

ETHICAL REFERENCES FOR AN AGREEMENT AMONG GENERATIONS

R. Morelli

- **Premise**

In order to outline the ethical references for the intragenerational agreement referred to in the new project of NUCLEAR CONVERSION proposed by Civiltà dell'Amore, it seems appropriate to recall a 2012 study available on the Web¹ and produced by this same Christian oriented association. This is the recurrence analysis of the word PEACE in the New Testament. This recurrence occurs 97 times, with prevalence in the Pauline Letters and particularly in the Letter to the Romans. The study - after the analysis - concludes that it is the Christian God himself who is configured as the God of Peace. This is assumed as one of the fundamental reasons that leads the Pontifical Magisterium to authoritatively condemn any form of conflict between peoples: the blatant war, the "war made in pieces" or the hidden, "underground" war, as they say today! In every form it betrays the necessary love for one's neighbor, beyond the methods, objectives and "weapons" chosen against the "enemy". While the NUCLEAR CONVERSION, on the other hand, by converting the atomic devices of mass destruction² into fuel for nuclear power plants, can feed, through micro-enterprises and microcredit, development projects that help to mitigate the migratory phenomena in the countries of origin, abandoned in conditions of poverty and marginality and for this very reason remain in the heart of the Christian God, who wants to act *hic et nunc* in the real world that he created.

- **Ecological, Nuclear Conversion and Development**

The social aspects of Christian dogma, masterfully analyzed by Henri-Marie de Lubac in his famous work "Catholicism"³, seem to permeate the whole Social Doctrine of the Church, starting from *Rerum Novarum* and ending with *Caritas in Veritate* and *Laudato Si'*; the latter encyclicals, which most inspire the associative activity of Civiltà dell'Amore and which have given an acceleration and urgency to the social action of today's Christians, a watchful sentinel who engages in action in a spirit of brotherhood, ready to send the alert to his people in case of glimpse of danger (Cfr. Ezekiel 33,1,33). And this moves us!

The fight against climate change, the postponement impossibility of environmental sustainability and the change in the lifestyles towards which the world is now oriented, are in fact imposed, according to a principle of prudence, for the benefit of future generations due to an immense consumerism and an "exhausting" exploitation of planetary resources and the ecosystem. We are forced to resort to circular economies and to recognize that the tacit or obvious prerequisites for the decarbonisation of the economy are the need for an ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION, as well as a NUCLEAR CONVERSION, for a peaceful COEXISTENCE of the Peoples, despite their diversity. These objectives appear today problematic paths to be undertaken and implemented in practice, but "almost-obliged", although they can become socially "painful", beyond manipulation for political consensus purposes or instrumental journalistic sweeteners, such as "the (happy) degrowth", which divert from a responsible observation of the real situation. The European Energy Road Map 2030-2050 approach, limiting the use of fossil fuels, if it refuses the use of nuclear power, would stigmatize a situation that sees the European world - despite its 1000 billion GREEN DEAL (mainly from private sectors) - reduced to the low-carbon "gas pipe", with an old nuclear under obsolescence without a new one being born; and without which the transition would become impossible, as the international scientific community points out (e.g. MIT)⁴. Unless deciding to intervene - overwhelmed so by heavy moral responsibilities - on the close (almost functional) correlation between population growth and increase in greenhouse gases in the

¹ Refer to <https://civiltadellamorerm.wordpress.com/2013/05/16/analisi-delle-ricorrenze-della-parola-pace-nel-nuovo-testamento-sintesi/> and https://civiltadellamorerm.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/ntxc_a_analisi.pdf

² It should also be remembered that there is a UN document approved by the majority of the nations of the Earth, but not by the Members of the UN Security Council, which condemns nuclear weapons; the Holy See also condemns their sole possession, in addition to their use.

³ H. De Lubac – CATTOLICISMO – Gli aspetti sociali del Dogma – Editrice Studium – Roma - 1964

⁴ Refer also to www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/Nuclear-part-of-climate-solution-says-European-Par?feed=feed

atmosphere⁵. Or, by undertaking problematic geoengineering⁶ actions which risk definitively and irreversibly touching the natural balance of the planet without having previously known the long-term effects of those interventions.

The social doctrine of the Church and a collateral pragmatism force us to observe that the time we live in western civilization is a time of transition; in particular energy transition, fueled by the perceived danger of climate change. Through an undisputed emphasis in European institutional fora on the need for degrowth⁷ the recovery of greater sobriety in consumption seems to be attempting an increase in sensitivity and foresight towards the environment, intended as a garden to be kept and not plundered; as a gift of the Creator to pass on to future generations, possibly without failures, so that they too can experience a full life, tending towards the integral development of man⁸ to which all of today's human society is projected, although it itself this integral development has not yet reached it. But, if it is true that growth and sustainability are not compatible, as the EEB (*Environmental European Bureau*)⁹ says, then public debts become unsustainable and this puts PEACE at risk.

Ours is a time of great social encyclicals of the Pontifical Magisterium¹⁰, which put their finger on the faults shown by today's human society so that they can be remedied, recovered and experimented - beyond one's own belief, the choice of which is fruit of human dignity¹¹ - a dimension of living in conformity with a Christianly inspired society and each man can thus be aware of his own call to fraternity towards every other man. It is the same Petrine magisterium that in our day reminds the world - not only Christian - that "*Money cannot be used to make more money*", implying that it is not speculative finance that can create collective wealth, but enterprise, work. Nothing different, after all, from what Calvinist ethics had been repeating from its earliest beginnings and which Max Weber had masterfully analyzed in his essay on "Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism". But, is the historic Calvinist spirit of the dawn (almost monastic) - which made America great and western civilization with it - still alive, active and present in today's world? Or has there been a slow and progressive drift from those primordial values? Values that have never been absent from Christian teaching in general! Ultimately, one wonders if at this time, contextualising the value and values of productive action should not in some way and to some extent take into account not only the technical-economic parameters that are characteristic of it, but also the ethical and social issues to which we are recalled by a magisterial teaching that we cannot ignore. For example, assume the enterprise as prevalent with respect to finance, which is its handmaid and not dominant. Or take on the environment and its preservation, safety and the common good as prevalent with respect to the project economy and finance; ultimately socially prevalent aspects with respect to the just necessity of contributing to generate economic value for the proponents of the project. Alternatively, one wonders if it is right, in a global system that amplifies inequalities, to continue to consider thrift in public spending of money for any project as prevalent, especially in "depressed" areas, without aiming anymore - with redistributive intents - its known "efficiency" in the multiplicative effects that generates the local impact of each investment. Ultimately, it is not economic-financial wasting that is proposed,

⁵ Refer to <https://wattsupwiththat.com/2016/05/17/the-correlation-between-global-population-and-global-co2/> and Lancet. 2012 Jul 14;380(9837):157-64. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(12)60958-1. Epub 2012 Jul 10. - Demographic change and carbon dioxide emissions.- O'Neill BC1, Liddle B, Jiang L, Smith KR, Pachauri S, Dalton M, Fuchs R.- National Center for Atmospheric Research, Boulder, CO 80305, USA. - boneill@ucar.edu "*First, empirical analyses of historical trends tend to show that CO(2) emissions from energy use respond almost proportionately to changes in population size and that ageing and urbanisation have less than proportional but statistically significant effects*". - Editor's note: Four childless generations would solve the CO₂ problem, but would make the age pyramid of the global population unsustainable.

⁶ Refer to <http://roccomorelli.blogspot.com/2020/01/noaa-national-oceanic-and-atmospheric.html>

⁷ See <https://mk0eeborgicuyptuf7e.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Decoupling-Debunked.pdf> but also <https://www.lastampa.it/tuttogreen/2019/08/28/news/il-mito-della-crescita-verde-portera-al-collasso-ecologico1.37371005>

⁸ Integral development promoted not only in the ecclesial, but also lay framework (see e.g. in the UN)

⁹ Refer to <http://roccomorelli.blogspot.com/2019/08/crescita-del-pil-e-sostenibilita.html>

¹⁰ Laborem Exercens (1981) - Caritas in Veritate (2009) – Evangelii Gaudium (2013) – Laudato Si' (2015)

¹¹ See Vatican II declaration on religious freedom: Dignitatis Humanae

but ethics: in the enterprise, it is valuable only the short term, market freedom and only the creation of value for the shareholder, or is there something else? And even if with the pretense of preserving scientificity and neutrality to the disciplines to which we dedicate ourselves, we were pushed unethically to a historical analysis of the economic theory of value, would we find unequivocal answers on what economic value is today? Regarding this theme, the old books of economics reported the abbot Galiani's theory that attributed the economic value of a good either to rarity (precious metals, jewels, etc.) or to utility. The physiocrats attached value to the land, while the mercantilists to exchange and the socialists to work only. The pre- and post-war identification (1944) of wealth with gold (*gold standard*)¹² ended in 1971 and shortly thereafter, with the Nixon government in the USA, it became clear that: "*The dollar is our currency, but it's your problem*"¹³. The dollar was already there and imposed itself globally until the euro came out. Today, among the antagonism of currencies, it seems reasonable to say that in modern society value, money and economic wealth have lost their original meaning, including seigniorage¹⁴, and have taken on more "papery", speculative and even "evanescent" forms "(see futures, insurance securities, twenty-year bonds, derivatives in general) thus exposing themselves to "volatility", that is, sudden changes determined in particular by cyclical or structural crises that jeopardize, in a globalized world, not only the productivity of the capital held, but even its very existence¹⁵. All this, associated with globalization, has had and still has the effect of making the "geopolitical" center of gravity of economic power vary and shift, which has become more exposed and changeable than in the past, associating it with a structural and intrinsic unpredictability that does not favor conditions of stability needed for development. Under such changing and unpredictable conditions, is it reasonable to expect a recovery of the power associated with the (Military) Force rather than that of the Economic Power? Will the Force determine and support the projects necessary for humanity or it will be the economic power of the Markets? These are conflicting values, which today seem to be polarizing in an antagonistic way: States and Markets, that is, autocratic and democratic capitalism, without allowing us to predict which of these "values" could prevail. Thus, PEACE is in any case put "at risk" continuously and, instead, dominant are conflict, suspicion, fear associated with dark visions of a future without resources and without God, in which the same gift of life seems to be put under discussion. Discussion sustained on the problematic nature of human livability in the world that is prefigured to-day.

Meanwhile, in the ethical-moral sphere, it emerges that the individual good is subordinated to the common, shared, public good and time is superior to space¹⁶. For the purposes of this discussion it should also be considered that, although our jurisprudence seems to say otherwise¹⁷, there is a widespread belief that energy, in the era we live in, is an essential component of the right to existence of the human species and of the civilizations that it developed. Consequently, this right, if it is a right, in certain circumstances should prevail over environmental considerations in the same way as that "right to food" which distinguished pastors of our church also speak of¹⁸. Human civilization therefore needs a mix, balanced and controlled on a case-by-case basis, of all the energy sources available so far (fossil, nuclear and renewable), none excluded, while waiting

¹² See https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sistema_aureo

¹³ See <https://www.ipe.com/the-dollar-is-our-currency-but-its-your-problem/25599.article>

¹⁴ See following link https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teoria_della_Moneta_Moderna ;

<http://ssrn.com/abstract=1905625>; www.moslereconomics.com ; vedasi anche Bank of England - Quarterly Bulletin 2014 Q1 - Money creation in the modern economy By Michael McLeay, Amar Radia and Ryland Thomas of the Bank's Monetary Analysis Directorate; - a summary is available at <https://roccomorelli.blogspot.com/2017/11/un-breve-cenno-sulla-teoria-monetaria.html>

¹⁵ See <https://it.businessinsider.com/pandemia-o-epidemia-per-loms-e-la-banca-mondiale-non-e-una-questione-di-vittime-ma-di-soldi/>

¹⁶ Evangelii Gaudium: paragraphs (217-237)

¹⁷ See reference at the link <http://roccomorelli.blogspot.com/2017/09/una-sentenza-storica-daricordare.html> - The EU plans a package to combat Energy Poverty.

¹⁸ Refer to the content of the volume ENERGIA GIUSTIZIA E PACE – Una riflessione sull'energia nel contesto attuale dello sviluppo della tutela dell'ambiente - Mons. Mario Toso – (Prefazione S.E. Peter K.A Card. Turkson) Libreria Editrice Vaticana. – In the book reference is made not only to the prevalence of the "right to food" but to the close link between the availability of food and energy.

for the "Research" to provide other possible environmentally safer options and harmless (for example: nuclear fusion, hot or cold, other LENR (Low Energy Nuclear Reaction) or piezo-energies or however to be studied and experimented together with a mandatory demographic control). Any ideal rejection, principled or even ideological, of any of the existing sources should be reduced and circumstantiated. This raises again the question that perhaps was not understandable at first reading: in the future, in the absence of reasonableness, will the Force support the projects necessary for humanity to guarantee survival or will it be the economic power of the Markets? And just thinking about that "Invisible Hand" operating in the human action, the belief is strengthened that the individual good is subordinated to the common, shared, public good; and time (healer of all evil) is greater than space (increasingly crowded on Earth, under the pressure of a demographic pressure not yet managed and controlled).

But yet the first liberalism - although believed to be erroneous in Pius IX's *Syllabus* of the *Quanta Cura* and thanks to the industrial revolution, scientific and technological progress and the "American dream" of generalizing well-being - was able to raise the living conditions of a large slice of humanity and to guarantee in Europe, and beyond, over 70 years of progress and peace, thanks also to areas of free trade and free movement. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, however, liberalism, that has become triumphant, devoid of a real antagonist (including recently the intervention of the state in economics), has experienced an escalation that has led to the financialization of every aspect of human existence (even pandemics events¹⁹) and to the generalization of a "single value and measure of all things", to make true that concept expressed by George Simmel in his essay "Psychology of money"²⁰: "Just like God in the form of faith, money is, in the form concrete, the maximum abstraction to which the practical reason has arisen ". Thus, in psychological terms, the feeling of PEACE is security that the possession of money guarantees on the one hand, and corresponds on the other to what the devout man finds in his God. Money, "*coincidentia oppositorum*"²¹ and "value that it acquires values "(sometimes corruptively!) therefore imposes itself in a generalized way not only as a means, but as an end, outside the Calvinist approach dear to Max Weber, where it was an expression of divine grace, but in any case an instrumental means in the social action.

It is no coincidence that signs of reflection have recently emerged regarding the need for an ethical change in today's capitalism precisely from its nerve centers²². Our attention to all this is high, but it must be ascertained whether it is tactical skirmishes or a real awareness of the unsustainability of the present situation. In Italy, France, Europe and the Mediterranean in general - not to mention Greece and the *Visegrad group* - through the awakening of sovereign sentiment and *popularisms* (rather than populisms) it was even before the Coronavirus spreading the manifest occurrence of Brexit, of the strong dissent towards the EU by a large portion of the European peoples; not even Germany has remained immune²³. This is putting PEACE at risk and exposing, also through the euro and its complicated mechanisms, the entire global finance and economy to a risk of structural instability, if not actually to a possible collapse. This is the reason for the conviction and hope at the same time, that "*Towards the Economy of Francesco*" cannot be just a contingent and fleeting moment of awareness, or a "spectacular" opportunity to capture consent in the service of the fight against the incumbent climate change.

¹⁹ See <https://it.businessinsider.com/pandemia-o-epidemia-per-loms-e-la-banca-mondiale-non-e-una-questione-di-vittime-ma-di-soldi> - Also consider modern securitization procedures and the disappearance of differences between savings banks, commercial banks and investment banks.

²⁰ G.Simmel – IL DENARO NELLA CULTURA MODERNA – Armando Editore – 1998 – See on this aspect also: http://www.associazioneambientesocieta.it/as/StudiRicercheProposte/Memorie_R_Morelli/Denaro_e_societa_moderna0001.pdf

²¹ Money "dung of Satan" or "expression of grace in social action" of the Christian (Calvinist) oriented to the social elevation of the marginalized and excluded?

²² See https://www.corriere.it/esteri/19_agosto_19/svolta-eticadel-capitalismo-f41e9ff8-c2b5-11e9-97ef35a2edd578d1.shtm . See also <https://it.businessinsider.com/il-nobel-per-leconomia-joseph-stiglitz-spiega-perche-le-idee-dimilton-friedman-hanno-contribuito-alla-crescente-disuguaglianza-negli-usa/>

²³ See AfD - Alternative für Deutschland

The initial ideal intent of this program of events was to provide a listening center (of entrepreneurs, researchers, economists, institutions, groups in general) in the Franciscan city, in order to open and seriously discuss ideas, the research, possibilities, developments, beyond the attitudes that underlie a sustainable economy still to be built. In the popular view it is no longer only the Work that sets you free, but with it is also the Truth.

Moved by these original intentions and by a constructive spirit of research of the common good, rather than aversion to possible pre-established solutions, some questions are reported for sharing and reflection, separately for technical-economic - financial-environmental themes and doctrinaire themes on which it is believed that clarifications are needed in the doctrinaire and pastoral framework for the benefit of those who today - in the light of the Scriptures and with sincere Christian spirit - ask themselves what is happening in the globalized world and in Europe; they wonder about the future of the planet and human civilization, moved by the need for Truth that seems to have disappeared in every area in today's general disorientation and confusion.

- **Questions on technical-economic - financial-environmental issues** ²⁴

1. Is degrowth as a weapon to combat climate change practicable by individual (national) communities while others remain in the status quo and defense of privileges?
2. The trade wars (and not only), already underway or looming in the future, also through the maximization of internal production and exports, minimizing imports and aiming for GDP growth (an indisputable parameter on which financial circles evaluate the solvency of accumulated public debt), will they ever allow the adoption of a virtuous, voluntary and peaceful path of degrowth?
3. Is such a path in turn compatible with the financial stability of the global economy and the maintenance of PEACE?
4. Provided that such a process can be undertaken voluntarily, peacefully and autonomously, Labor²⁵ will be able to maintain the current employment levels already problematic and be paid with a "just reward" in such a way as to guarantee the "dignified subsistence" of those who degrowth adopt?
5. If a concrete example of adopting such a degrowth orientation does not come from large economies, is it possible that it can be practiced by small economies, especially if already in difficulty?
6. Can the current apparatus, not only of democratic capitalism, but of international law and human rights, be preserved without drifting towards the use of the Force (e.g. military)?
7. Is the energy transition really possible by "decarbonizing" and focusing on renewables only, without an adequate mix of nuclear and fossil fuels, as well as without substantial moderation of the demographic push?
8. Can mass migration to Europe be mitigated through local development policies or will it be persisting so to become an instrument against a status quo perceived as unfair and iniquitous, putting PEACE at risk?

- **Questions on doctrinaire and pastoral issues:**

- 1) What was the interpretative evolution in the pre-conciliar, conciliar and post-conciliar period of the *Syllabus* of Pius IX and what value must that attachment (much discussed in the past, but almost forgotten today) to the encyclical *Quanta Cura* have for a Catholic of our time?

²⁴ For completeness see also:

<https://draft.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=7421631457898821861#editor/target=post;postID=2282098732590483268;onPublishedMenu=allposts;onClosedMenu=allposts;postNum=7;src=postname>

²⁵ The share of wages in relation to GDP in Italy (but also in many western countries) has dramatically decreased since the 1960s (0.7) until today (0.59) and unemployment today is among the highest in Europe. Historical data show that Italy has been in substantial real decline for about a decade (and Coronavirus will aggravate the situation).

In particular, it is still considered an error that: << LXXX. Can the Roman Pontiff reconcile himself and come to composition with progress, **liberalism** and modern civilization >>?

2) Quoting from point 56 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church - Libreria Editrice Vaticana - 1992 -pag. 33: << The Covenant with Noah after the flood expresses the principle of the divine Economy towards the "nations", that is the men gathered in groups, "each according to their own language and according to their families, in their nations "(Gn10 , 5) The Covenant with Noah remains in force for all the time of the nations, until the universal proclamation of the Gospel.....waiting for Christ to bring together "all the dispersed children of God" >>. (Jn 11.52). One wonders if the ongoing globalization that aims to reunite nations into a single organism is a process that can be "human"²⁶ or it is reserved only to Christ in the *parousia* to establish His Kingdom; and if in this perspective the EU aggregation with large portions of its peoples in dissent could be an objective approved by the Catholic Church because in harmony with the foundations of the Doctrine and the Magisterium.

3) (Neglecting for a moment that Creation and Creatures are certainly a *unicum* to be safeguarded) In the light of "Natural Law" and "Safeguarding Creation" - forced by an extreme limit / impending bond - is to be considered prevalent the existence (as much as possible) of the human species or that of the planetary environment? Instead, assuming the point of view of universal law or "Eternal Law" what would prevail between human existence and the protection of the Planet?

4) Do we have the obligation or the possibility to still think that a benevolent Creator does not make His Providence fail, as He has always done in human history, because the Earth has limits, but "Heavens have no limits!"?

- **Conclusion**

In an individual or even associative setting it is not possible to give certain and unambiguous answers to the crucial questions mentioned above and which emerge from the feeling of a part of the Christian world that cannot be considered marginal.

To discuss within the framework of "*Towards the Economy of Francesco*" a holistic and multidisciplinary approach, free from hegemonic political and commercial purposes by the powers of the Earth, the only possibility arises and appears, perhaps, through which the extraordinary incentive of the Research - by reappropriating human resources wasted with intellectual unemployment that is spreading everywhere - can reconstitute, by virtue and with the help of the Spirit, that dispersed people, Christianly inspired, who can find a solution to current problems of the Earth through Science and Faith.

Pending consideration and solution to the enigmatic questions posed above, in order to keep Hope alive, there is also an obligation to believe that a remnant of the Righteous of Israel is still present in the World and by virtue of this residual part the Creator, benevolent, does not make His Providence fail through an invoked Forgiveness, as he has always done in human history, because the Earth has limits, but "Heavens have no limits!", although some are inclined to think otherwise. Contrition and Conversion thus remain the Via Maestra for the New Man.

Alternatively, we could only take note that the Scriptures - imbued with the Prophetic Spirit as already in the Old Testament era - begin with Genesis and end up with the Apocalypse.

²⁶ We remember the attempt of Nimrod (to unify the peoples of the Earth then known) and the Tower of Babel, which was considered an act of pride and led to the "confusion" of languages and divine condemnation, with consequent destruction of the Tower.