

MillerVince\_LopezBarry\_HJAconnection

Drafted by Fred Swanson 2/4/2019. edited by Vince Miller 6/5/19.

## Unlikely Connections – Vince Miller and Barry Lopez – The Grace of the Forest

Vince Miller, Professor of Catholic Theology and Culture at the University of Dayton, visited the Andrews Forest as a writer in residence in 2017. He composed an essay, marveling at the complexity and interconnectedness of all elements of the ecosystem, learning there the need to be mindful of what lies outside of our perception and knowledge. He links this experience with Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'* and its notion of "Integral Ecology" rooted in the Catholic belief of God as a trinity of relationships.

Vince returned to Andrews Forest in January 2019 as a base for interviewing Barry Lopez, who lives a short distance down the McKenzie River, about his personal history and forthcoming book *Horizon*. Barry Lopez was raised and schooled as a Catholic, and Vince sees those roots at work in his sensibilities toward the natural world, which has been the subject of Lopez's amazing life as a writer. Vince wrote an interview feature "[Ethical Landscapes: the Literary Terrain of Barry Lopez](#)" for the Catholic journal *America* to convey the Catholic aspects of Lopez's work so that Catholic readers might engage his work and that Lopez's wisdom might be more available to the community that formed him.

As Vince explained this in the Greenhouse at Andrews Forest, a question was asked, "A recent visitor said this place, this region, is in a 'natural world bubble.' What is its significance in a world that seems to be unraveling in so many ways?" To this, Vince replied, "This is a place to find awe and wonder. In these fraught times, the amazing connections ecology reveals to us can provide a way to begin conversations across the stalemates that divide us. As the Anthropocene erodes the richness of nature, places like the Andrews become even more important sacraments of the whole we were given; from which we might begin to live otherwise."

These connections are an example of the unexpected workings of the Long-Term Ecological Reflections program and Andrews Forest.

Vince Miller's essay from his Andrews Forest residency:

[https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/sites/liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/millervince\\_laudatos\\_i\\_in\\_an\\_old\\_growth\\_forest\\_090718.pdf](https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/sites/liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/millervince_laudatos_i_in_an_old_growth_forest_090718.pdf)

Barry Lopez's essay on his Catholic roots:

[http://www.barrylopez.com/madre\\_de\\_dios\\_78650.htm](http://www.barrylopez.com/madre_de_dios_78650.htm)

Grace: an undeserved gift