

## **Pope Francis's Vision for Civic and Political Love in the Context of Care for our Common Home**

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#### [V. CIVIC AND POLITICAL LOVE

228. Care for nature is part of a lifestyle which includes the capacity for living together and communion. Jesus reminded us that we have God as our common Father and that this makes us brothers and sisters. Fraternal love can only be gratuitous; it can never be a means of repaying others for what they have done or will do for us. That is why it is possible to love our enemies. This same gratuitousness inspires us to love and accept the wind, the sun and the clouds, even though we cannot control them. In this sense, we can speak of a “universal fraternity”.

229. We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it. We have had enough of immorality and the mockery of ethics, goodness, faith and honesty. It is time to acknowledge that light-hearted superficiality has done us no good. When the foundations of social life are corroded, what ensues are battles over conflicting interests, new forms of violence and brutality, and obstacles to the growth of a genuine culture of care for the environment.

230. Saint Therese of Lisieux invites us to practice the little way of love, not to miss out on a kind word, a smile or any small gesture which sows peace and friendship. An integral ecology is also made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness. In the end, a world of exacerbated consumption is at the same time a world which mistreats life in all its forms.

231. Love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, is also civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world. Love for society and commitment to the common good are outstanding expressions of a charity which affects not only relationships between individuals but also “macro-relationships, social, economic and political ones”.[156] That is why the Church set before the world the ideal of a “civilization of love”.[157] Social love is the key to authentic development: “In order to make society more human, more worthy of the human person, love in social life – political, economic and cultural – must be given renewed value, becoming the constant and highest norm for all activity”.[158] In this framework, along with the importance of little everyday gestures, social love moves us to devise larger strategies to halt environmental degradation and to encourage a “culture of care” which permeates all of society. When we feel that God is calling us to intervene with others in these social dynamics, we should realize that this too is part of our spirituality, which is an exercise of charity and, as such, matures and sanctifies us.

232. Not everyone is called to engage directly in political life. Society is also enriched by a countless array of organizations which work to promote the common good and to defend the environment, whether natural or urban. Some, for example, show concern for a public place (a building, a fountain, an abandoned monument, a landscape, a square), and strive to protect, restore, improve or beautify it as something belonging to everyone. Around these community actions, relationships develop or are recovered and a new social fabric emerges. Thus, a community can break out of the indifference induced by consumerism. These actions cultivate a shared identity, with a story which can be remembered and handed on. In this way, the world, and the quality of life of the poorest, are cared for, with a sense of solidarity which is at the same time aware that we live in a common home which God has entrusted to us. These community actions, when they express self-giving love, can also become intense spiritual experiences.

Using Pope Francis's manifesto as listed above we can use this as a basis of understanding our role in society as pieces of a larger puzzle. This puzzle includes members of society who have a specific role in how the society functions as a whole and without them there would be a gap in the society that is normalized to us. Every piece, even one that is seen as insignificant or unimportant, shares a role in the large-scale view of our society. Without a piece we tend to lose perspective on society as a whole and tend to focus on the parts which are less important. Right now our society focuses too much on materialistic things and less on forming the ratio between mind, body, and soul. We look towards technology, which deteriorates our social abilities which we have adapted to from past centuries, eventually breaking down our moral code which comes from evaluation of social experiences. If we are to pick up the world and society as a whole, we have to understand that it's not always good to be popular. Sometimes the most unpopular are the most beneficial, and people will think of you with anger when trying to fix something which to most seems like it isn't broken. The only way to achieve goals of this magnitude is to have the awareness that there is a problem that must be fixed, have the tools necessary to fix the problem, and to fight for justice even when the cards are stacked against you, that is the real definition of bravery.

The Important take away from Laudato Si is that no matter the role, whether it has to do with the cleanliness, behavioral, social, economic or political roles of our society that each of us as pieces of a puzzle has a duty to accomplish. Many of times, it's the step in the right direction that society is fighting against and or us unaware that they need. In Philosophy, many philosophers possessed this trait which separated them from the others in their time period. Socrates, who called himself the gadfly was a perfect example of the type of readjustment that their society needed at the time, though they didn't want it. He was called the gadfly because he was the vehicle in which reality would bite society in the ass. People at the time of Socrates were okay with not questioning life or their existence but Socrates kept reminding them that life without question is not a life worth living. Jesus was another example, because it was a reminder of the things that society had been pushing away. Jesus was sent down to earth to profess Gods love and the good news but people persecuted him for trying to place the power among the people rather than to give power to the political figures. Sometimes the most important puzzle pieces get lost or thrown away, leaving a hole of emptiness right at the core of the foundation of society even though the piece is missing the piece is still remembered by those around it, all forming the shape of the piece that was supposed to be there.

In Confessions, from Augustine the quote is demonstrated ““is restless until it rests in thee” (Conf. 1.1.1) which can be related to Laudato Si 225, “ Inner peace is closely related to care for ecology and for the common good because, lived out authentically, it is reflected in a balanced lifestyle together with a capacity for wonder which takes us to a deeper understanding of life. (Laudato Si, 225). This links with the idea of the perfect ratio between mind body and soul as mentioned prior, the perfection of the human existence shows an appreciation for the tools that God has given us. We see this message as well in the bible in the Parable of the

Pounds. As each servant was given money, two of the servants spent/ invested the money and one hid the money in fear of him not being able to return it. This message of this parable was about using or hiding your God given talents. Laudato tells us that the lesson of using the abilities God has given you is how you can truly appreciate and experience life. Confessions touches vaguely on the topic with the quote given above because it shows that if our heart and our faith rest in God, we should never worry because he has our best interest in mind.

We can look for modern example of the ‘unwanted savior’ in many types of art and media. The first example is one that we have used in class which is the film, *The Secret of Kells*. *The Secret of Kells*, though seemingly far-fetched, is a perfect example of this. Brendan learned about this technique of Illumination that had been passed down to him, and was his destiny, though his uncle wanted him to stay away from it due to the dangers that would come from it. What his uncle wasn’t understanding was that the right thing to do isn’t always safe nor is it socially acceptable. Just as Jesus did, Brendan put his life on the line going into the forest in search of the stone that would help him see the illuminations, subjecting himself to unknown terrain, spirits and dangers of outside his sheltered lifestyle. However, if he decided not to do that, the whole population would have died at the hands of the enemy and they would have had no way to preserve and spread their culture and their religion. As Brandon disobeyed his uncle we transitioned to a part of the story where we didn’t know if he was doing the right thing. Only by seeing his journey in the forest progress did we know that it was his destiny to be there, breaking the rules. If those were the rules it makes you think how it would be in society. What if breaking the laws was the key to Salvation would you break the laws? This comes from the Awareness of knowing what is important for society and not caring about the personal repercussions of your actions. Just as a martyr would, people risk their lives for what’s right

every day, especially during a time of quarantine. If each human being was to have the same set of rules and the same jobs the pieces of the puzzle wouldn't fit together. Each piece would be a square, though it would result in the ability to go anywhere, it wouldn't be in communion with the pieces around it.

In the Divine Comedy, it stresses pain and isolation from being outcasted from the people you love. In many cases in Dante's Divine Comedy specifically Inferno, many people are casted outlawed for their profession specifically, which is something I feel every day for being a Communications major. The isolation and exile is commonly experienced by those whose duty is to change the world. These people are selected for a duty of greater power, but there is a price for it. Jesus had to pay for freeing the sins of the world, he had to die for us even though he had never done anything to deserve such tragedy and pain. In Laudato Si we can see that being a savior isn't always a popular role but its for a greater cause. As an advertising major I see the world through brands and the human psychology, as many see it as manipulation and betrayal. But as mentioned in the section of Confessions I will not hide my talents of art and analytics because someone says that Communication isn't an adequate major. In the divine comedy, the city of the Mystic Rose reminds him of all things divine and pure, in his mind this symbol is Beatrice, for me that symbol is art. Art as a unique mode of expression allows me to fully express my beliefs as a person though talents in which God gave me. Due to this I am proud to communicate through Advertising my talents and appreciation for the skills that God has given me.

Many people are constantly kicked down for standing up for those who don't have a voice. The Indians of the mission were seen as savages who don't even have rights to the land that they inhabit, and white powerful people were killing them and stripping them of their loved

ones and their belongings including their land. They were seen in the eyes of the Eminence and the Portuguese as animals. The Mission stood for the rights of the people just as described in Laudato Si. Even those who are not seen as important roles in society have ways of transforming our society. Though it seemed through the mission that those “savages” were just mooching off the help of the mission, they were really helping the Godly men of the mission learn about themselves and test the bounds of their moral standing as well as their spirituality. The Mission was seen to these men in power as people in which they could walk all over as a subject to their political power. However, once the mistake was made by the eminence, they realized that the works of the Mission would go beyond the roles of power. Though the eminence and the Portuguese hated the Mission; the Mission was the one thing that was helping better their societies, unifying their beliefs in religion when their numbers were low and teaching a new group of people, the love and compassion of religion. The real message from the mission that is concomitant with the message of Pope Francis’s Laudato Si is that if everyone took on the patient role of the Mission, everyone would be accepting towards cultures that they weren’t familiar with. The same can be said about our society today.

As you can see through many examples of media, that the words of Pope Francis do not go unnoticed. Everyone’s role, though maybe seen as unwanted, is helping the progression of society into a more beautiful place. If one person is not trying then other people around the world are not trying to transform our home. Though many try to forget once it is in their mind, they will never fully rid that thought from their mind, as much as they try to avoid it. Pope Francis is the Gadfly of our lifetime and we need to listen to his views in order to awaken ourselves from the slumber of obliviousness. As each individual person is awakened, the world will be swiftly moving down the path of advancement. If we use the ideals of Pope Francis such as, living

together in communion as Gods children, actively trying to change the world even when others put us down for our pursuit of societal advancement, taking responsibility for the world we live in, always greeting others with a smiling face, actively helping and guiding others so that they could do the same for us, and protecting and progressing the beauty of the world which belongs to all of us together, we can truly transform the world into a more beautiful and peaceful place.

**THIS IS MY FINAL ESSAY FOR THEOLOGY 2 TAUGH BY PROFESSOR OLSEN!**