

The Pope, the Poor, and the Planet

Georgian Triangle Lifelong Learning Institute, January 12, 2018

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1. *Evangelii Gaudium*: Evangelization in the context of a consumer society

- a. Consumerism as spiritual danger
- b. Francis on the idolatry of money
- c. The new economic tyranny
- d. Every economic system is a “means” to serve humans: must never be considered absolute
- e. The effects of the new idolatry: rising inequality

2. Pope Francis and Karl Polanyi on the Absolutization of the Free Market

- a. The Great Transformation: what is a free market society?
- b. The Supply-Demand-Price mechanism
- c. The Market Society as totalizing and self-regulating
- d. Submitting “labour” and “land” to the market mechanism
- e. Traditional communities v. Market societies: the “disembedding” of the economy
- f. Polanyi on the ecological crisis
- g. The Double Movement: society moves to protect itself.

3. Laudato Si!: The Ecological Crisis and Social Injustice

- a. Laudato Si (Praise be to you!)
- b. The nature of the ecological crisis
- c. Absolutization of the Market System in Practice
- d. The material harm
- e. The spiritual harm
 - i. Culture of indifference
 - ii. Culture of distraction
 - iii. Self-promotion, self-absorption
 - iv. Desperate, obsessive consumerism

4. Redefining idolatry

- a. Gustavo Guterrez: Idolatry, death and evil
- b. A new definition of idolatry
 - i. Cognitive dimension
 - ii. Practical dimension

c. Francis in Laudato Si

- i. Idolatry not atheism is the problem
- ii. Addressed to people of good will
- iii. Only conversion is ecological conversion
- iv. Idolatry of money (absolutization of the market) turns people into objects, instruments that serve the market and the interests of the wealthy
- v. Pope Francis and I-Thou relations
- vi Francis as a model for environmentalists.

5. Globalization of Addiction as Spiritual Crisis

- a. Alexander and Francis: parallel discourses of transcendence
- b. Defense of human dignity and freedom
- c. Social analysis v. individualistic moralizing
- d. Protest against absolutization of market-society
- e. Interpretation of consumerism (and ecological crisis) as response to social dislocation
- f. Spirituality and connection

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