

Birute Briliute\*  
Maryvale Institute, Birmingham, United Kingdom

## Global overpopulation and Catholic family ecology. An investigation into Pope Francis' call for a human ecology, change of culture and how it is linked to the Catholic teaching on family, sex and abortion: cross-examination of *Laudato Si'* and *Amoris Laetitia*

### Introduction

This article intends to explore a complex link between the ecological crisis, earth destruction, overpopulation, global ecology and human abuses – what Pope Francis contributes to the Catholic social and moral teaching on these issues in his encyclical letter *Laudato Si'* and apostolic exhortation *Amoris*

---

\* Dr. Birute Briliute is a full-time lecturer in catechetics, RE and pastoral theology as well as the Director for Ecclesiastical Licence in Divinity programme at Maryvale Institute, Birmingham, the UK. She is also a lecturer and a tutor for CCRS (Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies) for a Catholic school teacher training programme in London (Diocese of Westminster). Dr. Birute Briliute is a member of Catholic Theological Association of Great Britain as well as a member of European Society for Catholic Theology.

*Laetitia*. We will explore whether a change of a scientific, medical insight, and understanding of human nature and behaviour could positively influence the discernment of the Church on these matters. We will also examine how the Catholic teaching, as presented in *Amoris Laetitia*, illustrates a different quality of respect for the family and its sexual life? Will it foster a deeper respect for human life in general, and for the unborn child in particular? We will learn how the biblical story of creation is central for claiming respect for human life and nature. Both documents call for a renewal of the heart and a renewal of the Catholic family life.

### Part I: Pope Francis' ideas on ecological issues and respect for life as presented in *Laudato Si'* and *Amoris Laetitia*

1. **The encyclical letter *Laudato Si'*** is a plea to adopt a global perspective when dealing with ecological issues rather than a theory about nature and a global ecology. It urges us to change our culture when facing critical issues related to the beginning of life. "Since everything is interrelated, concern for the protection of nature is also incompatible with the justification of abortion. How can we genuinely teach the importance of concern for other vulnerable beings, however troublesome or inconvenient they may be, if we fail to protect a human embryo, even when its presence is uncomfortable and creates difficulties?"<sup>1</sup>

Pope Francis issued the encyclical letter "*Laudato Si'*, [...] mi' Signore" (Praise be to you, my Lord) on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2015. The main focus of this encyclical is centered on the broader issues of human development, ethics, social justice, and the care for our common habitat – Mother Earth, our stewardship bestowed on humanity by God's creation. The encyclical commences with the beautiful words from one of the canticles of St. Francis of Assisi: "Laudato Si', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord."<sup>2</sup> It begins with a cry of praise

<sup>1</sup> Encyclical letter *Laudato Si'* of the Holy Father Francis on care for our common home (henceforth *Laudato Si'*), 120, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html).

<sup>2</sup> Francis of Assisi, *Canticle of the creatures*, in: *Early documents*, vol. 1, New York–London–Manila 1999, pp. 113–114.

to God, our Lord, for his creation. It sounds like a liturgical start, like the preface at Mass. It is like a prayer of thanksgiving. Pope Francis also reminds us that we should be grateful for the gift of life as well as the stewardship of the Earth, our common home, and therefore we must be prepared to share a common responsibility for her protection and nourishment. Our earth “is like a sister with whom we share our life and our beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.”<sup>3</sup> The irresponsible use of the earth resources and an unequal share of common goods will constitute an immoral attitude and sinful behaviour towards God’s people and also towards God the Creator of the universe and all who dwell in it. In the exhortation he states: “We need to develop a new synthesis capable of overcoming the false arguments of recent centuries. Christianity, in fidelity to its own identity and the rich deposit of truth, which it has received from Jesus Christ, continues to reflect on these issues in fruitful dialogue with changing historical situations. In doing so, it reveals its eternal newness.”<sup>4</sup>

Pope Francis asked the Pontifical Academy of Sciences for advice about scientifically justified arguments, asserting the fact that our planet’s temperature is constantly increasing at an unprecedented rate, primarily due to irresponsible use of its resources, which is causing a permanent harmful change of our planet Earth. The main concern of the encyclical *Laudato Si’* is to prompt us to raise our awareness about our ethical responsibility as Christians. We should be aware of the potential consequences of the accelerating global warming of the Earth. To maintain and respect the balance within the global eco system, we should not interfere with the natural order of Mother Earth. Thus, the encyclical is not an academic or scientific document on environmental issues. It invites us to “transcend the language of mathematics and biology” and teaches us what it means “to be human.”<sup>5</sup> Pope Francis calls us on a conversion of the heart by inciting us to respect human life from its beginning till its end. “My predecessor Benedict XVI likewise proposed ‘eliminating the structural causes of the dysfunctions of the world economy and correcting models of growth which have proved incapable of ensuring respect for the environment.’ He observed that the

---

<sup>3</sup> *Laudato Si’* 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Laudato Si’* 121.

<sup>5</sup> *Laudato Si’* 11.

world cannot be analysed by isolating only one of its aspects, since ‘the book of nature is one and indivisible,’ and includes the environment, life, sexuality, the family, social relations, and so forth. It follows that ‘the deterioration of nature is closely connected to the culture which shapes human coexistence.’<sup>6</sup>

*Laudato Si’* is thus considered to be part of the moral and social teaching of the Catholic Church. This incitement is a concrete example of what the Catholic Church means by ‘scrutinizing the signs of the times.’<sup>7</sup> In *Mater et Magistra* Pope John XXIII presents the process of ‘seeing,’ ‘judging’ and ‘acting’ as a way of reading and responding to the signs of the times: “There are three stages, which should normally be followed in the reduction of social principles into practice. First, one reviews the concrete situation; secondly, one forms a judgement on it in the light of these same principles; thirdly, one decides what the circumstances can and should be done to implement these principles. These are the three stages that are usually expressed in the three terms: observe, judge, act.”<sup>8</sup>

In the first part of *Laudato Si’* Pope Francis offers a summary of alarming facts related to the climate change and its impact upon our planet. To justify his concerns, he is using information provided by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. He insists upon the urgent need to stop the irresponsible use of earthly resources. When preparing the encyclical, Pope Francis was not afraid of engaging in an academic dialogue with the scientists on the global ecological issues. In *Laudato Si’* he broadly explores the social, ethical, educational and theological aspects of the present global ecological crisis. Pope Francis doesn’t believe that the positive change in global ecology is possible without a change in our morality and in each person’s heart. He insists upon the importance of a social analysis of the problem, followed by a sound theological reflection. It should initiate a discernment of what is to be done to alter the situation. Pope Francis accepts and widens the idea which Pope John Paul II expressed on the World Day of Peace in 1990, stating

---

<sup>6</sup> *Laudato Si’* 6.

<sup>7</sup> *Gaudium et Spes*. Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world (henceforth GS), 4, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html).

<sup>8</sup> *Mater et Magistra*. Encyclical of Pope John XXIII on Christianity and social progress, 236, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_enc\\_15051961\\_mater.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_15051961_mater.html).

that the “ecological crisis is a moral issue.”<sup>9</sup> Therefore, it cannot be resolved unless all men and women start acting responsibly towards each other and to the ecological environment. When the threatening consequences and results as well as the impact of the global warming have been first ‘seen’ and ‘tested’ through the eyes and work of the scientists, Pope Francis interprets the situation in the light of God’s Word, as spelled out in the Gospel and the Tradition of the Catholic Church. *Laudato Si’* is not a scientific document, it is a faith-based Church document intended to inspire the faithful. When presenting his vision on ecology in *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis complements what the Catechism of the Catholic Church says about our responsibility to care for the world. The pope highlights the need to change our human behaviour, our culture when dealing with the changes affecting our planet. Among the other statements, he is very clear when saying that the overpopulation, as responsible for the ecological crisis, should not be understood as a claim for free abortion and use of contraceptives. The pope insists that the ecological crisis is to be addressed in the first place by a renewal of our hearts and by a fair distribution of the wealth of the earth among different world populations.

2. **The apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*** is also about a change of culture. It is more than an exhortation about the family, sexuality, children and abortion.

The environmentalists mainly blame the overpopulation of the developing countries, like for example China, African countries and India, as responsible for the global warming and pollution of the earth. As Judith Stephenson, Professor of Sexual & Reproductive Health at UCL and Programme Director for Maternal Health, UCL Partners (London, UK)<sup>10</sup>, Karen Newman, a coordinator in Population and Sustainability Network<sup>11</sup> and Susannah Mayhew, a lecturer in health policy and reproductive health at the Centre

---

<sup>9</sup> Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the celebration of the World Day of Peace, 1 January 1990 *Peace with God the Creator, peace with all of creation*, V 15, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_19891208\\_xxiii-world-day-for-peace.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19891208_xxiii-world-day-for-peace.html).

<sup>10</sup> Research Department of Reproductive Health, Institute of Women’s Health, UCL, London W1C1E 6BT, UK.

<sup>11</sup> Population and Sustainability Network, c/o Margaret Pyke Trust, 73 Charlotte Street, London W1T 4PL, UK.

for Population Studies, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine<sup>12</sup> rightly claim that the overpopulation not only causes pollution and global warming but also creates poverty and weakens the capacity of the poor communities to adapt to climate change: “Rapid population growth endangers human development, provision of basic services and poverty eradication and weakens the capacity of poor communities to adapt to climate change. Significant mass migration is likely to occur in response to climate change and should be regarded as a legitimate response to the effects of climate change. Linking population dynamics with climate change is a sensitive issue, but family planning programmes that respect and protect human rights can bring a remarkable range of benefits. [...] The contribution of population growth, migration, urbanization, ageing and household composition to mitigation and adaptation programmes needs urgent investigation.”<sup>13</sup>

In this article I intend to argue that environmentalists’ blame of the population growth as a major cause for environmental problems is not a fully integrated and properly analysed statement in respect to the overall wealth distribution at a world scale. On the contrary, Pope Francis does not take that tag line when stating that: “to blame population growth instead of extreme and selective consumerism on the part of some, is one way of refusing to face the issues.”<sup>14</sup>

The same document also links the global ecology with abortion and transgender issues: “protection of nature is also incompatible with the justification of abortion”<sup>15</sup> and “It is not a healthy attitude which would seek ‘to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it.’”<sup>16</sup>

The exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* not only talks about the respect for new life. It claims that the family is the only solid ground for a child to be brought up safely and integrally into adulthood. At the same time it also acknowledges

---

<sup>12</sup> Centre for Population Studies, Department of Epidemiology and Population Health, LSHTM, London WC1E 7HT, UK.

<sup>13</sup> J. Stephenson, *Population dynamics and climate change: what are the links?*, “Journal of Public Health” 2010, <http://jpubhealth.oxfordjournals.org/content/32/2/150.abstract?sid=c32f3668-20b8-4499-85d4-1d24a62db842> (08.11.2016).

<sup>14</sup> *Laudato Si’* 50.

<sup>15</sup> *Laudato Si’* 120.

<sup>16</sup> *Laudato Si’* 155.

that family life is a very rich and complex reality. It seeks emphatically to affirm, encourage and understand not only an 'ideal' family but also broken and remarried families. It not only offers reassurance, education on Catholic moral values, and approaches them sensitively and emphatically with pastoral care and love. The text of the exhortation is not only a close reading of the family life, providing spiritual insights, guidance and wisdom of everyday human life of married couples. It also offers a summary of the wisdom of Catholic morality. It is a call for patience and appreciation of the Catholic marital and sexual teaching. The language of the exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* is a language of love, care, hope and pastoral support. Nevertheless, the key statement on abortion and acceptance of a new life is firm and unchanged in both encyclicals. It is in *Laudato Si'*: "If personal and social sensitivity towards the acceptance of the new life is lost, then other forms of acceptance that are valuable for society also wither away."<sup>17</sup> As well as it is in *Amoris Laetitia*. The exhortation reminds us: "[...] equal consideration needs to be given to the growing danger represented by an extreme individualism which weakens family bonds and ends up considering each member of the family as an isolated unit, leading in some cases to the idea that one's personality is shaped by his or her desires, which are considered absolute."<sup>18</sup>

The apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* is a call for a renewal of our moral values, our family life. It then would lead us to a renewal of society we live in and of the world.

## Part II: Recent historical developments of the papal teaching on ecology and abortion

In this chapter it will be argued that the issues related to global ecology, fair material wealth distribution and control of ever growing population are relatively new in the official theological teaching of the Church. It will also show that the Church's present teaching on abortion and on the soul of

---

<sup>17</sup> *Laudato Si'* 120.

<sup>18</sup> Post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* of the Holy Father Francis (henceforth *Amoris Laetitia*), 33, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20160319\\_amoris-laetitia.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html).

a human person being infused into an embryo, as presented over the centuries, is also relatively new in the Church's teaching on the family issues.

#### a) History of the papal teaching on ecology and social justice

Firstly, we intend to offer a brief summary of the key elements of the teaching on ecology, as presented in the Church documents written prior to the election of Pope Francis and his encyclical *Laudato Si'*. Secondly, we intend to give a brief historical account of the understanding of the infusion of the soul of a human person into an embryo as developed over the centuries in the Church documents. It is argued that the evolution in understanding and control of life, introduced relatively new aspects in the Church's teaching on the family, sexuality, procreation and abortion. Finally, it will illustrate that what Pope Francis is offering in the encyclical *Laudato Si'* and the apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* about earth, human ecology and abortion is wide-ranging and relevant in today's context.

*De iustitia in mundo (Justice in the world)*, statement of the Synod of Bishops in 1971, is the first known official Church document with an explicit teaching on social justice and peace. This document doesn't tackle ecology directly, nevertheless it is considered to be a landmark and a major step towards the development of the Catholic Church social teaching on environment and ecology: "Furthermore, such is the demand for resources and energy by the richer nations, [...] and such are the effects of dumping by them in the atmosphere and the sea that irreparable damage would be done to the essential elements of life on earth [...]."<sup>19</sup>

In eight years after the publication of the document *De iustitia in mundo (Justice in the world)*, John Paul II issued several documents drawing the attention upon ecological issues, like for example encyclicals *Redemptor Hominis (The Redeemer of man)*, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, and *Centesimus Annus*, as well as in the document *Message for the celebration of the World Day of Peace*. Starting with his first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis* (1979), Pope John Paul II, warns us about the danger of industrialization, military

---

<sup>19</sup> World Synod of Catholic Bishops 1971, *De iustitia in mundo (Justice in the world)*, 11, <https://www1.villanova.edu/content/dam/villanova/mission/JusticeIntheWorld1971.pdf> (09.11.2016).

conflicts, the threatening use of atomic weapons, and the pollution of the natural environment. The encyclical also broadly speaks about human rights violation and the need to change our hearts. Later, in 1987, in his encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, he mainly speaks about material inequality, as well as discrimination of differences among populations in the world: “Among today’s positive signs we must also mention a greater realization of the limits of available resources, and of the need to respect the integrity and the cycles of nature and to take them into account when planning for development [...]. Today this is called ecological concern.”<sup>20</sup>

The document written by John Paul II in 1990 *Message for the celebration of the World Day of Peace* provides us with a comprehensive teaching on ecology: “In 1979, I proclaimed Saint Francis of Assisi as the heavenly Patron of those who promote ecology [...]. He offers Christians an example of genuine and deep respect for the integrity of creation. [...] It is my hope that the inspiration of Saint Francis will help us to ever alive a sense of ‘fraternity’ with all those good and beautiful things which Almighty God has created. And may he remind us of our serious obligation to respect and watch over them with care, in light of that greater and higher fraternity that exists within the human family.”<sup>21</sup>

In these and more recent documents, Pope John Paul II talks about the importance of the relationship between creation, the natural world, world resources and the people of God.

In *Centesimus Annus*, John Paul II touches on similar concerns, speaks about the need of conversion, which he calls a ‘human ecology’: “In addition to the irrational destruction of the natural environment, we must also mention the more serious destruction of the human environment [...]. Although people are rightly worried [...], too little effort is made to safeguard the moral conditions for an authentic ‘human ecology.’”<sup>22</sup>

Pope Benedict XVI contributed to the Church’s teaching on ecology in two major documents: *Caritas in Veritate* and *Compendium of the social doctrine*

---

<sup>20</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 26, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_30121987\\_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html).

<sup>21</sup> Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the celebration of the World Day of Peace 1 January 1990, 16, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_19891208\\_xxiii-world-day-for-peace.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19891208_xxiii-world-day-for-peace.html).

<sup>22</sup> Pope John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Centesimus Annus* 38, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_01051991\\_centesimus-annus.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus.html).

of the Church. He talked about the need to have a healthy human environment and a peaceful living with the rest of the world. In his encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (2009), the pope maintained that “the environment is God’s gift to everyone.”<sup>23</sup> *Compendium of the social doctrine of the Church* was issued in 2004 and gave a quite favourable account of biotechnology. Pope John Paul II as well as Pope Benedict XVI provided us with a clear message on the importance of keeping the right balance between ecology and humanity. They called for a need of a clear theology on human conversion in respect to the use of the natural resources of the world.

In his encyclical *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis provides us with a clear message on what it means to maintain a ‘human ecology’. He sees a link between the protection of people and the protection of nature, which means that the Pontiff brings a new insight and a refreshing view on the ‘old ideas’ on ecology. The encyclical invites us to promote environmental justice in many different ways. It is the first social encyclical of the Catholic Church which promotes care for the environment in a direct and specific way.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992)<sup>24</sup> underscores that love and care for creation are essential dimensions of our faith and therefore they are two very important educational elements. Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’* helps Catholic believers to address, reflect and respond to the environmental challenges our world is facing today, as well as to look deeply into our hearts and learn how to live in a morally and spiritually ecological way.

Another important point about the innovative nature of the encyclical *Laudato Si’* is that official Church documents usually do not refer to secular literature. The sources mentioned as justification for the text would normally include Scripture texts, quotations from other councils, the Church Fathers, saints or other official Church documents like encyclicals, apostolic exhortations, apostolic letters, etc. This is also the case for the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and in many ways for the encyclical *Laudato Si’*. However, besides many references to Church documents and statements of his predecessors, Pope Francis uses a larger scope of sources.

---

<sup>23</sup> Encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate* of the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI, 48, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20090629\\_caritas-in-veritate.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html).

<sup>24</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/\\_INDEX.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM).

He draws on the results of the best scientific research available today, particularly in Chapters I and III, “letting them touch us deeply and provide a concrete foundation for the ethical and spiritual itinerary.”<sup>25</sup> They constantly occur throughout the text. Just to mention the most obvious ones: the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, the analysis of the North-South relationships, the efforts of many organizations of civil society, the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the 1972 Stockholm Declaration, the 1989 Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements and Hazardous Wastes, the 1963 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the 1985 Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and its implementation through the Montreal Protocol and amendments, The Conference of the United Nations on Sustainable Development, also known as “Rio+20” or Rio de Janeiro 2012, etc. Apart from the documents mentioned above, Pope Francis relies heavily upon two influential authors: Romano Guardini *Das Ende der Neuzeit, Ein Versuch zur Orientierung*, Würzburg 1950, and Carlos Scannone, *Teología de la liberación y praxis popular: aportes críticos para una teología de la liberación*, Salamanca 1976.

The pope follows Guardini’s very critical evaluation of a merely rational, technocratic worldview (*Laudato Si’* paragraphs 105, 108 and 115). Due to the influence of Scannone, Pope Francis links up with an Argentinian style of liberation theology, taking distance from, or even opposing Marxist influences. Obviously, Carlos Scannone is a philosopher and therefore he became Pope Francis’ guide for articulating vision on an ‘integral ecology’ in terms of the specific philosophical, cultural, political and religious identity of the Latin American people (popular religiosity). Liberating the ‘earth-rooted’ Latin American people from the suffocating technocratic mind-set – the source of the destruction of their environment and autochthonic social network – Scannone becomes, for Pope Francis, an icon of worldwide integrated ecology.

The pope’s openness for pertinent secular sources makes it also possible to articulate a deeper insight in the interconnectedness of problems and situations. For Francis, there is a link between the gradual destruction of the environment on the one hand, and the deteriorating situation of the poor on the other. Respect for the environment is intrinsically linked to respect

---

<sup>25</sup> *Laudato Si’* 15.

and concern for the poor – the core issue in a theology of creation. All these ideas are closely linked to the Church teaching, which we can find in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

#### b) Catechism of the Catholic Church: The dignity of the human person

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Christians are called to live in the Spirit. “The divine image is present in every man” (paragraph 1702). This is the source of human communion. “Society is essential to the fulfilment of the human vocation. [...] Human society must primarily be considered as something pertaining to the spiritual” (paragraph 1886). This faith-based vision requires “the permanent need for [...] inner conversion, so as to obtain social changes that will really serve him” (paragraph 1888). When the Catechism of the Catholic Church emphasises the importance of social justice, for the ordering of society and deepening respect for the human person, various aspects are mentioned:

- a) Respect for the transcendent dignity of man (cf. paragraph 1929),
- b) “Respect for the rights that flow from his dignity as a creature” (paragraph 1930),
- c) “The establishment of truly fraternal societies” (paragraph 1931),
- d) Respect for differences among people: they “belong to God’s plan [...] These differences encourage and often oblige persons to practice generosity, kindness, sharing of goods and fostering the mutual enrichment of cultures” (paragraph 1937), and
- e) The required solidarity becomes obvious in the distribution of goods and fair remuneration of labour, in solving socio-economic problems, in living solidarity which goes beyond material goods (cf. paragraphs 1939–1942).

Finally, the Catechism highlights the concerns and love for the poor as a long-standing biblical commitment. “The Church’s love for the poor [...] is a part of her constant tradition” (paragraph 2444). “When we attend to the needs of those in want, we give them what is theirs, not ours. More than performing works of mercy, we are paying a debt of justice” (paragraph 2444). “In its various forms – material deprivation, unjust oppression, physical and psychological illness and death – human misery is the obvious sign of the

inherited condition of frailty and need for salvation in which man finds himself as a consequence of original sin” (paragraph 2448).

c) History of the development of the papal teaching on sexuality, the prime origin of a human being, and abortion

From the overview above, it becomes obvious that the recent Church’s social teaching underscores that the ecological crises of the earth, the overpopulation, the global ecology, and social care for everyone are interlinked. The coincidence of these factors in a global picture puts new aspects of traditional representations to the foreground and requires an appropriate interpretation. We want to give a brief historical account of the Church’s understanding of the infusion of the soul of a human person into an embryo – an issue the Church has been dealing with over centuries. It is important to address it in order to talk responsibly about the Catholic Church’s teaching on abortion, procreation and sexuality. Medical sciences initiated the discussion about the specific moment of the emergence or the prime origin of a human person. Is it the moment of fertilization, as it was assumed for a long time, or does the embryo have to reach a certain level of complexity in order to recognize it as a human being? It is argued that the understanding of when the human being is conceived is a relatively new aspect of the Church’s teaching on procreation and sexuality in the family context, and of a claim for non-abortion policy. This new understanding needs discernment. Can the Church go along with the medical developments, its presuppositions and related implications, given its tradition as regards procreation? What will be its advice as regards artificial birth control, abortion, a dissociation of procreation and sexuality? Will the Church be able to introduce pertinent arguments in relation to these questions and to win young men and women for its vision and suggested practices?

Part III: A need to deepen the dynamic nature of the religious identity in order to strengthen the contemporary Catholic family

This chapter will argue that the Church’s vocal presence in the global debates on ecology and the growth of population is very important in order to stimulate

believers to clarify their religious thinking and attitudes on these issues. The understanding of the dynamic nature of a religious identity is decisive for this action. People discovered the importance of their active participation in the global contribution to the development of a human ecology, a family ecology in particular. Such a maturing change would then lead us to a greater respect for human life and ecology of the earth. The documents *Laudato Si'* and *Amoris Laetitia* introduce people into a new sensitivity, a new awareness of the universal problems in today's globalized society. They awaken people's concern to act responsibly in order to protect the common good, and to inspire a creative relationship with the self-revealing God and with each other within the family and the larger community.

### 1. What is Catholic identity?

Catholic identity signifies who we are as human beings among other human beings in a deepest self-awareness and understanding of life. It is our essence, our distinctive character, and the way of life. Identity is not a natural feature given through birth or a child's baptism. It must be presented to a child in the family, attended, educated and nurtured throughout their entire life.

The parish, as a first broader point of contact for the Catholic education of a family or an individual within the local community, plays a pivotal role in carrying out the mission of evangelization and Catholic identity formation through different forms of Catholic religious education. It can be evangelization and catechesis or adult faith formation, which should be given a priority as "all other forms are in some way orientated to it."<sup>26</sup> The parish's main role is to proclaim the Gospel to all<sup>27</sup> and to provide pre-sacramental

---

<sup>26</sup> Congregation for the Clergy, *General directory for catechesis* (1997), 59, 258, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_17041998\\_directory-for-catechesis\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html) (henceforth GDC); cf. Apostolic exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae* of Pope John Paul II on catechesis in our time, 43, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_16101979\\_catechesi-tradendae.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_16101979_catechesi-tradendae.html) (henceforth CT); Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, *General catechetical directory* (1971), 20, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc\\_con\\_cclergy\\_doc\\_11041971\\_gcat\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_cclergy_doc_11041971_gcat_en.html).

<sup>27</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. Apostolic exhortation of His Holiness Pope Paul VI, 52, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_exh\\_19751208\\_evangelii-nuntiandi.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html).

meetings<sup>28</sup> and on-going instructions for all ages. In that case, the family education as well as preparation for marriage should be conducted in the parish in the first instance. In many countries, however, the parish is thought to be old-fashioned and out of touch as it has been shaken by the phenomenon of urbanization<sup>29</sup> and the technological age. Yet, it is essential that the parish remains the foundational place of the local community which then enables family catechesis. In this case, this venue becomes a unique platform for family catechesis and Catholic identity formation. All parishes have a duty “to be watchful about the quality of the religious formation”<sup>30</sup> and “taking into account the necessary diversity of places for catechesis,” they all should “converge on the same confession of faith, on the same membership of the Church.”<sup>31</sup>

Catholic identity serves as the foundation and guiding force for the application of the Catholic family values to the reality of our world. Everything we do, the way we live, talk, celebrate and aspire to be, should come from the inner understanding of who we are, which forms our Catholic belief, values and way of life that forms our Catholic identity. It should permeate our families, our child upbringing, the culture and the daily way of our life. Only then we can expect that the Catholic way of living would bring difference to our secular culture, and the global economic, political and environmental change. The family culture, which first receives the Catholic identity from the parish, can then change the culture by bringing Catholic identity to life. It can be also the other way around that the Catholics get together and initiate, for example, a new relational parish instead of a territorial one.

Today “social and religious realities, which were once clear and well defined”<sup>32</sup> became increasingly complex with many European Christian countries becoming “mission territories.”<sup>33</sup> This means that teaching the Catholic values, and family values in particular, cannot be communicated

---

<sup>28</sup> GDC 96.

<sup>29</sup> CT 67.

<sup>30</sup> CT 67.

<sup>31</sup> CT 67.

<sup>32</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*. On the permanent validity of the Church’s missionary mandate, 32, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_07121990\\_redemptoris-missio.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html).

<sup>33</sup> *Redemptoris Missio* 32.

from one generation to another through a traditional linear transmission of the faith from a person to a person.

Jesus, who was the greatest teacher, used parables and metaphors to ‘re-construct the scripture’ in order to be able to ‘re-tell’ the story of God the Saviour to the people of God. He told the ‘old’ stories pointing out to a new insight in comparison to what they were taught by the authorities (“you have been told, but I tell you...”).

The transmission of the faith, therefore, began orally and these stories were memorised and retold for centuries. The transmission of the faith happened in the first place through being ‘impressed,’ deeply moved, personally addressed by people. What that represents is later formulated and reflected upon and confronted with traditions (plural). This way of telling the Good News story goes back to the Old Testament where God told the Israelites to ensure that the generations to come never forget what he did for them,<sup>34</sup> thus establishing the premise that catechesis comes from an established fact which they were to pass down the generations. But it is not the case any longer. Vatican II did no longer insist upon memorisation as the main way of ‘conveyance’ and recognized that faith cannot be taught or transmitted. It insisted that faith is a gift, a grace to be attributed to the encounter with the ‘Other’. In most places today even an older generations do not know their faith well and they do not carry a clearly defined religious identity. This then leads us to a rhetoric question: How can we then educate our children and families to gain a clearly defined Catholic identity or identities. (As ‘Catholic faith’ is a historical and contextual reality, therefore there are many different Catholic identities). They depend upon interpretations and cultural differences and people’s experiences.

What can be done to confront secularism and global materialism? What can be done to reduce poverty and ecological waste? How can we make an impact on the culture of secularism and global disrespect of human life, poverty and nature destruction when many of our Catholic families do not share Catholic identity and values, clearly expressed and lived, with the rest of the Church? Catholic families should be encouraged to integrate these concerns into their understanding of being a Catholic.

---

<sup>34</sup> Ex 10:2; cf. Jl 1:3; Ps 78:4.

## 2. Church adherence, Church leavers and believing in the Western world

Secularisation is not a one-dimensional phenomenon, but a multi-dimensional concept,<sup>35</sup> which embraces not only traditional personal adherence to religion and the Church, but also social and cultural factors of persistence of traditional values, beliefs and the emergence of different forms of personal religiosity.<sup>36</sup> Europe did face a secularisation process (which is in some sense just a ‘hypothesis’<sup>37</sup>). At the same time, traditional religious attitudes still orient people in their way of thinking, behaving and discerning. Even such a famous scholar as Peter Berger, the former founder of many theories about secularisation, has changed in his later works interpretations of processes and theories about secularisation in Europe. He goes even further in his defence of the importance of belief in the contemporary world, claiming that secularisation has not eradicated religious beliefs from the contemporary Western world, but on the contrary – even strengthened the religious opinions and attitudes.<sup>38</sup> In his latest works he himself challenges the belief that the modern world is increasingly secular, showing instead that modernization more often strengthens religion<sup>39</sup>. In the 1950s and 1960s, Peter Berger, Harvey Cox and others were fearless proponents of the ‘secularisation theory’. This theory held that as technology improved and modernity had a deeper impact upon culture, religion would begin to decline and we would live, according to Cox, in a “secular city.”<sup>40</sup> Cox reversed himself in *Religion in the secular city* (1984), declaring that the future of religion lay in grassroots movements such as fundamentalism, Pentecostalism and liberation theology. In 1999, Berger gathers a number of essays contending that, far from being in decline

---

<sup>35</sup> L. Halman, T. Petterson, *Differential patterns of secularization in Europe: exploring the impact of religion on social change*, in: *The individualizing society. Value change in Europe and North America*, eds. L. Halman, P. R. de Moor Leact, Tilburg 1994, p. 48.

<sup>36</sup> L. Halman, T. Petterson, *Differential patterns...*, p. 48.

<sup>37</sup> A. Arbor, *The secularization debate*, “Politics and Religion” 2000 vol. 3, p. 34.

<sup>38</sup> *The de-secularization of the world. Resurgent religion and world politics*, ed. P. L. Berger, Michigan 1999, p. 55.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>40</sup> H. G. Cox, *The secular city: secularization and urbanization in theological perspective*, Princeton 1990, p. 23.

in the modern world, religion is actually experiencing resurgence. In his opening essay, Berger asserts that “the assumption we live in a secularized world is false... The world today is as furiously religious as it ever was.”<sup>41</sup> He points out that religious movements have not adapted to secular culture in order to survive but have successfully developed their own identities and retained a focus on the supernatural in their beliefs and practices. While he acknowledges that he cannot predict the future course, he maintains that the “critique of secularity common to all resurgent movements is that human existence bereft of transcendence is an impoverished and finally untenable condition.”<sup>42</sup>

Berger argues that the desire for transcendence is an integral part of the human psyche. He also provides a brief overview of the impact of religion on economic development, war and peace, human rights and social justice<sup>43</sup>. During the last decade, however, the thesis of the slow and steady death of religion has come under growing criticism. Following the thoughts of Anne Arbor, indeed, secularization theory is currently experiencing the most sustained challenge in its long history. In her works, Arbor points out to multiple indicators of religious health and vitality today.<sup>44</sup>

Even though the data of the Atlas of European Values indicates a vast decline in traditional adherence to religion and the Church in contemporary Europe, it is, however, not easy to neglect the fact that about half of all Europeans pray or meditate privately at least once a week, and three out of four say they are religious persons.<sup>45</sup> It refutes the general, radical statements on the increasing and undeniable impact of secularisation in Europe made by such famous scholars like for example P. Berger,<sup>46</sup> M. Chaves<sup>47</sup> and others

---

<sup>41</sup> *The de-secularization...*, p. 171.

<sup>42</sup> *The de-secularization...*, p. 159.

<sup>43</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>44</sup> *The de-secularization...*, p. 78.

<sup>45</sup> M. A. David, *A general theory of secularization, explorations*, Oxford 1978, p. 85 (Explorations in Interpretative Sociology, 11).

<sup>46</sup> P. L. Berger, *The sacred canopy: elements of a sociological theory of religion*, New York 1967; see also: P. L. Berger, *Questions of faith: a skeptical affirmation of Christianity*, “Religion in the Modern World” 2004 vol. 9, pp. 221–257.

<sup>47</sup> M. Chaves, *Secularization as declining religious authority*, “Social Forces: An International Journal of Social Research” 1994 No. 72, p. 51.

in their early works.<sup>48</sup> The real problem of the change of traditional values is more complex than just an issue of 'secularisation'.<sup>49</sup>

This situation clearly suggests to us that the Catholic education is still possible and can make a difference in the world if we can bring up in our parishes, countries and the world well-informed, motivated young people and young families with a strong Catholic bearing. It is also clear that in order to achieve that, we need different methods of teaching and catechesis to deliver our faith to the young generation. However, historically, since the Counter-Reformation, despite impressive development of methodologies, it is clear that the main problem is the recognition of contextual and new life experiences and their impact upon the reinterpretation of the content of faith. What kind of methods do we need to develop in order to be able to nurture this process?

One more question remains unanswered: Does the European investigation of value change suggest that the young generation is more 'un-churched' than 'non-believing'? Does it tell us the story that the institutional Church has also to reconsider its strategy towards the educational relationship with its followers and believers? Should it pay more attention to people's creative contribution to the reinterpretation of the meaning of faith? These are the questions that might need deeper research in the subject area in the future.

Summary: Can the Church with its traditional teaching on family life really contribute to the restoration of the global ecology or is it contributing to its destruction?

The question of overpopulation, that is considered as a main cause of the global ecological disbalance and social inequality in the world, has been analysed from point of view of the Catholic teaching on sexual relation, marriage and family planning. Can the Church with its traditional teaching on family life really contribute to the restoration of the global ecology or it is contributing to its destruction?

---

<sup>48</sup> A. M. Abela, *Post-secularization: the social significance of religious values in four Catholic European countries*, "Melita Theologica" 1993 vol. 23, pp. 76–92; S. S. Acquaviva, *The decline of the sacred in industrial society*, Oxford 1979, p. 211.

<sup>49</sup> M. David, *A general theory...*, p. 72. Cf. also: *The de-secularization...*

This is a very delicate issue. On the one hand, Pope Francis claims that he listens to the scientists to learn from them about the climate change and all the dangers related to the change of the environment ecology. He accepts their reasoning on many hot issues. But on the other hand, he strongly disagrees with the 'overpopulation' claim and birth control in 'artificial' way. He recognizes the authority of scientific investigation and expertise on ecology, but disagrees on one of the presupposed means to control and improve it: to stop 'over-population' through medical intervention resulting in birth control. In these matters, he seems to take a limited risk in his teaching about modern ways to influence common resolutions of the world's burning issues.

A few questions then remain unanswered: Does the pope, as a representative of the universal Catholic Church, also represent the shared view of all Catholic communities or just of the institutional Church? It also needs to be explained what kind of discernment and reinterpretation of the Christian identity and Christian faith emerges from his teaching on modern global ecology and the Catholic family ecology. Does he suggest a shift in the interpretation of traditional Church's teaching on creation and pro-creation? Can his teaching correspond with the values and identity of the modern Catholic family?

When does Pope Francis, respecting the authority of scientists and following their insights, distance himself from their logic and highlight the specific interpretation in the light of faith? Should this departure from a linear scientific thinking be included in the overall education of Catholics, in religious education in particular?

The history of the Church's teaching on family education and sexuality should also include attention to the historical context and a possibly different relationship between modern rationality, historical 'scientific' reasoning and the authority the Church attributes to faith traditions and their representatives.

Both papal documents analysed in this article seem to suggest a link between the teaching on family life and the restoration of the global ecology. However, it would be very important to examine more in detail what this link represents in practice. In my opinion, Pope Francis has not given enough clarification on the obvious link between the global ecology and value education in the Catholic family. This can only cover one or two aspects of

the global ecological problems and the ways scientists can see the solution: a) responsible parenting and (natural – in the Catholic meaning) birth control as well as b) moral wealth distribution around the globe.

It as a most valuable initiative of Pope Francis to have established a close link between ecological issues, over-population and the Catholic thinking on family issues, in terms of creation and pro-creation. He clearly states that the light of faith is of a different order than the rational scientific logic. The Church has the responsibility to take the scientific investigation into consideration. Its main responsibility is however to spell out the unique and specific logic, proper to the Christian faith and to point out the implications for a Catholic lifestyle.

## Bibliography

### Church documents

*Ad Gentes*. On the mission activity of the Church, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decree\\_19651207\\_ad-gentes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html).

*Apostolicam Actuositatem*. Decree on the apostolate of the laity, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decree\\_19651118\\_apostolicam-actuositatem\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651118_apostolicam-actuositatem_en.html).

*Dei Verbum*. Dogmatic constitution on divine revelation, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651118\\_dei-verbum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html).

*Gravissimum Educationis*. Declaration on Christian education, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decl\\_19651028\\_gravissimum-educationis\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html).

*Lumen Gentium*. Dogmatic constitution on the Church, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19641121\\_lumen-gentium\\_lt.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_lt.html).

*Presbyterorum Ordinis*. Decree on the ministry and life of priests, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decree\\_19651207\\_presbyterorum-ordinis\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_presbyterorum-ordinis_en.html).

- Sacrosanctum Concilium*. Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19631204\\_sacrosanctum-concilium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html).
- Synod of Bishops, *De iustitia in mundo* (Justice in the world), 1971, <https://www1.villanova.edu/content/dam/villanova/mission/JusticeInTheWorld1971.pdf> (11.11.2016).
- Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, *General catechetical directory*, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc\\_con\\_cclergy\\_doc\\_11041971\\_gcat\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_cclergy_doc_11041971_gcat_en.html).
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Pastoral statement *Renewing the Earth: an invitation to reflection and action on environment in light of Catholic social teaching*, November 14, 1991. <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/renewing-the-earth.cfm>.
- Catechism of the Catholic Church*, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/\\_INDEX.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM).
- Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/compendium\\_ccc/documents/archive\\_2005\\_compendium-ccc\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/compendium_ccc/documents/archive_2005_compendium-ccc_en.html).
- Pope John XXIII, Encyclical letter *Mater et Magistra*, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_enc\\_15051961\\_mater.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_15051961_mater.html).
- Pope John XXIII, Encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris*, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_enc\\_11041963\\_pacem.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html).
- Pope Paul VI, Apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_exh\\_19751208\\_evangelii-nuntiandi.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html).
- Pope John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Redemptor Hominis*, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_04031979\\_redemptor-hominis.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis.html).
- Pope John Paul II, Apostolic exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae* on catechesis in our time, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_16101979\\_catechesi-tradendae.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_16101979_catechesi-tradendae.html).
- Pope John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_30121987\\_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html).
- Pope John Paul II, *Peace with God the Creator, peace with all of creation*. Message for the celebration of the World Day of Peace 1990, <https://w2.vatican.va/>

content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf\_jp-ii\_mes\_19891208\_xxiii-world-day-for-peace.html.

Pope John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Redemptoris Missio* on the permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_07121990\\_redemptoris-missio.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html).

Pope John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Centesimus Annus*, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_01051991\\_centesimus-annus.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus.html).

Pope John Paul II, *Respect for human rights: the secret of true peace*. Message for the celebration of the World Day of Peace 1999, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_14121998\\_xxxii-world-day-for-peace.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_14121998_xxxii-world-day-for-peace.html).

Pope Benedict XVI, *Migration and the new evangelization*. Message for the 2012 World Day of Migrants and Refugees, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/migration/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20110921\\_world-migrants-day.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/migration/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20110921_world-migrants-day.html)

Pope Benedict XVI, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2011. *Pope speaking at the opening of the New St. Corbinian Church for the Diocese of Rome*, <https://zenit.org/articles/make-parish-a-family-of-families-urges-pope/> (11.10.2016).

Pope Benedict XVI, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2012. *Pope speaking at the Parish of San Giovanni Battista de La Salle al Torino in the Diocese of Rome*, <http://www.news.va/en/news/the-parish-is-the-place-in-which-we-learn-to-live> (11.11.2016).

Pope Francis, Encyclical letter *Laudato Si'* on care for our common home, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html).

## Others

Abela A. M., *Post-secularisation: the social significance of religious values in four catholic european countries*, "Melita Theologica" 1993 vol. 23, pp. 76–92.

Acquaviva S. S., *The decline of the sacred in industrial society*, Oxford 1979.

Arbor A., *The secularization debate*, "Politics and Religion" 2000 vol. 3, pp. 30–37.

Berger P. L., *Questions of faith: a sceptical affirmation of christianity*, "Religion in the Modern World" 2004 vol. 9, pp. 221–257.

- Chaves M., *Secularization as declining religious authority*, "Social Forces: An International Journal of Social Research" 1994 No. 72, pp. 49–74.
- David M., *A general theory of secularization*, Oxford 1978 (Explorations in Interpretative Sociology, 11).
- De Schrijver G., *Imagining the Creator God. From antiquity to astrophysics*, Manila 2015.
- European values study*, [https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/file.asp?file=ZA4800\\_mr.pdf](https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/file.asp?file=ZA4800_mr.pdf) (11.10.2016).
- Guardini R., *Das Ende der Neuzeit, Ein Versuch zur Orientierung*, Würzburg 1950 (English translation: Guardini R., *The end of the modern world*, transl. J. Theman and H. Burke, New York 1956).
- Halman L., Petterson T., *Differential patterns of secularisation in Europe: Exploring the impact of religion on social change*, in: *The individualizing society. Value change in Europe and North America*, eds. L. Halman, P. R. de Moor Leact, Tilburg 1994.
- Rio+20, *United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development*, Brazil, June 20–22, 2012, <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42573.pdf> (11.11.2016).
- The de-secularization of the world. Resurgent religion and world politics*, ed. P. L. Berger, Grand Rapids 1999.