



PURSUING
THE COMMON GOOD
FOR OUR COMMON HOME

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Dominican Sisters
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Emboldened by faith, serving with joy

Module 3: Ecological Economics, 3rd Goal of *Laudato Si'* by Brigid Clingman OP

Christian communities that commit themselves to solidarity with those suffering and to confrontation with those attitudes and ways of acting which institutionalize injustice, will themselves experience the power and presence of Christ. They will embody in their lives the values of the new creation while they labor under the old. The quest for economic and social justice will always combine hope and realism and must be renewed by every generation. It involves diagnosing those situations that continue to alienate the world from God's creative love as well as presenting hopeful alternatives that arise from living in a renewed creation. This quest arises from faith and is sustained by hope as it seeks to speak to a broken world of God's justice and loving kindness.

#55 *Economic Justice for All*, U.S Catholic Bishops 1986

Economic Justice: *The human person has a right to a sustainable living including nutritional food, clothing, shelter, jobs, healthcare, and education. Workers have the basic right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to private property and to economic initiative.*

(USCCB) *Dominican Call to Justice* 2011

We urgently need a humanism capable of bringing together the different fields of knowledge, including economics, in the service of a more integral and integrating vision. Today, the analysis of environmental problems cannot be separated from the analysis of human, family, work related and urban contexts, and of how individuals relate to themselves, which leads in turn to how they relate to others and to the environment. There is an interrelation between ecosystems and between the various spheres of social interaction, demonstrating yet again that "the whole is greater than the part". LS #138



The 3rd Goal of the *Laudato Si'* Action Plan -- **Ecological Economics** -- is not a new or foreign concept. We have had, within the Catholic community as well as the Dominican Family, exhortations to consider the relationship of economics within our worldview. However, it is a complex concept since it involves sustainable production, fair-trade, ethical consumption, ethical investments, divestment from fossil fuels and any economic activity harmful to the planet and to the people, investing in renewable energy, and similar issues.

Pope Francis introduces the concept of **cultural ecology**: "that with the patrimony of nature, there is also an historic, artistic and cultural patrimony... the shared identity of each place and a foundation upon which to build a habitable city." (LS 143) and the "**ecology of everyday life**": "Authentic development includes efforts to bring about an integral improvement in the quality of human life" (LS 147).

Finally, the encyclical talks about **human ecology** quoting Pope John Paul II who stated the need to "safeguard the moral conditions for an authentic human ecology... a gift which must be defended from various forms of debasement. Every effort to protect and improve our world entails profound changes in lifestyles, models of production and

consumption, and the established structures of power.” Human ecology takes into account the nature of each being and of its mutual connection in an ordered system.” LS #5// Centesimus Annus (1 May 1991), #38



Maybe the simplest way to understand what the 3rd LS objective calls for might be to look at the **Economy of Francis**: *a different economy, one that helps people live and does not kill, that includes and does not exclude, that humanizes rather than dehumanizes, that takes care of creation and does not plunder it...*

WE ASK THAT...

- the great world powers and the great economic and financial institutions **slow down their race** to let Earth breathe... We must choose to slow down the unbridled race that is suffocating Earth and the weakest people who live on earth;
- a **worldwide sharing of the most advanced technologies** be activated so that sustainable production can also be achieved in low-income countries; and that energy poverty – a source of economic, social and cultural disparity – be overcome to achieve climate justice;
- the subject of **stewardship of common goods** (especially global ones such as the atmosphere, forests, oceans, land, natural resources, all ecosystems, biodiversity and seeds) be placed at the center of policy agendas throughout the world;
- **economic ideologies** should never again be used to offend and reject the poor, the sick, minorities and disadvantaged people of all kinds, because the first response to their poverty is to respect and esteem each person: poverty is not a curse, it is only misfortune, and it is certainly not the responsibility of those who are poor;
- the right to **decent work for all**, family rights and all human rights be respected in the life of each company, for every worker, and guaranteed by the social policies of each country and recognized worldwide by an agreed charter that discourages business choices based solely on profit and founded on the exploitation of minors and the most disadvantaged;
- **tax havens around the world be abolished** immediately, because money deposited in a tax haven is money stolen from our present and our future and that a new tax pact be the first response to the post-COVID world;
- **new financial institutions** be established and the existing ones (the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund) be reformed in a democratic and inclusive sense to help the world recover from poverty; sustainable and ethical finance should be rewarded and encouraged, and highly speculative and predatory finance discouraged by appropriate taxation
- companies and banks introduce **an independent ethics committee** in their governance with a veto on the environment, justice and the impact on the poorest;
- national and international institutions provide prizes to support innovative entrepreneurs in the context of **environmental, social, spiritual and, not least, managerial sustainability** because only by rethinking the management of people within companies will global sustainability of the economy be possible;
- states, large companies and international institutions work to provide **quality education** for every girl and boy in the world, because human capital is the first capital of all humanism;
- economic organizations and civil institutions not rest until **female workers** have the same opportunities as male workers because, without an adequate presence of female talent, businesses and workplaces are not fully and authentically human and happy places;
- Finally, we ask for everyone’s commitment so that the time prophesied by Isaiah may draw near: *“They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore”* (Is 2, 4).

Full text: [Economy of Francis Final Statement and Commitment](#)