

# POPE FRANCIS, *LAUDATO SI'*, AND INTEGRAL ECOLOGY PERSPECTIVES ON A CRITICAL ISSUE

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## INTRODUCTION

The editorial in the first issue of this journal indicated an important criterion for accepting papers for publication, that is, whether the scholarship provides an affirmative response to the question “Will reading this paper assist others in aiding the effort to move to a more sustainable world?” (Stoner, 2013). For the five articles in this issue, I think the reader will answer in the affirmative—while they share a set of common concepts and concerns, each provides a different view of the problems, attendant consequences, and remedies related to our lack of an integral ecology.

The articles also share at least one other theme: the observation that too few people are influencing the fate of the earth. By controlling wealth and the policy process, a small elite is pursuing policies that challenge the sustainability of the planet. Indeed, attending to this concentration of power, influence, and wealth in the hands of the few has been at the center of social and Church policy since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (beginning with Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*). Pope Francis is hardly the first pope to lobby on behalf of those on the margins—papal documents have steadily moved toward supporting working people, recognizing their right to work, earn a living wage, and organize. The Holy Father thus continues this process of linking the social, economic, and political worlds to the spiritual world, a course of action which the articles published here demonstrate all too well. As a matter of fact, as will be argued in the conclusion of this editorial, these studies make clear that much more scholarly work and involvement in the workaday world

is needed if we hope to contribute constructively toward increasing the sustainability of our world.

One other concept deserves mention here: since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, papal documents have argued for increased use of the principle of subsidiarity—the notion that decision-making should be pushed down to the lowest level of organization possible. Along with the principle of participatory democracy, its parallel concept in the secular world, subsidiarity argues for the dignity of humankind. By looking at new management models, the articles in this collection therefore demonstrate how and why these principles are important and suggest how they might contribute to an integral ecology.

## REACTION TO THE ENCYCLICAL

Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'* precipitated a great deal of academic and popular interest when it was released in June 2015. Some thought it was long overdue; others critiqued Francis for writing about something they believed he was ill-prepared to discuss, namely sustainability (Fleming, 2016). Among the latter, some elected to personalize the criticism while others attacked the scientific and theological foundations of the document. In a paper published by the Global Warming Policy Foundation, for example, Forster and Donoughue indicate that 90 percent of the media coverage focused on climate change yet note that only ten percent of the document actually addresses that topic. They take issue with Francis on six points: poverty, fossil fuels, markets, science and consensus, adaptation, and the precautionary principle. For them,

the encyclical is coloured too much by a harkening for a past world, prior to the Industrial Revolution, which is assumed to have been generally simpler, cleaner, and happier. There is little historical evidence for such a vision, and for most people then life was brief, painful[ly] poor, and even brutal. (Forster & Donoughue, 2015).

Yet while the document did receive criticism for sins of both commission and omission, the legitimacy of these assessments should be viewed in context nevertheless. Francis was overturning long established beliefs that the earth was to be subdued rather than nurtured and cultivated. He is a new standard bearer for some—in the preface to a compendium of articles on integral ecology, John B. Cobb, Jr. says:

The pope's primary audience was not the elite in the church or in the wider world. He addressed the world's people. And millions have resonated [with]

Francis' call. Before then, we had scores of leaders working for rational change, and therefore, effectively, no leader at all. Now the cause of LIFE has a champion who cannot be ignored. (Cobb & Castuera, 2015: iv-v)

Despite the fanfare raised lauding the document as a new manifesto, however, Thomas Rausch cautions that “this long anticipated document is not primarily about climate change as is so often alleged, although climate change is one of the Holy Father’s concerns” (Rausch, 2017: 135). Rather, it is a document which calls all to protect our “common home” in the image and likeness of the Creator. One approach to that end, as many of the authors here indicate, is the pursuit of an integral ecology.

Francis thus adds new dimensions to the sustainability dialogue which elevate the debate from simply being an issue of waste and misuse to one of respect for God’s creation and all its elements. He is extending the thought process of Leo XIII when the latter called attention to the plight of labor, indicating that workers, as children of God, have rights and should not be used solely as means to an end. Like Leo, Francis feels an obligation to speak on behalf of the disadvantaged and stresses the importance of the principle of subsidiarity: decisions affecting the lives of the many should be resolved within those bodies (at the lowest organizational level possible) and not automatically by the privileged. A former archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams clarifies the significance with these words:

The argument of these opening sections of *Laudato Si'* repeatedly points us back to a fundamental lesson: We as human beings are not the source of meaning or value; if we believe we are, we exchange the real world for a virtual one, a world in which—to echo Lewis Carroll’s Humpty Dumpty—the only question is who is to be master. A culture in which managing limits is an embarrassing and unwelcome imperative is a culture that has lost touch with the very idea of a world, let alone a created world (i.e., one in which a creative intelligence communicates with us and leads us into meanings and visions we could not have generated ourselves). (Williams, 2015)

Like Leo XIII, Pius X, John XXIII, and pontiffs after them, Francis is asserting the obligation of the Church to ensure the well-being of all of God’s creation. He is reiterating the belief that this is a “created world.”

Each of the articles in this issue provides a unique perspective on Francis’s encyclical. Each includes insights that readers can ponder and assess. Each recognizes that Francis adds new dimensions to the role of the Church in addressing global unsustainability. Each perceives that part of the solution is the development of a new paradigm for sharing earth in respect for the Creator. All realize that Francis is doing more than

just adding to the foundations laid by his predecessors (from Leo XIII to Benedict XVI) for treating our common home with respect and wonder, that while climate change and unsustainability are important elements of the encyclical, they are symptoms of an integrated, systemic, and global problem begging for a solution in a created world.

### **LAUDATO SI' AND INTEGRAL ECOLOGY: A RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF SUSTAINABILITY**

In “*Laudato Si’* and Integral Ecology,” Imanaka, Prussia, and Alexis use the lens of Roman Catholic social thought to extend “the focus of sustainability to include social justice through its emphasis on human dignity, the common good, and *caritas*” (p. 39). While the article calls attention to how some businesses misrepresent their sustainability practices despite generating unsustainable consequences, its primary focus is demonstrating how the underlying tenets of Roman Catholic social teaching can build bridges between important concepts in the sustainability literature such as human ecology, peace, and ecological conversion. They thus reconstruct the sustainability framework through the notion of integral ecology.

In connecting Roman Catholicism to sustainability, Imanaka and her coauthors draw from the work of the Saint Kateri Tekakwitha Conservation Center. They indicate that the Center, which has been developing a systematic Roman Catholic perspective on sustainability, adapted and refined the seven themes of ecological responsibility originally developed by the U.S. Catholic Bishops. As a useful checklist for trying to understand the foundations of a Roman Catholic rubric on sustainability, these principles bear repeating here:

1. [a God-centered and] sacramental view of the universe [which grounds human accountability for the fate of the earth];
2. a consistent respect for human life, which extends to respect for all creation;
3. a worldview affirming the ethical significance of global interdependence and the global common good;
4. an ethics of solidarity promoting cooperation and a just structure of sharing in the world community;
5. an understanding of the universal purpose of created things, which requires equitable use of the Earth’s resources;
6. [real choices for the poor], which [give] passion to the quest for an equitable and sustainable world; and

7. a conception of authentic development[,] which offers a direction for progress that respects human dignity and the limits of material growth. (p. 45)

For the staff of the Center, these themes provide a good starting point for principles that can guide a Roman Catholic perspective on sustainability as developed in *Laudato Si'*.

The authors also contribute a model of integral ecology that demonstrates “how the concept of integral ecology is related to both the secular sustainable development paradigm and prior teachings on the environment and justice in CST” (p. 54). They argue that integral ecology is an antidote to unsustainable business practices.

In an article prepared for the 10<sup>th</sup> Whitehead International Conference and published in *For Our Common Home: Process-relational Responses to Laudato Si'*, Clugson and Gore indicate that *Laudato Si'* challenges us to implement three major shifts:

From narrow anthropocentrism to integral ecology, centered on the common good and the interconnectedness and dignity of all life.

Toward a just and equitable social order, emphasizing a new bottom line for development that replaces economic growth and short-term gain (GDP) with fuller measures of personal and planetary well being.

Toward a true global collaboration—a social movement that is not about conversion but convergence grounded in shared global ethics. (Clugson & Gore, 2015: 202)

This lay perspective provides insights for developing a working definition of integral ecology and is consistent with the principles refined by Imanaka et al., whose viewpoint is definitely informed by Ignatius’s *Spiritual Exercises* and offers a distinctly Roman Catholic (and perhaps even Jesuit) perspective on sustainability.

## **INEQUALITY, DIGNITY, AND THE SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE**

Sandra Waddock explores alternatives to current economic models through the concept of inequality. Like many of the other contributors, she identifies how the lack of sustainable business practices creates greater gaps between the haves and the have-nots, and demonstrates how climate change has a diverse impact on people across different

social and economic classes. Citing a 2014 IPCC document, she builds a sustainability link to inequality: “Risks are unevenly distributed and are generally greater for disadvantaged people and communities in countries at all levels of development” (p. 66, citing IPCC, 2014: 13). She also cites Francis’s insight: “Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature” (p. 66, citing Francis, 2015: no. 139).

Waddock sees inequality as a systemic issue. She observes, for instance, that poverty too often has the consequence of violating the dignity of the poor, and that disparities in wealth on a global level are leading to a shrinking middle class and a jobs crisis. Waddock thus introduces efforts by the U.N. to address goals that are designed to discourage inequality and injustice and slow climate change.

Waddock’s review of the impact of current business practices also leads her to consider alternative theories of doing business. A major goal of such ideas is to redefine the meaning of success, of which wealth maximization and profitability have long been the measure. The new business and economic models that Waddock pursues aim to change our choice of measures in favor of strategies that are more compatible with sustainable practices.

One consequence of such alternative models, for example, would be more broad-based involvement in decision-making, which in turn would contribute to the development of a more egalitarian decision calculus. It would also encourage recognition of the shared nature of economic, political, and social themes which is wholly consistent with Francis’s call for respect and human dignity.

## **LAUDATO SI’ AND THE PAPAL VIEW OF ECOLOGICAL DEBT**

This study focuses on a more specific, and perhaps more contentious, topic compared to most of the other contributions. Chipalkatti, Rishi, and Lobo use the concept of ecological debt to introduce their treatment of *Laudato Si’*’s critique of countries in the northern hemisphere, an idea that stems from a picture of the economics between the global North and South as presented in paragraph 51 of the encyclical. The authors observe that

in [Francis’s] view, over-consumption on the part of the global North has led to a disproportionate use of natural resources extracted from the global South, resulting in local environmental damage for the latter. The debt thus

arises when raw materials are exported from poor nations (South) to rich nations (North) to satisfy the latter's appetites. (p. 86)

They then assess the Pope's statement by providing a historical perspective on the concept of historical debt before moving on to evaluate the indictment of MNCs using the pollution haven hypothesis and empirical data.

Chipalkatti et al.'s historical treatment of ecological debt includes a short history of the concept as used by South American intellectuals and political leaders. They also use a working definition developed at Ghent University that points to three different patterns of ecological damage:

1. the ecological damage caused over time by country A in other countries or in an area under jurisdiction of another country through its production and consumption patterns, and/or
2. the ecological damage caused over time by country A to ecosystems beyond national jurisdiction through its consumption and production patterns, and/or
3. the exploitation or use of ecosystems and ecosystem goods and services over time by country A at the expense of the equitable rights to these ecosystems and ecosystem goods and services of other countries or individuals. (Goeminne & Paredis, 2010: 697)

The authors then argue that Francis's encyclical has reinvigorated the discussion.

From their historical analysis, four methods for estimating ecological debt are discussed. One measure is "the amount of ecological damage caused over time by a country, through its production and consumption patterns, in ecosystems beyond its natural jurisdiction" (p. 91); indeed, a summary of their findings states that "our results demonstrate that this assertion is empirically valid for our sample of commodity exporting developing countries" (p. 98). The authors then make several recommendations for mitigating the negative impact of processes and policies that encourage ecological debt.

## **LAUDATO SI'**

Fr. Rausch's article is a more traditional analysis of the encyclical. He approaches the document chapter by chapter while addressing the question "What is happening to our common home?". He notes in his first section the consequences of the abuse suffered by the earth and its

ecosystems. He reiterates that what Francis is calling attention to is not new, and notes that Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI also called for efforts to reduce greenhouse emissions and assist those most affected by the harmful effects of climate change. Yet of particular importance in the first chapter of *Laudato Si'* is Francis not claiming to have all the answers; rather, he calls for collaboration and deliberation in addressing climate change. He leaves the door open rather than suggesting dogma.

Like the other authors, Rausch makes a point out of the Pontiff's broadening concept of the planet: "Francis argues that the Bible has no place for a tyrannical anthropocentrism at the expense of, or unconcerned for, God's other creatures..." (p. 138). He also echoes the feelings of others when he points out what Peter Cardinal Turkson indicated—that the word "stewardship" is rarely used in the document in deference to the word "care." That emphasis points to how Francis's document and the Church are moving further away from an anthropocentric view of the world.

Commenting on integral ecology as discussed in the encyclical, Fr. Rausch stresses "that as human beings we belong to one single human family, dependent on each other and on the earth that is our common home" (p. 140). An integral ecology thus needs to be characterized by new definitions of terms like "sustainable use," for instance, which "means considering each ecosystem's regenerative ability" (p. 141). Here Rausch observes, as with many others, that Francis is challenging all to a profound conversion, to a change of lifestyle, one for which the concept of integral ecology once again provides an organizing principle. As the author remarks, quoting from the encyclical, "a true ecological approach *always* becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*" (no. 49), especially since the poor are most affected by a changed environment.

In later paragraphs, Fr. Rausch addresses fears expressed by critics in discussing Francis's treatment of technology and of terms such as "free market" and "profit-driven economy." He reminds us that Francis is "calling not for an end to capitalism but for a spirituality more sensitive to our hurting planet" (p. 142). Again, one is reminded of the *Spiritual Exercises* as an integrating element of the process that brings us closer to an integral ecology.



## **THE PAPAL ENCYCLICAL *LAUDATO SI'*: A FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY ATTENTIVE TO THE POOR**

In the first sentence of their article, Kennedy and Santos quote reactions to *Laudato Si'* from the *Financial Times* of London and *The Guardian*. They note that these major news outlets refer to *Laudato Si'* “as one of the most significant events in the modern environmental movement” and something “the world should pay attention [to]” (p. 110). Indeed, the author of the preface to a collection of articles on integral ecology echoed such praise when he stated that “we [the members of the conference] resolved to merge our little movement into the great one we hope Pope Francis will lead” (Cobb, 2015: v). Such comments surely testify to the impact of Francis’s message, and indicate that not all businesspersons found it threatening, ignorant of the facts, or objectionable. In fact, Kennedy and Santos’s article attempts to demonstrate how alternative business models can move the world closer to the Holy Father’s concept of a just society.

The authors first show how the Dominant Social Paradigm (DSP) fails to support global sustainability goals, and then contrast it with the New Ecological Paradigm (NEP) which calls for a more eco-centric and holistic view of the world. They evaluate and view programs developed by organizations like the OECD, the UN Global Compact, and the Caux Roundtable as small steps in the right direction, as efforts to moderate business excesses, but consider them to be too anthropocentric. They note Kilbourne’s conclusion that “real change in environmental behaviors has not occurred even with a heightened concern about the environment” (p. 111, citing Kilbourne, 2010).

Kennedy and Santos conclude that the base assumptions of the DSP and NEP are considerably different. For the DSP, they discuss four identified assumptions based on Catton & Dunlap (1980):

1. that human persons are independent and inherently different from nature, and so are dominant over it;
2. that they are in control of their own futures;
3. that the world has unlimited potential for creating opportunities for human persons; and
4. that human progress can be maintained by human ingenuity, often in the form of technology. (p. 114)

Rejecting the notion that the DSP can support a more sustainable future, they then focus the rest of the article on comparing the assumptions of the NEP with *Laudato Si'* and discussing how principles derived from the NEP and *Laudato Si'* can better address the shortcomings of the current environmental situation. These careful comparisons build links to Roman Catholic social thought and demonstrate that while Francis's encyclical is critical of business, he himself is not hostile to it. The authors conclude that *Laudato Si'* puts the poor and marginalized at the center of the ecological debate.

## THIS ISSUE OF THE *JOURNAL* IN CONTEXT

In reflecting on the articles in this issue of the *Journal*, it seems appropriate to keep in mind that Francis did not deliver his encyclical as an instrument of dogma. He was sharing a sincere concern for the future of the planet, one inclusive of all of Creation. He was speaking as a spiritual leader who had not only studied but also listened for years to experts and the representatives of people at the margins. He encourages dialogue throughout the document, not confrontation, and appears to see his role as that of a cautious and compassionate mentor. The Holy Father is speaking of aspirations.

One principle both critics and supporters have latched onto is that of subsidiarity. Critics of the Pontiff's efforts who come from the religious right, for instance, see Francis's work as systematically inconsistent with the teachings of popes since Leo XIII. They argue that the Roman Catholic concept of subsidiarity stresses the idea that governments (and central ones especially) should not attempt to redistribute wealth, provide for medical care, or interfere with the right to property (DePrisco, 2017). Protagonists like David Bosnich, writing through the Acton Institute, argue, for example, that the United States Catholic Bishops are distorting the fundamental arguments of subsidiarity by encouraging state sponsored health care. He observes that

this is why Pope John Paul II took the "social assistance state" to task in his 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annus*. The Pontiff wrote that the Welfare State was contradicting the principle of subsidiarity by intervening directly and depriving society of its responsibility. This "leads to a loss of human energies and an inordinate increase of public agencies which are dominated more by bureaucratic ways of thinking than by concern for serving their clients and which are accompanied by an enormous increase in spending." (Bosnich, 2010)

Such opinions expose the divisions and very different perspectives adopted among Roman Catholics, let alone among non-Catholics. They demonstrate just how divided people are over sustainability and many other related topics, e.g., universal health care, limiting access to coastal zones for oil exploration, etc. Indeed, the idea of government-sponsored or -aided efforts at sustainability can be tantamount to heretical behavior for some. DePrisco, for example, interprets as direct violations of papal teaching the same papal encyclicals that seem to support state sponsored assistance for the marginalized or regulations that might threaten aspects of private property ownership and usage. He quotes Leo XIII to bolster his argument against threats to private property that may level the playing field:

Let them, however, never allow this to escape their memory: that whilst it is proper and desirable to assert and secure the rights of the many, yet this is not to be done by a violation of duty; and that these are very important duties; not to touch what belongs to another; to allow everyone to be free in the management of his own affairs; not to hinder any one to dispose of his services when he please and where he please. (Pope Leo XIII, as quoted in DePrisco, 2017)

DePrisco interprets the words of Leo XIII as existing in the same historical context as today, yet the Pontiff back then was guarding a very different type of challenge to property rights compared to Francis—he was concerned, in part, with government absorption of industrial property. Indeed, Francis himself, like Leo XIII before him, is also concerned with human dignity in the context of Creation. Both of them needed to address the consequences of increasing inequalities in income and wealth. Leo, however, did not have to contend in 1891 with the social, political, and cultural forces that Francis faces today.

As members of a select group of educators, we can support the Pontiff by ensuring that our institutions are incubators for the minds of generations who will have to live with, and overcome, the consequences of the continued pursuit of unsustainable practices. This task will not be an easy one: as the articles in this journal indicate, reform will require major cultural changes throughout the world, yet our current social, economic, and political systems are not designed to promote long-term transformations. By linking the argument to religious values, the Pontiff recognizes that these issues are complex and require philosophical and theological underpinning to justify the types of analyses and actions that are needed. It is fortunate, then, that the authors of these articles have contributed mightily to that effort. They have cracked the surface of a set of problems that resemble a layer cake. Yet they—and all of us—will need help. What can Jesuit institutions do to assist?

Many of us view our educational efforts as important tools for creating a mindset that can see less obvious solutions. One wonders to what degree that assumption is correct. In an article entitled “On Educational Reform,” Marcus Ford discusses the cultural reforms required to address the problems of unsustainability. He says that “we must replace our consumer culture with a culture that ‘encourages a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption’” (Ford, 2015: 270–271).

Ford also addresses the inadequacies of our current educational model. First, he observes that “humans are a part of an ecosystem that has meaning and worth quite apart from the worth it has to human economy” (Ford, 2015: 271). He then notes that “transitioning from our current culture of economic progress and individualism to an ecological culture presents what Pope Francis terms an educational challenge (209)” (Ford, 2015: 271). Ford cites Francis:

The specialization which belongs to technology makes it difficult to see the larger picture. The fragmentation of knowledge proves helpful for concrete applications, and yet it often leads to a loss of appreciation for the whole, for the relationships between things, and for the broader horizon, which then becomes irrelevant. (Francis, 2015: no. 110)

Ford also extends his argument by observing that our public and private universities are not equipped to provide this “holistic, trans-technical, ethically infused education” (Ford, 2015: 271). Furthermore, “if they are to provide what is needed, they will have to take a new form, embrace a new mission, and adopt a new worldview. As it currently exists, higher education is a major part of the problem that needs to be solved” (Ford, 2015: 271–272). He then extends the observation by saying that we need “colleges and universities that value and encourage wisdom as well as knowledge” (Ford, 2015: 272–273).

Educating for wisdom, compassion, and ecological stewardship will require a different kind of curriculum than what now exists. We will have to recover old ways—and develop new ones—of teaching young people to think carefully about the world and their lives and about how to find happiness and meaning without destroying the planet and other cultures. (Ford, 2015: 273)

It is important to remember as well that Francis is not the only, nor the first, religious leader to call for change. Two years before the Vatican released *Laudato Si'*, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew dedicated a day of prayer for the renewal of the earth (September 1, 2013). He sent this message to his flock:

Since then, as a result of this initiative, the interest in protecting the natural environment has expanded more broadly and numerous measures are now taken for the sustainability and balance of the earth's ecosystems as well as for all related problems....

On the occasion, then, of this important day and the commencement of the year, we pray with Joshua, the angelic Symeon, the seven children in Ephesus, and the sacred Psalmist David that the Lord will send forth His spirit and renew the face of the earth (cf. Ps. 103.20) to bless the works of His hands and deem us worthy of peacefully completing the time that lies before us. And we invoke upon those undertaking scientific research into the power of nature the illumination, grace and blessing of the Holy Spirit. Amen. (Bartholomew, 2013)

The debate over Francis's encyclical will hopefully continue attracting more support and assessment. It calls attention to important social, economic, political, and religious principles, principles that are not new and that have been with us for a very long time. We therefore cannot allow those who argue that *Laudato Si'* is naïve and wishful thinking to claim victory because we did not try. Unlike Forster and Donoughue, we need to be more hopeful and positive; indeed, their concluding comments in their article for The Global Warming Policy Foundation already beg the question:

Overall, the encyclical strikes us as well-meaning but somewhat naïve. Its gentle idealism longs for a world in which cats no longer chase mice, a world in which species do not kill and eat each other (most do), a world in which species no longer become extinct, despite the firmly established scientific fact that most of the species that have existed have already become extinct through the normal operation of the evolutionary process. (Forster & Donoughue, 2015: 7)

Church leadership, moreover, has evolved Roman Catholic social thought in many ways since Leo XIII penned *Rerum Novarum*. A partial list of such developments would include:

- shifting from policies that favored the wealthy and employers to policies that emphatically state the right of individuals to dignity (as expressed in the right to organize) and to work that provides a living wage;
- actively pursuing the principle of subsidiarity both within the Church and in support of those peoples who are currently unable to organize and pursue their social and economic interests;

- recognizing the interests of Catholics held in common with every other religious denomination and widening the lines of communication and collaboration; and,
- actively arguing for a consistent ethic of life (Bernardin, 2008).

All these issues share a link to human dignity and, by extension, to an integral ecology. We need to ask ourselves what we can contribute to the effort, and how this journal can foster an atmosphere that encourages research and action in pursuit of an integral ecology.

So now what? After reading the articles in this issue, one may ask, “What are we doing? What do we intend to do?” If we use as a reference point the worldwide network of Jesuit colleges and universities, the answer to these questions is, “We are doing much and can do a great deal.” In the wake of the release of *Laudato Si'*, many Jesuit schools developed conferences and teach-ins to discuss the implications of the encyclical and map strategies for ensuring that Francis’s message was not just received but also actually acted upon. The development of this journal, moreover, represents a commitment by members of the International Association of Jesuit Business Schools to transform our academic focus into one that will contribute much more toward achieving a sustainable world. An article appearing on the Ignatian Solidarity Network (ISN) provides an impressive list of activities sponsored by Jesuit colleges and universities, high schools, and parishes in response to the encyclical’s release (ISN Staff, 2016).

Faculty at many of these schools have also developed courses that challenge the Dominant Social Paradigm and cast traditional subjects into the context of *Laudato Si'*. Articles in earlier issues of this journal document such courses in formation or already implemented in the curriculum; they recast traditional business subjects into a framework consistent with the principles of sustainability. Werner and Stoner, for instance, demonstrate how a traditional finance course can be reframed to encourage the types of values, principles, and practices that support initiatives consistent with Francis’s message (Werner & Stoner, 2015). Other articles, including those in a special issue of this journal (2013; on social entrepreneurship), talk about how entrepreneurship courses can focus on social issues by using the creative process to develop enterprises that assist the poor and disadvantaged.

Such faculty initiatives at individual schools are not the only avenues, however, for introducing the principles of sustainability and supporting Francis’s call for a cultural transformation. The Ignatian Solidarity Network provides a communications channel for spreading

and collecting information, publishing an extensive list of activities undertaken at Jesuit institutions after taking stock of accomplishments one year after the publication of *Laudato Si'*. The list cut across all layers of education, detailing events at colleges, universities, high schools, and parishes as well as with aligned groups (ISN Staff, 2016).

As individuals, we can do what every other person can—live a lifestyle that respects and promotes values congruent with a commitment to sustainable practices. Doing so begins with a respect for human dignity, a point several of our authors made in suggesting alternative management models. It also means recognizing the Pontiff's main thesis—that we live in a created world/universe where human beings are only one aspect of that existence. Admitting this principle, however, requires that we rethink the role of humankind. William Weis thus reminds us, in an article written well before the release of *Laudato Si'*, of the influence of faculty and of the implications of not walking the walk (Weis, 2013).

Other endeavors include aiding other groups and institutions in taking practical action. For instance, we can volunteer for organizations when they sponsor activities intended to promote sustainability. For those who attend religious and spiritual services, volunteering at events sponsored by our local parish, church community, synagogue, temple, mosque, etc. can provide support for pastors, ministers, and leaders as well as set examples for our children, their friends, and their classmates. We can also volunteer for political activity that supports policies consistent with sustainable practices and candidates who will support compatible policies.

We also need to find ways to maintain relationships with our graduates to minimize intellectual and social distance. Beyond the occasional interaction at alumni events or on-campus activities featuring interesting or prominent speakers, we tend to lose contact with all but a few of them after they finish their degrees and take their place in the workaday world. By maintaining these relationships, we may be able to encourage them to apply the principles they were exposed to in class and influence their behavior in the work environment. And, perhaps far more importantly, they may be able to teach us a great deal about problems, opportunities, and possibilities in contributing to a more sustainable world. We cannot continue to interact with them only when we raise funds for a building or an endowed chair.

We can thus continue the practices that helped bring us this far especially in our educational institutions, e.g., developing coursework, providing opportunities outside the classroom context, participating in and contributing to extra-curricular activities. But there is still more that

can be done, like encouraging our institutions to form consortia that can broaden the support base. Groups of faculty members, for instance, can urge administration to make it easier for students and faculty to develop initiatives and to reward such efforts by including them in the evaluation process.

Faculty members sitting either as voting or *ad hoc* members of boards of trustees can also provide support by encouraging their boards to invest only in firms that promote sustainable practices while avoiding those that pursue the contrary. They can implement internal policies and practices that award contracts to companies that follow sustainable practices as well as set goals for the reduction of the institution's carbon footprint, if they have not already done so.

We can also encourage the membership of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (through the participating administrators of our institutions) to promote the encyclical as well as sustainable business practices within their organizations as much as they support the sharing and coordination of study abroad programs. The AJCU has spoken out twice in recent months, for instance, on behalf of students impacted by the DACA issue.

We can also encourage the administration and faculty of colleges of business administration to undergo a process of discernment to determine if concrete programmatic changes that promote sustainability can be introduced while maintaining and enhancing career opportunities for students. Stoner has identified some of the worst practices of our current finance and other courses in a document that mimics, somewhat ruefully, the United States Declaration of Independence (Stoner, 2016). We need to spend time reviewing the content of these subjects to see how they can be redesigned to support the development of curricula that take sustainable practices seriously, and to ensure that graduates are prepared to compete in an environment that may, at least initially, take a stance of indifference.

On a global level, we need to find ways to assist schools in countries where there are large concentrations of people at the margins. While this does not imply that no such programs are already in place and doing good work, several authors in this issue indicate discrepancies in wealth distribution that continue to widen. Progress in reducing poverty and conserving resources also appears to be slow. These environments as such seem to be fertile grounds for the development of alternative educational models. Without treating these cultures as laboratories, we may be able to help them experiment with educational programs that are more consistent with sustainable principles and practices. In fact,



they may have greater success than our own institutions because they may have less inertia and fewer vested interests.

There is little doubt that our faculties can creatively incorporate ideas and concepts that highlight the connection between our subject fields and the principles Francis promotes in his encyclical. Many faculty members, for instance, are already emphasizing the centrality of respect for human dignity as an integral component in courses they are currently teaching and developing in traditional disciplines. Doing this does not require a major change in values; it “simply” requires that we keep seeking to walk the talk of our beliefs. As members of Jesuit institutions of learning, we are already pursuing many of the foundational values needed to nurture and promote sustainability as envisioned by the Pontiff, values well described in a document initially developed at the Jesuit Institute as a work of the British Province of the Society. It was written well before sustainability attained traction as a hot topic, and demonstrates that Francis’s efforts to link his encyclical to transformative changes in culture are consistent with the education philosophy pursued by the Jesuits for centuries. It also shows that Francis’s encyclical may be less revolutionary than portrayed and is fully consistent with Church philosophy which treats creation as a gift not just to benefit from but for which we have obligations. Indeed, as several supporters of Francis have indicated, humankind needs to respect the dignity of all creation.

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