

Abstract

Toward an Integral Ecology

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This paper delves into Pope Francis' ecological perspective in his encyclical 'Laudato Si', with a focus on its theological foundations, and its critiques of our current technocratic paradigm. Central to his vision is the concept of Integral Ecology, which envisions a world where all aspects of existence are intricately interconnected. This interconnectedness hinges on three crucial relationships: between humankind and God, humankind and the natural world, and humankind with itself, our neighbors. These foundational relationships have been fractured, both outwardly and within us. These fractures of relationship are rooted in misguided anthropocentric cultural and psychological worldviews. It is in converting these cultural and psychological underpinnings of our technocratic societies that a new and more integral socio-structural schema can emerge.

Intro: Relationships and their fractures

Pope Francis' encyclical 'Laudato Si' presents an ecological perspective that emphasizes the interconnection of three pivotal relationships: between humanity and the divine, humanity and the natural environment, and the relationships amongst humanity itself. This paper will

expound upon the theological underpinnings of Pope Francis' Integral Ecology, demonstrating how it addresses the ruptures in these fundamental relationships.

Part 1: The Broken Mandate

The disruption of these vital relationships has derailed the ecological stewardship bestowed upon us in the biblical directive to 'till and keep' the Garden of the World. 'Tilling' signifies the responsible cultivation of the earth, while 'keeping' implies nurturing and safeguarding the natural world, including human communities and cultures. Regrettably, this sacred calling has been overshadowed by a domineering anthropocentrism that displays little regard for the common good.

Part 2: The Technocratic Paradigm

This anthropocentric hegemony is identified as the technocratic paradigm, a dominating force in economic and political spheres. This paradigm exhibits a relentless pursuit of technological advancement, often prioritizing profit at the expense of human well-being and environmental sustainability. It is characterized by a rapidification of life and work geared solely towards production and consumption. This mindset, coupled with the pervasive throwaway culture, has resulted in a distressing degradation of our planetary home, particularly in less developed nations. In these developing regions, it has culminated in alarming rates of water pollution, biodiversity loss, social fragmentation, and economic disparity.

Part 3: A Call to Metanoia

Addressing these critical issues requires a profound reorientation not only of our economic, political, and social structures, but also of our hearts and minds, reorienting our place within the natural order and human community. Drawing from Daniel P. Castillo's 'An

'Ecological Theology of Liberation', we understand that the values that underpin our socio-economic and material frameworks find their origins in the cultural and psychological fabric of society. By reorienting these foundational cultural/ psychological aspects, we can challenge the distorted value systems perpetuated by the technocratic paradigm. This recalibration holds the potential to foster fresh social visions and valuations that can reshape both the structural and cultural dimensions of our world.

Conclusion:

This transformative journey requires nothing short of a metanoia. Such a conversion holds the promise of a deeper understanding that can lead to the restoration of a harmonious relationship with the natural world, humanity, and the divine. This, in turn, can produce structural changes that forge a new paradigm and new solidarities for the future—a paradigm that embraces a heightened awareness of our shared origin, mutual belonging, and collective destiny.