

**Education and social formation  
in an integral ecology  
with global bioethics.  
*Remembering the tenth  
anniversary of Francis***

**Educación y formación social  
en una ecología integral  
con bioética global.  
*Haciendo memoria del décimo  
aniversario de Francisco***

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<https://doi.org/10.36105/mye.2023v34n3.05>

**Abstract**

Now that we are remembering the celebration of the tenth anniversary of Francis and his responsibility as pope, we have produced the article that includes our latest teaching and academic activity. My paper “Ethics and social thought since Francis”; related to a recent publication of which I am co-author and as an associate researcher, linked to the

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Reception: 29/04/23 Acceptance: 19/05/23

university research project “Querida Amazonia” (Anáhuac University, Mexico). In this intervention, I raised these issues and themes that are the beginning of said book (1). Preceded by the prologue by Michael F. Czerny, Cardinal and collaborator of the Pope. In this work, we deepen these themes, proposing keys or criteria to promote moral, social, solidarity and humanistic education and training. United to an integral ecology and global bioethics, guided by the teaching and testimony of Francis.

*Keywords:* Francis, global bioethics, integral ecology, moral theology, social doctrine of the church.

## 1. Introduction. The moral and social teaching of Francis

As has been investigated in a previous book with a similar theme (2), Francis’ teaching shows his social and ethical message, with relevant encyclicals such as *Laudato si’* (LS), which deals with “the care of the common home” and an integral ecology, or *Fratelli tutti* (FT) on “fraternity and social friendship”. In this way, the Pope is making a clear continuity with the vigorous flow of the moral tradition and *social doctrine of the Church* (DSI), which, in the contemporary era, is developing significantly, continuing with its method of inductive character, together with the deductive, which favors the incarnation of faith in the real (LS 15-16; FT 9). This ethical worldview and the Good News (Gospel) of Jesus Christ with seeing, judging (evaluating) and acting in reality (3). It is an interdisciplinary methodology, which implements the studies and social or human sciences, for a pertinent reading and liberating and integral discernment of the world (4).

In this way, human development and integral ecology are made visible, which gives rise to a true good living, connecting the different dimensions of reality and humanity: personal, social, ecological and spirituality (LS 138-140), promoting socio-environmental justice with the poor and the planet earth, in a global sustainability (5).

Moreover, it is based on a theology of creation, with the Gift (Grace) of the God of life revealed in Jesus Christ. As witnessed by the saints and witnesses of the faith and the Church. As is, for example, Francis of Assisi (LS 10; FT 2-5), model and paradigm of this integral ecology (6) with his global bioethics (7).

From this wisdom that knows deeply the real, the Pope announces the faith and its ethical message. At the same time, he prophetically denounces the evil established in our unequal and unjust world, which plunders the impoverished, the victims and the common home that is our planet. All this is causing this global discard, exclusion and culture of death that destroys populations, the most impoverished and nature (8). This is fed by ideologies that dehumanize, by structural mechanisms at the social and international level, by idols and systemic economic, commercial and financial evils (LS 48-52; FT 189).

The origin of this unjust reality that affects our society and global world, with its environmental sphere, is to be found in so many personal and structural sins, in globalization and individualistic ideologies, such as neoliberal capitalist and communist-collectivist ideologies, with all these populisms and ideologies of reality, with their relativistic, technocratic and economic dictatorship. Those false mercantilist, capitalist and speculative financial gods with their savage competitiveness, the dominating and transnational business or corporate power, such as global banking and finance (9). Thus, all these unjust realities of the hungry, the poor and the victims remain and increase, denying the dignity and life of human beings, destroying the natural habitat (LS 109-114; FT 155-157, 165).

In contrast, Francis transmits this moral, social, ecological and integral teaching with its global bioethical elements for the care and defense of life, in all its process or elements, in a credible and honest way (10). Faced with this destruction of life generated by such asymmetrical, unequal and unjust realities. Such as those suffered by the hungry, the poor, the workers, the environment, the victims of war, the most vulnerable, the unborn human embryo (being), the family cells or the elderly (LS 115-122; FT 18-19).

The Pope communicates to us that diverse fertility of the natural law, of the personal, corporal and complementary reality of man and woman, that beautiful marital and family reality that fertilizes existence with its offspring (LS 155; FT 208-209). For this reason, it communicates to us and updates the criteria of the SDC that begin and value reality, nourished in God. Such as merciful compassion, fraternity, inherent social and political charity, the common and more universal good, a more peaceful and just world with the impoverished, with the victims and the planet (LS 159, 228-231; FT 196).

Hence, the moral and political spheres must regulate the economic sphere in order to promote the most universal and just good for the impoverished. In opposition to these idolatrous, technocratic and mercantilist profit-driven desires that sacrifice the life and dignity of human beings (LS 189-198; FT 103-105). In the face of the neoliberal and capitalist system and ideology, property does not come before the principle of the universal destination of goods. Only property acquires legitimacy if it fulfills its solidarity character and intrinsic social function, ensuring justice and equity in the distribution of the planet's goods. Therefore, as the moral tradition of the Church teaches us with the Holy Fathers, wealth (being rich) is immoral and unjust because it does not share resources and goods with the poor (11). Generating all these unjust and unequal situations in humanity, with its populations (LS 93-95, FT 118-120). In the same way, it is necessary to establish the principle of work over capital, the dignified existence of the working person, justice in wages and other rights (12). Humanizing working conditions, which ensure decency in employment (LS 124-129; FT 162).

The Pope bases this teaching on the deepest theological roots of Catholic Christianity, the values, virtues and priority theological keys such as fraternal charity, love in solidarity and merciful compassion. Thus, it is shown in the revelation of God in Christ, with the gift of his life and Passover that gives salvation and integral liberation. Granting us that dignity and fulfilled life, which culminates in eternity. In this way, the dignified, ethical and transcendent life of all human beings who are the likeness and children of God acquires all its

sacredness and inviolability (13). The successor of Peter, therefore, places us in the heart of faith. The joyful and beautiful Good News of the Gospel of Jesus, the Trinitarian God who is the essence and paradigm of solidary, loving and just unity among persons (14), communities and history (LS 236-240; FT 85). Continuing then with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council (GS 24) and its predecessors, for example, St. John Paul II (SRS 40) or Benedict XVI (CV 54).

In this line, as it comes to us through tradition and ecclesial faith with the Fathers of the Church or the aforementioned Council, from the soul of Catholic Christianity, as is the Incarnate God in Christ, union with every human being is realized. This is, similar to the Eucharistic sacrament, in the other and in every suffering person (in the poor and excluded) is the presence of the poor and crucified Christ (Mt 25:31-46): in those who suffer the dramas and injustices of migration or refuge, hunger, male violence, sickness; those victims of historical reality, who must be remembered with the *memoria passionis* (FT 226-227).

## 2. Education, ethics and social formation

From the above, Francis transmits some very important points or aspects for education and formation that is enriched with a solidary and integral humanism. A social, bioethical and liberating education and formation that communicates a real solidarity (15). The Pope “emphasizes solidarity, which “as a moral virtue and social attitude, fruit of personal conversion, demands the commitment of all those who have educational and formative responsibilities” (FT 114). The protagonists of the educational world, such as family cells and educational or cultural institutions, together with those who communicate and inform, are responsible for promoting all these educational and formative processes with their inescapable moral sense. Making visible those principles of human, solidary and spiritual fraternity

with others (FT 114), these bioethical keys of respect and care of existence, of family realities and of planet earth (16).

Authentic educational and formative projects based on solidarity, which promote responsible subjects with moral and social conscience and are oriented towards the most universal good and justice with the impoverished, the victims and the discarded as protagonists of their liberating and integral development (FT 18, 116).

And it is that true life in solidarity is constituted in the:

Thinking and acting in terms of community, of prioritizing the life of all over the appropriation of goods by some. It is also to fight against the structural causes of poverty, inequality, lack of work, land and housing, the denial of social and labor rights. It is to confront the destructive effects of the Empire of money. [...] Solidarity, understood in its deepest sense, is a way of making history and that is what popular movements do (FT 116).

It is thus made visible, in opposition to all welfare paternalism, how the Pope promotes these educational and formative processes based on solidarity, in a global bioethics that goes beyond customs and tolls, inclusive of all aspects of reality (17). It is about providing critical, moral and social thinking. Promoting human beings, populations and the poor as protagonists of their human, ecological and integral promotion with their rights and duties (FT 117-118). In this way, the educational and formative tradition, oriented by the faith, is substantiated in all this spiritual, moral and social fruitfulness, with such significant authors as the Fathers of the Church and the DSI itself (18); with these ethical and social keys, there we have the well-known and indispensable evangelical, spiritual and solidary poverty. That is to say, in following and fidelity to Christ, the communion in solidarity of life, goods and action for justice with the poor of the earth. The poor community and church with the poor. Against the evil of selfishness and bourgeois individualism with its idolatry of wealth (being rich), greed, having, power and violence.

And the fact is:

If someone does not have enough to live with dignity, it is because someone else is keeping it for himself. St. John Chrysostom sums it up: “not to share one’s goods with the poor is to rob them and take their lives. The goods we have are not ours, but theirs”; or St. Gregory the Great, “when we give the poor the indispensable things we do not give them our things, but we give back to them what is theirs” (FT 119).

It is this educational and formative moral action, critical and liberating of the causes of evil, which encourages this real solidarity, promoting justice by restoring personal, cultural and social (structural) evils and injustices. In this direction, we are educating and raising awareness of a primordial key of the SDC, such as the universal destination of goods, which comes before property, so that it can develop its constitutive solidarity and social function.

I once again make my own and propose to everyone the words of St. John Paul II, whose forcefulness has perhaps not been noticed: “God has given the earth to the whole human race so that it can sustain all its inhabitants, excluding no one and privileging no one”. In this line, I recall, “the Christian tradition never recognized as absolute or untouchable the right to private property and stressed the social function of any form of private property”. The principle of the common use of created goods for all is the “first principle of the whole ethical-social order”; it is a natural, original and priority right (FT 120).

Moreover, following this path, guided by this ethical key of the equitable sharing of goods, the basic educational and formative lines of solidarity for a bioethical economy are realized. Whose meaning, largely, lies in the moral and political regulation of the market at the service of life, of the capacities and needs of humanity (19).

Development must not be oriented towards the growing accumulation of a few, but must ensure “human, personal and social, economic and political rights, including the rights of nations and peoples”. The right of some to freedom of enterprise or of the market cannot be above the

rights of peoples, nor the dignity of the poor, nor respect for the environment, since “whoever appropriates something does so only to administer it for the good of all” (FT 122).

This educational and moral formative activity, with its inherent social dimensions, transmits this economic bioethics guided by political charity, which makes possible the universal good. In addition, it has another main key in the work, life and dignified conditions of working people with their rights, as is that basic criterion of justice in their remuneration, which is above capital (FT 123).

The big issue is work. What is truly popular —because it promotes the good of the people— is to assure to all the possibility of making the seeds that God has placed in each one sprout, their capacities, their initiative, their strength. That is the best help for a poor person, the best path to a dignified existence. That is why I insist, “Helping the poor with money should always be a temporary solution to solve emergencies. The great objective should always be to allow them a dignified life through work”. No matter how much the mechanisms of production may change, politics cannot renounce the objective of ensuring that the organization of a society provides each person with some way of contributing his or her abilities and efforts. Because “there is no worse poverty than that which deprives people of work and the dignity of work”. In a truly developed society, work is an indispensable dimension of social life, since it is not only a way of earning one’s bread, but also a channel for personal growth, for establishing healthy relationships, for self-expression, for sharing gifts, for feeling co-responsible for the improvement of the world, and ultimately for living as a people (FT 162).

The DSI, with this integral ecology and global bioethics, teaches the primordial promotion of global socio-environmental justice at work. An adequate response to evil and injustice, such as the destruction of life in all its phases or forms and of the family. Yes, there really are some social and structural causes of disrespect for life, underdevelopment and impoverishment. As is all this precariousness and socio-labor exploitation. In addition to the above, we must educate and train in corporate bioethics. This means an authentic corporate

social responsibility, raising community and humanizing business realities that respect the life, dignity and rights of every person. It is about every human being, the very subject of work, becoming the protagonist and manager of life, resources and the purpose of these business communities. People who co-manage the economy and its human and integral promotion, at the service of life, dignity and equity in the distribution of resources (FT 122).

In these processes that develop life and integral ecology in a global way, in worldwide solidarity with all populations and humanity, an education-training for fair trade and ethical banking is very important. Thus enabling us to promote commercial and financial systems that, at the planetary level, eradicate the injustices of these international trade relations, speculative finance and usurious banking institutions with their evils, such as the unjust foreign debt (FT 126). Therefore, it is a popular education and formation for this other possible world, which is necessary, together with the popular and social movements. They seek dignity and rights such as the roof, work and land (*the three T's*); they promote justice that brings peace, against all war and violence (FT 127).

### **3. Educational and pedagogical perspectives**

As can be seen, from all that has been said up to this point, very suggestive and vital horizons are opening up for educational, pedagogical, formative and cultural action. Shaped by a critical, moral, socializing, mystical, liberating and integral humanism that has as a base all this ethical, social, humanist, spiritual and theological message of Francis. As the studies and authors on all this, show us.

In these investigations and magisterium of the Pope (20), with his ethical and social proposal and educational implications, the contributions of his influences are valuable (21). For example, the theological keys of Latin American and Argentinean perspectives, such as those of the people or of culture with names like L. Gera (22), together with other horizons such as those of Doctor Angelico,

Aquinas, and of personalism that have been fertilized with his teaching. Guided by the above, we will trace some lines and elements of this moral, social and educational teaching that provides us with this integral pedagogical humanism in terms of fraternal solidarity, justice, peace and integrity of creation. We are in the heart of Catholic Christianity with its evangelical and joyful message, from the “Grace of the Love of God in Christ”, which communicates to us a moral and education oriented by its essential values or principles. As they are the solidary fraternity, the merciful compassion that loves the other and the liberating justice with the impoverished.

From here, with Francis, this humanist, ecological and integral education and pedagogy is delineated with a bioethics that cares for and promotes life and justice for a global human development (23). Encompassing and including, then, all the dimensions or aspects of the human and of reality. That is, an ecological education *personalized*, which empowers the mind with the most beautiful and profound values and ideals. *Social*, which promotes relational ethics and justice with all humanity, with the victims and the marginalized. *Environmental* or *sustainable*, protecting the existence of that common home which is our planet earth; and transcendent, *spiritual* or mystical, which bases all of this on communion with the God of life, as revealed to us in Jesus Christ.

As can be seen, in all this integral educational and ecological perspective, a bioethical character with a global horizon is constituted. Caring for, defending and promoting life in all its stages, throughout its development or aspects, from the moment it arises with fertilization-conception until its natural death, in the whole reality of existence (24), of culture, politics, economy, work, etc. It is a bioethics of merciful compassion and solidarity that from moral reason with its cordial substratum welcomes the sufferings of others, of the impoverished and the damage of all of nature, of the cosmos and of the whole of creation. It is clearly opposed to the current culture of discarding and death. Such as the evils and injustices of garbage work and unemployment, forced immigration, sexist violence, those suffered by native and rural populations, child slaves or others

oppressed by human trafficking. That discarding and denial of life in its beginning or end, the corrupt public (political) life or other evils and unjust realities.

It is a moral education with prophecy and critical sense before this evil, before the unjust, everything that denies the dignified existence of human beings and the most universal goodness. Those unequal and unjust realities and relationships that exist in society, in the world and in history. And that are caused by the economic and political powers over the poor, generating victims, by the neoliberal systems and ideologies with their dominant capitalist or communist bases, collectivism, or other populist and totalitarian, originating unemployment, indecent employment, child slaves or other injustices of misery and underdevelopment. Breeding ground and generator of violent, warlike or weapons realities with their lucrative benefits above life, of the environmental disaster that does not take care of the earth's biodiversity. It is the productivity and consumerist economy that is destroying nature, which favors human trafficking, the enslavement of the pornographic industry with people prostituting themselves, substances and all kinds of addictions. The mistreatment of women, the culture of death against the most fragile, the unborn human embryo (being) and the elderly.

In this sense, Francis provides us with some keys in social and moral life to understand or discern society and history, such as that reality comes before ideas. Another would be that the whole goes beyond the parts, with this broader and global vision, which, moreover, is in the era in which we find ourselves. Assuming those realities, evils and injustices that generate conflict or opposition, transcending it, for the gift (gratuitousness), goodness and just peace; with that integral liberation of that evil and structural and unjust realities of sin, as is this economic system that denies life.

Likewise, the spaces must be transcended by time since human beings, populations and the impoverished must be protagonists of their dynamics of liberating and integral human promotion. Authors of a more just and fraternal world, as opposed to the paternalistic assistance of the powerful and elites. The same ones that prevent

these dynamics of justice, peace and integral liberation from the structural mechanisms and ideologies that cause so many problems and unequal and unjust situations. Such as those economic and political models that impose dehumanization and inequity, with their enslaving ideologies, those false gods of possessing, enrichment and domination.

Thus, an ethical, critical and liberating educational and cultural thinking is carried out against all these political and economic systems and ideologies that go against life that impose the culture of discarding and death. These idolatries of wealth, of being rich and of capital, with their economic and mercantilist totalitarianisms. The possessive, individualistic and competitive proprietorship that, with its desire for profit, like idols devour the existence of the people, the poor and the excluded. A humanistic and critical pedagogy, in opposition to the global disorder of economic materialism with its relativism and individualism, where Francis transmits to us a social and global bioethical education with its integral ecology. Constituted by the keys and essential moral criteria. The globalization of solidarity, which defends the life and dignity of the worker with his rights, such as justice in labor remuneration (25). The equitable distribution of resources, so that goods fulfill their purpose: to be destined for all humanity, which comes before the right to property.

A moral and social formation that is united to action, so that political orders, serving the most universal good, regulate economic, commercial and entrepreneurial life and promote integral human and ecological promotion. In this way, the economic realities carry out their authentic mission, the sustenance of life, with this gratuitous solidarity and socialization of a sustainable existence. It is the education and democratic management of the economy, with a bioethics of the market and business, which exercises these authentic corporate responsible processes at the socioeconomic level. This means that the economic reality, together with the entrepreneurial instances, are transformed into a humanizing, ethical, participative and democratic life and community, co-managed by all at the service of the dignity and fulfillment of each person.

It is an education and action for justice in the commercial and banking systems, with ethical finance. Faced with the speculation that dominates the economic world, which turns the planet into an inhuman global game, the banking system into a dictatorship of usury that imposes abuse and injustice in loans, mortgages and other financial products. In addition, that lead families, peoples and the poor to permanent global crises, to indebtedness and ruin, generating destruction, victims and death.

Against this neoliberal globalization, of a capitalist sign, it is about educating and promoting the globalization of poverty, as it means the poor ecclesial community with the impoverished. It is the humble, supportive and spiritual existence that shares everything one has, what one is, and the action for justice with the impoverished. A decentralized, extroverted, available, and itinerant community and existence that goes out to meet the margins and reverse of history. It is about growing downwards, to meet the peripheral and discarded crossroads suffered by the victims, that social and theological place of the poor, of the crucified of history, real presence of God revealing in Christ poor and crucified. Moreover, that it is liberating us completely from materialism and unsupportive individualism with its idols of having, wealth, being rich and competitiveness that impose the death of human beings and impoverished peoples.

#### **4. Conclusions**

For all these reasons, Francis transmits to us a humanistic and global bioethics with its anthropological bases, united to an integral ecology, which protects and defends existence in each of its stages, in all its development and aspects that conform it. Promotes the moral and social keys that care for the dignified life and integrity of all human beings, victims and all beings. Therefore, lead people to be subjects of social and public life, thus exercising that main virtue of political charity and in this way make visible the joy and beauty of that union, affective and fertile, of the man with the woman and their

diverse, complementary nature and that, in that loving gift, constitute the matrimonial, family and filial realities with their descendants.

The institution of marriage and the family is a teacher in solidarity of ethical, social and spiritual life, of goodness and civic responsibility for a more fraternal, peaceful and just world with the impoverished. The Pope also encourages communicative, intercultural, ecumenical and interreligious processes in this spiritual search for a non-violent, peaceful culture of fraternal solidarity, to contribute to a fraternal spirituality (25), which fosters this global bioethics and integral ecology.

We conclude by emphasizing that all this bioethics is oriented by merciful love, nourished by compassion that includes others, the vulnerable and damaged life (26). It unites the diverse in communion, with that charity in truth that defends the dignified existence of persons, peoples and the poor. A communicative and interdisciplinary bioethics that dialogues, meeting, with the multiple rational, scientific, cultural and spiritual knowledge for peaceful, humanizing and just relations. Welcoming therefore the essence and connections of people, of our planet earth and of the whole cosmos in the God of life. Encouraging, therefore, authentic educational projects with mature formation processes, for all this global bioethics and integral ecology that makes possible a meaningful, happier, spiritual and transcendent life.

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