



Summary of 2019 International Convention

by Professor Anna Maria **Tarantola**, Chairwoman of CAPP Foundation
Professor Adrian **Pabst**, Secretary of CAPP Foundation Scientific Committee

1. Integral ecology

We live in an increasingly digital age that offers opportunities for communication and cooperation, but also new sources of social fragmentation and conflict. *Laudato Si'* provides a prophetic voice which calls attention to the negative consequences - ecological, social, economic and political - of the present model of development and underline the urgency of systematic and concerted efforts aimed at an Economy with a human face.

Pope Frances with this social encyclical speaks of an integral ecology that underlines the need for, and the interaction of, human, economic, social and environmental sustainability. The Holy Father points out the spiritual dimension of ecology and enjoins us to inhabit with care our 'common home of nature'.

To understand the meaning of integral ecology and lead a more holistic life, it is instructive to reflect on five themes that can be summarised in terms of 5 Cs:

- (1) Crisis – both environmental devastation and the spiritual void in contemporary society, but also the moment of discernment and judgement to change our ways
- (2) Collegiality of teaching and dissemination of Catholic Social Thought
- (3) Conversation or dialogue with science and other disciplines
- (4) Care for creation
- (5) Conversion – transforming our hearts and minds through our union with Christ and education into ecological citizenship

Key to the process of conversion is the acknowledgment that the destruction of nature hits the poor first and most of all. There is a deep link between the fragility of our natural environment and the vulnerability of the poor. Moreover, in developed economies people are now more likely to die from lifestyles than from infectious diseases. We need new models for integral economic and ecological development that are anchored not in instrumental rationality but in practical wisdom (*phronesis*). Practical wisdom is a higher reason linked to the practice of virtue, so that economic thinking and policy can once again be teleological – pursuing the common good based on the equality and dignity of all.

2. Concrete obstacles to integral development

The dominant technocratic paradigm is part of a spiritual disorder, with the self at the centre of reality and will and desire dominating both society and nature. Connected with this are not just selfishness and greed, but also the externalisation of ecological and social costs. The problem is that our prevailing economic models privatise profits and socialise costs. Growth is about quantity, not quality or sustainability, and developed economies use more resources for production today than ever before in the sense of having a very high material footprint.

The obstacles to integral development include (1) short-term goals, not strategic thinking; (2) a definition of risk that ignores systemic threats and the negative impact of actions not aimed at integral ecology; and (3) the absence of just, fair and inclusive models. What is needed is an intergenerational approach that shares risk, rewards and resources. Developed economies have to reduce resource use and decouple growth from resource depletion. We require circular economic models that shift from the limits of growth to the growth of limits. Central to a fundamental transformation and ecological transition is a humanism capable of bringing together different fields of knowledge, including economics, ethics, anthropology and the natural sciences. This is vital in order to hold in balance material and spiritual development.

Business cannot survive without taking into consideration the ethical significance of how the cycle of production and consumption is carried out: actions and responsibility, justice and profit, creation of wealth and its distribution, operations and respect for the environment must be held together.

3. Practical action

The 2019 International Convention of the Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation featured two sets of propositions for practical action.

First, submissions from the various chapters in different countries and, second, presentations delivered at the conference in the Vatican.

All stressed the need to act immediately and appropriately in order to get back onto the right path towards fair, generous and sustainable growth.

Among the most salient and original ideas were:

- (1) a 4-day week with the same pay
- (2) fair, free public transport
- (3) greater limits again on Sunday trading, so that consumerism is reduced and people get to spend more time with their families

- (4) impact investment needs to take into account ecological effects, e.g. integrating SDGs into investment decisions
- (5) the exit from fossil fuels will require youth engagement and incentives for low carbon technology like electrical cars
- (6) the need to modify companies' strategies, governance and organization in order to take care of the needs of all the stakeholders, not only those of shareholders
- (7) to have generally accepted measurement methods to detect and correctly assess non- financial results of the companies, for example highlight the results reached by employers that help their workforce with childcare or housing
- (8) integral measures of poverty
- (9) financial institutions can
 - (i) factor in ecological effects of investment projects
 - (ii) promote sustainable climate finance by channelling investment into carbon-neutral energy production, e.g. wind farms in England or green bonds in Poland
 - (iii) be signatories to international agreements such as COP21 Paris
 - (iv) bring financial, intellectual and organisational capital to global action
- (10) fighting energy poverty through smart solar technologies, e.g. BBOX
- (11) laser technology to deal with nuclear waste
- (12) modifying company model (e.g. employee-owned or social enterprise) and adopt SDGs voluntarily .

All stressed that what is missing is political will and taking on the vested interests.