

[Francis's Vision for Civic and Political Love in the context of care for our Common Home](#)

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Globally, humans shared several topics that contribute to common knowledge. The different manners across cultures can identify the characteristics of who we are or explains the habits we adopt when talked about those topics. Our bond, across all nations, of love as brothers and sisters, is a powerful connection that unites us. Even though there are many interpretations of what love is or the way it is express, an individual can agree that love is patient, kind, "it does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud." (1 *Corinthians* 13:4) The encyclical letter of Pope Francis *Laudato Si'* (praise be with you) is an invitation to all people to reconsider the way we live, to reflect upon the vulnerable poor, and the ways we are harming our common home. *Laudato Si'* is a call to our human egocentric worldview, and to not forget that we as a family can help others alleviate the problem, with civic love and consideration.

Throughout human history, nature has been an essential element to survive. In the last centuries, the direct connection with nature has been diminishing as manufacturing increases. Pope Francis reminds us that "care for nature is part of a lifestyle which includes the capacity for living together and communion." (*Laudato Si*, 228) In other words, we cannot ignore the place that unifies us. *The Mission* is a great example of the communion Pope Francis is referring to. The movie demonstrates the relationship that existed between the Guarani and the Jesuits Missionaries. Father Gabriel decided to confront the combat "in communion," together with the

Guarani in a spiritual manner. Even though the perspective of the communion of Father Gabriel is spiritual salvation (because they all died), the approach is the same. People need to be together under the same purpose for justice. Before the combat, Father Gabriel, as Pope Francis referred, “humans being in communion liberate each other” because the love that exists in a community thrives the unity in people for their purposes.

Our planet was created for us by “our common father [and] this makes us brothers and sisters.” (*Laudato Si*, 228) We make part of a big community with the same purpose to care about sustainability. The love that exists between brothers and sisters, Pope Francis refers to as “Fraternal love that can only be gratuitous; it can never be a means of repaying others for what they have done or will do for us.” (*Laudato Si*, 228) When we care for others, it does not mean we, as individuals, are helping for the benefit of others or ourselves. The fraternal love is the simple action to help, to take care of others with no recompensation because “remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” (*Acts* 20:35) Therefore, as part of a community or citizen in the world, with fraternal love, it is “possible to love our enemies.” (*Laudato Si*, 228) As brothers/sisters and as the command said, “to love one another.” (*John* 13:34) We only need to think about what we provide others, and not on what we receive. After all, it is more glorious to give than receive.

Undoubtedly it is difficult to love a person that has caused harm in our lives. However, I believe love is express in many forms. After a betrayal, it is impossible to have the same relationships as before. *Philia* is a Greek word to refers to the love that exists in friendship. Based on the word definition, it is the least demanding love. The book of *Confessions* gives a clear example of the relationship and when is lost. Augustine had a very close friend who shared many adventures. Sadly, he experienced the loss of his close friend very deeply. He could not

understand why his soul “was sad, and [threw him into] terrible distress.” (*Confessions* 4:9; Ruden, 83) However, unperceivable circumstances make Augustine understand more about himself and love. His *philia* that existed with his friend was focus on the experience each other lived throughout their lives. Even though the fraternity love or the *philia* in a relationship is not enough to forgive or understand circumstances, Jesus reminds us to “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.” (*Matthew* 5:44) Since loving our enemies can give us salvation and a better understanding of the world.

Today, technology has improved dramatically the way we live as well as the system. The growth has changed the regularities on how business work and interaction with consumers, and other business around the world. In the past few years, there has been some change in the manner of how politics handle problems concerning business and sustainability. There is no doubt that industries play a significant role in the sustainability of the planet since the product life cycle, the majority depends on the manufacturers. However, most companies are under a political system that allows the government to intervene and set rules on how a business operates nationally/internationally. Nevertheless, not every country is contributing to the change because there is a lack of understanding. In 2015, the United Nations adopted the Paris Agreement for global climate change and its negative impact. The environmental accord involves many countries worldwide to aim for the sustainability of the planet with global greenhouse emissions to decrease the global temperature. Sadly, the president of the United States begins the withdrawal, and on November 4, 2020, the US officially will no longer be part of this reconstruction. *Laudato Si* explains that these types of actions are no longer tolerable, “we have

had enough immorality and the mockery of ethics, goodness, faith, and honesty.” (*Laudato Si*, 229)

As an international business student, I understand the disturbance that many citizens have in the world about sustainability. From a business perspective, there are some moral values many companies need to fulfill. However, the sustainability of the planet does not only depend on the corporations or the political system. Also, it depends on the citizens that consume the goods/services and the election for the political system. Some countries in the world do not have a sustainable government or an educated population that can contribute to sustainability. Therefore, Pope Francis said that “it is time to acknowledge that light-hearted superficiality has done us no good.” (*Laudato Si*, 228) It is time to confront the problem from every aspect that influences the ecological system. Since “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.” (*Laudato Si*, 228)

Today, there is no empathy in the simple gesture of taking care of problems that affect the environment. There is no compassion for others, and we are neglecting that love embarks many aspects of our lives and the city. Pope Francis said that “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.” (*Laudato Si*, 231) The beauty of love it’s not on the subliminal and materials that companies have developed in the last decades. Love is found on the simplicity of life, small gestures of taking care of others, and the action of doing it for love. *Agape* is a Greek word that defines God's love in Christian's understanding. The unconditional love of God is that "we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:9-10) Before anything, God has loved us, and to be loved is like food to the soul (Lewis).

We feel plentiful to know that someone loves our soul. The love God gives us is a love that cares for others and their actions. A good example of love that cares is Dante in *The Divine Comedy*. Dante travels two cities with Virgil (*Inferno* and *Purgatory*) to reach his beloved Beatrice. His journey represented the knowledge and appreciation of love. Same as Dante, we have learned, with mistakes from the past, that the egocentric view of us on the planet does not benefit anyone, instead, it harmed everyone does not matter the social status.

A human-centered environment worldview is someone who sees the natural world primarily as a support for human life. Today, humans are living unsustainably with continued waste, and the ethics of being responsible for future generations are not primary. The “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] (*Laudato Si*, 231) If society has a love for charity, it can have great impacts on many aspects of the city. Therefore, *Laudato Si'* gives an idea to a “civilization of love.” [157] (*Laudato Si*, 231) Since, a love for society can encounter many aspects together to help others and provide future generations a better future for the world.

Nevertheless, to have a social interest of love for others it depends on many factors. Government systems and culture play a significant role in the manage of a society. Sometimes management is affected by different factors in culture or government intervention. It is very important to understand the cultural aspect of each country before proceeding with the conditions. From the perspective of Christians “Social love is the key to authentic development: '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] (*Laudato Si*, 231) However, there is a problem because some countries are

individualistic society. Based on *Hofstede* results, countries like the United States and France have high scores of individualisms. It means that the society in these countries are more independent and cares more about themselves or their closest family instead of the community. This contemporary society is the opposite of what Christians perceive desires in the combat of climate change.

When a society does not have an interpersonal relationship with each other, it is more difficult to accomplish social love. Therefore, it affects the contribution to the sustainability of the planet because there is a lack of interest. Pope Francis explains that "social love moves us to devise larger strategies to halt environmental degradation and to encourage a "culture of care" which permeates all of society." (*Laudato Si*, 231) When a society enhances the culture of care, the preoccupation with others increases as a matter of a community. However, when there is a lack of understanding in society because of education or lifestyle is difficult to elaborate strategies. Undoubtedly, scientific studies (NASA) has demonstrate excess of carbon dioxide and methane in the atmosphere that can affect our day-to-day and others environment changes.

From a scientific perspective, there is concern about global climate change because of the consequences it can bring to the world. As climate change happens, some environmental hazards occur affecting parts of the ecosystems. There is various type of dangers but, the most related to the pandemic is the biological hazards. COVID-19 is a clear example of an infectious disease transferred from an animal. Many are experiencing a call to help others, and the affiliation or not to politics it's not an excuse. "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." (*Laudato Si*, 231) Pope Francis

recognizes that the action to help others, during a difficult situation, is part of the spiritual journey. It is a way to become more holy, free from sin, and becomes more like God.

Sometimes there is a lack of part of those in need because they do not know how to help. *Laudato Si'* reminds us that there are a variety of ways a person can help, "Not everyone is called to engage directly in political life. Society is also enriched by a countless array of organizations that work to promote the common good and to defend the environment, whether natural or urban." (*Laudato Si*, 232) Organizations are an arrangement of people with the same purpose to benefit society. "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." (*Laudato Si*, 232) Organizations are freer and more precise with the actions taken and many citizens are more satisfied with the results. Also, "a community can break out of the indifference induced by consumerism. These actions cultivate a shared identity, with a story that can be remembered and handed on." (*Laudato Si*, 232) Moreover, it is a way to connect a community with an identity that many can identify with their lives. Therefore, an easier connection means an easier interaction among people and feel more comfortable to help the future or leave a positive message with faith for future generations.

Overall, *Laudato Si'* alert us of the ecological crisis the planet is currently facing. Pope Francis explores the love and civic by explaining why we, as a citizen of the world, should care. The Pope indicates topics of love and systems that can resonate with people around the world. Like these, they can reflect upon and help more the planet. Also, *Laudato Si'* is a called to the system and the people who are more affected to be on alert, "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 communities' actions, when they express self-giving love, can also become intense spiritual experiences."

(Laudato Si, 232) Therefore, the world should be in communion, part of the societal care for the common home. Most importantly, to benefits the well-being of every creature on earth as the new generation approach.

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