, but part of a wider cycle. In this awareness lies the balance between autonomy and dependence, between power and humility.

Moreover, the mystery of the earth offers us an ethical and moral framework. Everything we do on the earth – whether through work or destruction – has consequences for the life that follows. The relationship with the earth thus becomes a measure of responsibility, a reflection on the way we live and how we choose to participate in the perpetuation of creation. Caring for the soil is, implicitly, caring for ourselves and for those who will come after us.

Finally, the mystery of the earth invites us to gratitude and respect. It reminds us that life does not begin and does not end with us. We are part of an infinite cycle, in which creation, matter and return mutually support each other. The man who understands this mystery acquires a lucidity that transcends the fear of death, modern superficiality and contemporary wandering. He lives in harmony with his origin and his inevitable destiny.

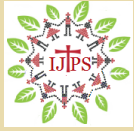
Thus, the mystery of the earth is not just a philosophical or spiritual reflection, but a guide for concrete existence. It teaches us to look at the world and our own lives with respect, humility and curiosity. It shows us that origin, matter and return are not separate events, but a continuous cycle that defines us. In this cycle, every gesture, every choice, every moment of consciousness becomes part of the mystery that encompasses us all.

The earth, as archetype and concrete reality, thus remains the foundation of a meaningful life. It does not end, it is not lost and cannot be ignored without consequences. To recognize it, respect it and follow its rhythms is, perhaps, the deepest form of wisdom to which man can aspire. The mystery of the earth, in all its complexity, reminds us that, from the earth we come, through matter we live and to the earth we return – and in this simple but eternal ordinance, lies our entire condition.



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