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**The Role of (Christian) Spirituality in  
the Economy in the Light of *Laudato si'***

**Abstract**

*The global economic crises at the beginning of the third millennium revealed the harmful consequences for the whole of society and the environment that the myth of the “deified” economy brings. Many researchers have been encouraged to begin exploring the causes of crises intensively. The author thinks that it is more important to look for ways to implement the economy in a way that serves the common good and a common home. The path to renewal of the economy the author sees described primarily in the direction that Pope Francis presented in the *Laudato si'*. Therefore, he puts forward the thesis that in the light of *Laudato si'* (Christian) spirituality plays an important role in the economy. To confirm the thesis, the author briefly defines economics and spirituality. Then follows a presentation of fundamental orientations based on the analysis in *Laudato si'* that could enable economic recovery. In the end, the author describes how a renewed Christian spirituality and dialogue can help individuals and communities make basic guidelines for a new economy.*

**Keywords**

economics, new economy, Christianity, spirituality, economic spirituality, common good, common home, *Laudato si'*, dialogue

The economy plays a very important role in today's world. It is safe to assume that the majority of people are intensely concerned about the economy: personal, state, world, etc. We become particularly aware of our dependence on the economy in times of a state or global crisis. These have been quite frequent since entering into the third millennium. Such crises crudely revealed the harmful consequences for the whole of society and the environment that the myth of the deified economy brings. The crises encouraged many people to begin exploring the causes of the crises intensively and seeking ways to alleviate, eliminate, and prevent them from recurring. Researches attribute many causes that led to these crises (e.g. Allen & Carletti, 2009; Kame & Tshaka, 2015; Štuhec, 2011). Rather than seeking the causes of economic crises, it is more important to explore ways to create or modify the economy in a way that does not lead to similar crises, but serves its basic purpose to care for the well-being of all people and the whole “home”.

In this paper, I follow the path of such a search. Since Pope Francis devoted his encyclical letter *Laudato si'* to all humanity as an incentive to care for their common home together and to offer basic principles for the renewal of ecological awareness, I explore whether the path of economic recovery can be found in this letter. My thesis suggests that (Christian) spirituality plays an important role in the economy in the light of *Laudato si'*. If those who

are involved in the economy in various ways strove for a genuine (Christian) spiritual life, they would be able to implement basic guidelines that lead to a change in the economy. Often, the economy is not in the service of people and allows for an increase in inequality, depersonalization of society, and degradation of the environment.

To advance this thesis, I first briefly define economics and spirituality and present the trends of modern economics and spirituality. Based on the analysis of *Laudato si'*, the following is an overview of the fundamental orientations that could enable an economic recovery to become what it was intended to be in its original sense, i.e. in the service of good for all where no one and nothing is excluded. In the last chapter, I point out based on the same encyclical letter how a renewed Christian spirituality can help individual people and communities create fundamental guides for a new economy. The viewpoint is limited to Christian or Roman Catholic spirituality (which is why the word Christian is in brackets in the title), though at the same time I remain open to other spiritualities. Pope Francis himself gives general basic guidelines in *Laudato si'* to encourage all people of all religions and spiritualities to work together for their common home.

## 1. Trends of modern economy and spirituality

The word *economy* comes from the Greek word *oikos* (house) + *nomós* (rules, management). It originally means “rules or management of the house”, that is, the concern that the “family” would be well-supplied. The word is purely pragmatic and concerns both theoretical knowledge and practical implementation (Porta, 2006, 3201–3202). In a broader sense, then, it can be stated that economy originally represents the concern for the good of everyone in a mutual home, which is a human’s own home or the world as a whole.

Particularly in the last decades, the economy, along with politics, has become a central social system. Never before has the economy been so central in the life of individuals, families, and society. The whole of society was transformed into a marketing society. Trading and capital have become fundamental. The interests of the deified market have become the highest priority of all activity. Earth and labour became “goods”, whereas money became capital. The pursuit of profit has often become the only logic of an individual’s and society’s actions. The growth of GDP and economic development have become, for a majority of people and societies, a measure of development, success, and endeavours (Festival dell’economia e spiritualità, 2017).

Pope Francis well demonstrates such an understanding of the economy in his encyclical letter *Laudato si'* (= LS). After he presented a good analysis of what is happening in our common home at the beginning of his encyclical letter (17–61), he made it clear that “the alliance between economy and technology ends up sidelining anything unrelated to its immediate interests” (LS 54). Even though we can now quite clearly see how catastrophic the consequences of this alliance are,

“... economic powers continue to justify the current global system, where priority tends to be given to speculation and the pursuit of financial gain, which fail to take the context into account, let alone the effects on human dignity and natural environment. Here we see how environmental deterioration and human and ethical degradation are closely linked.” (LS 56)

It is important – especially in the context of this paper – that we are always aware that the economy is connected to every human being and community. It does not concern only entrepreneurs, economists, financiers, and politi-

cians or merely different national and global economic and political structures. Every person has a responsible and irreplaceable role in the economy, although it often seems that these are only those who are in the highest and most responsible places of the state and world economy.

More and more people in the West are aware that modern economics offers virtual satisfaction and confirmation, but at a deeper level, the continual acquisition of goods and the search for profit does not satisfy the hunger of their spirits. Contrary to the mindset of the prevailing secularised, materialistic, and consumer culture, it is precisely in spirituality that they have “discovered” the lost or hidden dimension of their lives. Even before the turn of the millennium, spirituality has become the key to finding the direction and meaning of life (King 1992, 18).

Surely it is very difficult to define this spirituality that has become so important for many people. Admittedly, this spirituality is no longer within the framework of a specific religion and its institutions in the West. Fewer and fewer people are identified with their worship, various rituals, religion, doctrine, and morality. Most seekers defend their spirituality, which is independent of the major world religions. In the field of spirituality, people are ready to try anything. They mix very different spiritualities between them and choose according to their (as fast as possible) efficiency (Thomson, 2008, V–VI).

Spirituality that wants to be separated from religion is most often – as Beaudoin demonstrates – defined:

“... as experiential (as opposed to, say, juridical), interior (versus external or doctrinal), individual (as opposed to institutional), freeing and trustworthy (neither restrictive nor suspect), pure (not sinful), and a connector between religions (as opposed to a wall between them).” (Beaudoin, 2007, 18–19)

In any case, today’s understanding of spirituality, as Beaudoin points out, “allows people of various religious traditions – and none at all – to respect each other’s journey of faith” (Beaudoin, 2007, 19).

The word spirituality has clearer content when it is linked to a historical religious tradition such as Christianity or other religions. Indeed, Christianity is the source of the *word*, even though it has now entered other religious traditions as well (Sheldrake, 2012, 4–6). In Christianity, spirituality refers to life with and in the Holy Spirit, as Apostle Paul simply referred to in Romans 8. Therefore, it can be summed up that Christian (Catholic) spirituality is a living faith within the (Roman Catholic) Church amid a concrete society and the world. Living life in the faith of God, i.e. the triune God, means practising the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit, practising the theological virtues and fundamental evangelical values in personal and community life, in the communities to which they belong, and in the environment in which they live and operate. The material world, along with everything in it, including the economy, is the context in which a person is transformed, and at the same time, they transform it with their way of life and action. In doing so, various spiritual practices, in particular, reception of the sacraments, (prayerful) reflection on God’s Word, personal and common prayer, the sharing of spiritual experiences in the community, spiritual direction, etc. can be helpful.

Modern secular society has introduced secular spirituality in today’s world emphasizing humanistic values such as love, compassion, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, satisfaction, responsibility, harmony, cohesion, integrity, and concern for others “in order to have a happy life and to help other people” (Prijetelj, 2013, 242). The person who allows these values to touch him and

who establishes a personal relationship with them or with the forces that shape life according to them (Kame & Tshaka, 2015) becomes a spiritual person.

Spirituality can, in particular, if it is cut off from religion and relations with others and the world, as O'Donohue (1998, 96–97) points out, quickly slide in its many alternative versions only in the direction of imagination, uncritical syncretism, narcissism, individualism, consumerism, irresponsibility, abstraction, etc., that is, it exists only in this.

Such spirituality cannot greatly affect concrete human action in the world, nor does it affect the economy. At the same time, it does not allow the principles that shape and govern its mode of operation to live. Therefore, many seem to think that economics and spirituality are separate areas and that they can be truly spiritual even if they are left to modern economic thinking and if no responsibility is taken for the consequences of such an economy (Beaudoin, 2007, 21). Precisely because of this fact, it is necessary to search for a spirituality which can truly influence the fundamental principles of the current economy and transform them. Economics is part of human life, which is why nobody can live and act in concrete terms without it.

The basic guidelines of the current economy have most often been, and they still are: fast and high profits, immediate efficacy, constant progress, maximum technocracy, etc. The constant search for this has led to serious economic crises. The question arises as to which guidelines and guides could help to renew the economy so that it can truly be what it is supposed to be in its fundamental sense.

## **2. Fundamental orientations and guidelines for the renewal of the economy**

Fundamental orientations and guidelines for the renewal of the economy through the analysis of a wide variety of research and debates about this in recent decades could have been addressed. This paper is limited primarily to the framework of Christian spirituality, which is encouraged by Pope Francis in *Laudato si'*. Therefore, I seek these guides mainly by analysing this encyclical letter, which has very different echoes both in the Catholic Church itself and throughout the world. In his encyclical letter, Pope Francis primarily addresses ecological issues, ecological crisis and its causes, ecological conversion, and spirituality. Since the ecological crisis is – among other things – also the result of an economy that did not care about a common home and the common good, I am convinced that the search of guidelines for a solution to the ecological crisis may also be useful in determining guidelines to find a possible economic recovery. The justification for using these guidelines to renew the economy is also confirmed by comparing these guidelines with the document of the Pontifical Council Justice and Peace (2012) *Vocation of the Business Leader* (= VBL), written three years before *Laudato si'*. The comparison shows that Pope Francis, although not referring to this document, exposes similar guidelines for the renewal of ecological awareness and the care of a common home. Pope Francis upgrades these guides and gives them a special note, which is particularly marked by his proclamation of the gospel; for example, moderation, joy, the poorest, the environment, culture, etc.

In the last decades, especially after the recent economic crises, various vision and thinking currents have been developed concerning the state of the world, which is embedded in the current economy, and possible solutions. Referring to *Laudato si'*, I argue that one of the extremes of finding a solution is that the

current myth of economy and continuous progress, which does not address the possible negative consequences for humankind and the environment, is supported at all costs. It is claimed that all problems will be resolved by themselves, without having to counteract this myth of economy with a different mentality and watching, education and politics, lifestyle and spirituality (LS 60.111). The other extreme is the belief that the human species with any form of economy is a threat and danger to the world, especially to its ecosystem. For this reason, it is appropriate to limit the number of people on the planet and prevent them from any interference with the environment (LS 60).

The search for a solution should take into account some aspects of both extremes and, above all, show a different way of responding to today's state of the economy. In doing so, people should be aware that there are many ways to reach a solution. This leaves the possibility of a dialogue in finding the best answers. In any case, I am convinced that the solution is to consider what should be in the centre of the economy, by which guidelines it should be led and thus be transformed. For now, if the search for the greatest possible profit and progress regardless of the price is the fundamental principle, then something should be placed at the centre of a guide that can transform the economy into what it was in its original sense – responsible concern for common home and the common good. Such basic orientations and guides can be found in the following chapters of *Laudato si'*: common good (135.156–158.169–170.198); sustainable and integrated development (13.18.52.93.157.191–194); developing a culture of mutual life and respect for the environment, love and solidarity (14.53.63.105.108.111.143–146.228–232); the consciousness of a common home (13.61.243); joy and peace (223–227).

#### **A) The common good**

The common good is the sum of those living conditions of social and economic life that enable individuals and groups to achieve the fastest and most complete fulfilment. It is based on respecting a human being as a person who has fundamental and inalienable rights to everything that enables him to develop fully. In this context, the family as a basic cell of society has a particularly irreplaceable role. It also requires prosperity and social security and, in particular, social peace. The whole of society, in particular, the state, must “defend and promote the common good” (157). It is always necessary to have the common good for all, for “present and future” (135). However, the common good must never be at the expense of the good of a person who is involved in various economic activities in various ways. Nor can it be at the expense of their immediate family and community, to which he belongs and for which he is called to care for its well-being (Malović, 2015, 678–681; Štuhec, 2009). The document of the *Vocation of the Business Leader* (= VBL) highlights the need to always have in mind the fundamental ethical principles of the business world: human dignity and the common good (VBL 30–37).

#### **B) Sustainable and integrated development**

Pope Francis specifically stresses how the new economy should abandon the principles of seeking only quick profits and continuous development, and replace it by seeking sustainable and holistic development. Only in such a way will it help to protect the common home (LS 13). Change and development are something that a person wants, “yet it becomes a source of anxiety

when it causes harm to the world and to the quality of life of much of humanity” (18). Human beings are worthy only of development that respects and promotes human personal, social, economic and political rights, including the rights of all peoples, as well as the requirements and needs of the environment and nature (93). This is also very clearly discussed by the VBL (38) document where it addresses the practical ethical principles of business that each company should follow to meet real human needs. This document emphasizes that:

“...in particular, there are three independent activities which business should take up: address genuine human needs through the creation, development, and production of goods and services; organize good and productive work; use resources to create and to share wealth and prosperity in sustainable ways.” (VBL 38)

### ***C) The awareness of the common home***

The awareness of the common home is what should always guide the functioning of the economy. By their dignity, every human being as God’s creation is invited and able to participate in the creation of a common home (LS 13). Pope Francis devoted the encyclical letter *Laudato si’* to all humankind to awaken the awareness of responsibility and care for a common home in all areas of action, including economic. People should always be aware that they should, as good managers, take creative and fruitful care of the resources with which they are entrusted (Matt 25: 14–30; VBL 52). It is also very important to deal with:

“... the environment, physical and cultural. As Pope Benedict XVI wrote, ‘The environment is God’s gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole.’” (VBL 54)

### ***D) Developing a culture of mutual life and respect for the environment, love, and solidarity***

By caring for the common home and the common good, each human being, including an economist, can participate as God’s instrument, each with the richness of their culture, with their initiatives and abilities (LS 14.63). It is necessary to enter the path of cultural transformation (114) to resist the culture of dumping (22.43), consumerism (203–204, 209), relativism and death (123), and begin to develop a culture of mutual life and respect for the environment, love, and solidarity (143–146.213.231). “Love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care” (231) affects not only the relationship between individuals but also economic ones. A society can become more human if, again in economic life, love is valued as the gift of God, and it will turn into a permanent and supreme rule of life and action. Everyone must feel that they need others, that they are responsible for others and the world, and that it pays to be good and honest because carefree shallowness is revengeful (228–229). When we recognise God’s invitation to cooperate with others at the economic level, “we should realise that this too is part of our spirituality, which is an exercise of charity” (231). It is exactly in this and through this that we will mature and will dedicate ourselves.

“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.” (LS 232)



### *F) Moderation, joy, and peace*

The modesty with which a person lives freely and consciously frees them, makes them happy and leads to a more fulfilled life. A moderate human being who does not let themselves be convinced of the supreme importance of an economy driven by rush and a focus on profits comes to realize through their experience that it is possible to have fewer needs and yet to live richly, particularly if they can choose other pleasures and if they “find satisfaction in fraternal encounters, in service, in developing his gifts, in music and art, in contact with nature, in prayer” (223). It is a happy person who can renounce the stupefactions of the old economy and remain open to many opportunities offered by life even within an economy that accepts the principle of moderation and modesty. Surely,

“... it is not easy to promote this kind of healthy humility or happy sobriety when we consider ourselves autonomous, when we exclude God from our lives or replace him with our own ego, and think that our subjective feelings can define what is right and what is wrong.” (LS 224)

Pope Francis emphasises that Christian spirituality should invite every human being to “a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption” (222). Naturally, this is true if the old doctrine is adopted, which in some of its regular traditions is also present in the Bible: “The conviction that ‘less is more’” (222). The constant accumulation of consumer opportunities scatters the heart of human being and prevents them from appreciating everything and every moment. Alert attention to everything, even if it appears insignificant, opens many more opportunities for a deeper perception of giving and personal fulfilment. However, only those who are in peace with themselves can ripen in a happy temper. Human inner peace is, as Pope Francis emphasises, “closely related to care for ecology and for the common good” (225). Inner peace:

“... is reflected in the balanced lifestyle together with a capacity for wonder which takes us to a deeper understanding of life. Nature is filled with words of love, but how can we listen to them amid constant noise, interminable and nerve-wracking distractions, or the cult of appearances?” (LS 225)

### **3. Renewed Christian spirituality for the renewal of the economy**

Today’s times need a more humane, compassionate, and solidary economy. Such an economy can emerge from following the above directions and guidelines. These guidelines cannot exist on their own. They need a source, i.e. spirituality, that will give them content, life, inspiration, and power for realisation. Pope Francis derives the offered guidelines from the beliefs of Christian faith, from the teaching of the Gospel, and the richness of the twenty centuries of the Christian tradition. This is not so much about ideas as for inclinations, orientations that come from genuine Christian spirituality and actively promote loving concern for the whole world and every human being.

“A commitment this lofty cannot be sustained by doctrine alone, without a spirituality capable of inspiring us, without an interior impulse which encourages, motivates, nourishes and gives meaning to our individual and communal activity.” (LS 216)

Pope Francis thus sees precisely in such Christian spirituality “a precious contribution to make to the renewal of humanity” (LS 216) and thus the economy. Of course, it is necessary to be aware of the dangers in which Christian spir-

ity can be trapped very quickly in the present day as well as the dangers in which it has already been caught. Christian spirituality in the past has not been, and even now is often not very attentive to the economy. There is considerable talk about ethical principles in the economy, but spirituality is rarely put forth as a source for understanding and reforming the economy or as a source that enables the implementation of ethical principles for a genuine economy (LS 209–221). The Pope himself admits that:

“Christians have not always appropriated and developed the spiritual treasures bestowed by God upon the Church, where the life of the spirit is not dissociated from the body or from nature or from worldly realities, but lived in and with them, in communion with all that surrounds us.” (LS 216)

The Pope also observes the need for a transformation of Christian spirituality so that it can truly respond to the needs of today’s human being and the challenges of the present world, including the economy, in his apostolic exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel* (*Evangelii Gaudium* = EG). In this document, Pope determines, among other things, that:

“... in other parts of our society, we see the growing attraction to various forms of a ‘spirituality of well-being’ divorced from any community life, or to a ‘theology of prosperity’ detached from responsibility for our brothers and sisters, or to depersonalized experiences which are nothing more than a form of self-centeredness.” (EG 90)

He also notes that:

“... there is always the risk that some moments of prayer can become an excuse for not offering one’s life in mission; a privatized lifestyle can lead Christians to take refuge in some false forms of spirituality.” (EG 262)

Therefore, whoever defends such a Christian spirituality can also advocate a liberal or neoliberalist economy. But Pope Francis referring to John Paul II emphasises that

“... we must reject the temptation to offer a privatized and individualistic spirituality which ill accords with the demands of charity, to say nothing of the implications of the incarnation.” (EG 262; Zyzak, 2017, 16)

Because the Pope is aware that:

“... some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an ‘ecological conversion’, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them.” (LS 217)

We can talk similarly about the attitude of Christians to the economy. There is also a need for economic conversion in this respect. This will enable all Christians to recognize that an essential component of genuine Christian spiritual life is to cultivate an economy that will enable them to pursue a calling as promoter of the dignity of every human being, of each community, and guardian of all creation, life and activity in accordance with the fundamental orientations and guidelines of the renewed economy (Čović & Marinčić, 2016, 474–476).

Economic conversion first involves the gratitude that arises from the recognition that all goods together with the whole world are costless “God’s loving gift, and that we are called quietly to imitate his generosity in self-sacrifice and good works” (LS 220).



“It also entails a loving awareness that we are not disconnected from the rest of creatures, but joined in a splendid universal communion.” (LS 220)

In their role given by the Creator in the world (Ms 1:1–2), the Christian “sees no reason for personal glory or irresponsible dominion, but rather as a different capacity which, in its turn, entails a serious responsibility stemming from our faith” (LS 220). This is also promoted by the:

“... awareness that each creature reflects something of God and the security that Christ has taken unto himself this material world and now, risen, is intimately present to each being, surrounding it with his affection and penetrating it with his light.” (LS 221; Krašovec 2014, 29–30)

Such a renewed Christian spirituality, says Pope Francis, proposes a different understanding of the quality of life and encourages Christians to grow in moderation and the enjoyment of small things.

It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things, to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us, to be spiritually detached from what we possess, and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack. (LS 222)

Such a Christian spirituality invites every Christian to recognise that their involvement in the economy is an exercise of costless and serving love to God, to themselves, and others, especially the poorest, and all creation, especially those most at risk (LS 222–223; VBL 69).

When Christian spirituality connects rest with celebration, it also gives a new dimension to the economy, as it protects human activity from empty activism as well as from excessive greed and narrowing of the conscience, leading to the pursuit of purely personal gain. The day of rest, Sunday, the centre of which is the Eucharist, which embraces and covers all humanity and creation, spills its light throughout the week, and encourages Christians to engage in costless love and devote themselves to the deepening of their mutual relations, even to the poorest, and to nature in all its complexity (LS 236–237; VBL 69).

Together with the Second Vatican Council, Pope Francis argues that “man is the center, the focus, and the purpose of all economic and social life” (GS 63; LS 127). When a person no longer holds this function and when they lose their ability to respect, to wonder, to think, to evaluate, and to distinguish, conditions are created that spoil the economy.

In the history of Christian spirituality, there are many examples of a respectful attitude towards all living beings. Protestant theologian and humanitarian Albert Schweitzer warned already at the beginning of the 20th century that it is necessary to extend human ethical responsibility to all living beings. Human beings should be aware deep inside that they are “life that wills to live, in the midst of life that wills to live” (Globokar, 2012, 39).

Christian spirituality is supposed to develop a rich and healthy understanding of all forms of work (e.g. St. Benedict, Charles de Foucauld) with contemplative wondering about things (e.g. St. Francis of Assisi) (LS 125). St. Benedict’s principle of *Ora et labora* promotes the impenetration of physical work with spiritual concentration, prayer, the relationship with fellow man, the environment, and the transcendence, God, proved to be revolutionary (LS 125; VBL 70; John Paul II 1981, 24). This way of life and action helps the human being mature in all their dimensions and directs the economy into the service of human’s humanisation and sanctification, the common good, common home, and sustainable development (Marinčić & Čović, 2012, 116).

The faith in a triune community of mutual relations and in the fact that everything is created in his image and therefore everything carries a triune footprint, a network of lasting relationships that are mysteriously intertwined, must lie at the heart of the renewed Christian spirituality and faith in one and triune God. Such spirituality encourages human beings to discover and admire the many bonds among everything that exists (Prijetelj, 2017, 309) and the possibilities of one's realisation. For this reason, the Pope emphasises:

“The human person grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures. In this way, they make their own that trinitarian dynamism which God imprinted in them when they were created. Everything is interconnected, and this invites us to develop a spirituality of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity.” (LS 240)

## Conclusion

Christian spirituality in the light of *Laudato si'* can play an important role in changing the economy in the direction of serving human being more as a whole being, in a wide variety of communities, for the common good and care of a common home.

The analysis of the encyclical letter in terms of what is being said about the role of spirituality in the economy has clearly shown that Pope Francis exposes important orientations and guidelines. If people take them into account or integrate them into their lives, these may also revamp the present economy to become (more) humane, compassionate, solidary and able to respond to the needs of all humanity, with particular attention to the poor and marginalized, as well as to nature, especially in its most endangered dimensions.

Pope Francis encourages the renewal of Christian spirituality to become more “economic” in the spirit of the original meaning of the word *economy* and the Gospel itself, which emphasises the primacy of the giving and serving love. Jesus' parable of the final judgment (Matt 25:31–46) reveals the evangelical Jesus' “economic” spirituality specially, as Beaudoin (2007, 23–31) describes and explains. Love for God is manifested primarily through the use of the means that a person has concerning those who are close, especially those who are experiencing economic and other disadvantages. Likewise, the opportunity of the poor Lazarus and the rich man very clearly shows that salvation “happens” in and through “economic” relations, that is, through concrete and giving love in Jesus Christ to our fellow man, especially to the poorest.

This renewed Christian spirituality, which will also be “economic”, will be serving and solidary in its foundation that is practiced love, which is between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and which the Father and the Son through the Holy Spirit pour into the hearts of every human being who is open in faith and open to receiving gifts. Thus, the old economy, which often follows only the search for the greatest profit and the quickest possible progress without regard for the common good and the common home, will turn into a new economy, a gift economy. Such an economy will encourage people to be more and more aware that they are constantly receiving gifts. This experience will enable them to become a gift to others and thus gradually build a culture of mutual self-giving love and solidarity, mutual life and respect for every person, even the most peripheral, for society and its needs, and the environment, especially the most endangered.

All these considerations about the importance of the role of spirituality in the economy may seem almost utopian, unrealistic dreaming about something

that cannot be realised, an escape from reality. Therefore, it is good that people search for and discover real cases where this is being realised in some way. It is a joy to see that there are already movements and programs that are trying to take the spiritual dimension of the life of entrepreneurs and those who are intensively involved in the economy seriously. Some of these organizations are UNIAPAC and its affiliates, Legatus, Woodstock Business Conference, new movements such as the “communal economy” of the Focolari movement, the “Compagnia delle Opere” Movement, Community and Liberation (Comunione e Liberazione), a group of investors such as the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility, as well as other organizations and movements (VBL 24, note 14; 62, note 49).

The book *God, Money and Consciousness* (Grün & Zeitz, 2011) is also fascinating. It is written in a popular style as a conversation between the contemplative Benedictine monk Anselm Grün and Jochen Zeitz, the top manager of the multinational corporation Puma. In it, Grün presents how the entire economy of Benedictine monasteries is based on Christian spirituality in the spirit of St. Benedict. Manager Zeitz shows how they try to implement “economic” spirituality in their multinationals and how this gives many good fruits to everyone involved in various ways as well as to those who benefit from their products.

However, the renewal of the economy is not based solely on the orientations and guidelines that originate from Christian spirituality, which supports and enables them. It is also based on other spiritualities that carry within themselves the ability to reconsider the meaning of life, to liberate and connect, to seek the common good and to care for a common home. This is emphasised by Pope Francis as he encourages all religions and spiritualities and all people of good will to seek ways to apply the fundamental principles of the economy which can enable its renewal so that it can serve the common good and a common home. The more people are engaged in ecumenical, interreligious, and intercultural dialogue, the more likely the new economy will come to life (Čović & Marinčić, 2016, 484–488).

Pope Francis offers a new and fresh approach to the renewal of the economy in all its dimensions. Even when he speaks about the importance of ethics, he speaks of ethics deriving from the deep orientation, deep spiritual life, and the connection with the Secret (LS 209–221). It is a shift from a rational imperative ethic to relationship ethic based on spirituality, genuine reflexivity, and the acceptance of people as persons (not individuals) in the community and rooted in culture and history (Bahovec, 2015, 343–345). Its foundation is the dignity of every human being. Therefore, it emphasises its contribution to the promotion of the dignity of people and communities in the economy.

In any case, people must not lose sight of the fact that every person is, in some way, embedded in the economy and responsible for the place in which they live, to live the most responsible and conscious “economic” spirituality with their personal way of acquiring funds and disposing of them. Whoever lives and works amid their everyday life, directly or indirectly influences and forms their environment and expands the culture of a new economy that seeks for the common good and a common home. Never should a human being serve the economy, the economy should always be in the service of humans and society by helping them to become more and more a human being of relationships, a gift for others, society, and the environment.

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### Ivan Platovnjak

## Uloga (krščanske) duhovnosti u ekonomiji u svjetlu djela *Laudato si'*

### Sažetak

Globalna ekonomska kriza na početku trećeg tisućljeća otkrila je štetne posljedice za čitavo društvo i okoliš što ih mit 'glorificirane' ekonomije donosi. Mnogi su istraživači bili ohrabreni da započnu intenzivno istraživanje uzroka kriza. Autor smatra da je važnije tražiti načine implementiranja ekonomije na način putem kojeg će služiti zajedničkom dobru i zajedničkom domu. Put obnove ekonomije autor nalazi upisanim prvenstveno u smjeru koji je Papa Franjo predstavio u *Laudato si'*. Temeljem toga, autor iznosi tezu da u svjetlu *Laudato si'* (krščanska) duhovnost igra važnu ulogu u ekonomiji. Da bi tu tezu potvrdio, autor sažeto definira ekonomiju i spiritualnost. Zatim slijedi prezentacija temeljnih orijentacija na osnovi analize iz *Laudato si'*, koje bi mogle omogućiti ekonomski oporavak. Na kraju, autor opisuje kako obnovljena krščanska duhovnost i dijalog mogu pomoći individuama i zajednicama u oblikovanju osnovnih smjernica za novu ekonomiju.

### Ključne riječi

ekonomika, nova ekonomija, kršćanstvo, duhovnost, ekonomska duhovnost, zajedničko dobro, zajednički dom, *Laudato si'*, dijalog

**Ivan Platovnjak**

**Die Rolle der (christlichen) Spiritualität  
in der Wirtschaft im Lichte der *Laudato si'***

**Zusammenfassung**

*Die globale Wirtschaftskrise zu Beginn des dritten Jahrtausends hat die schädlichen Folgen für die gesamte Gesellschaft und die Umwelt offengelegt, die der Mythos der „vergötterten“ Wirtschaft mit sich bringt. Viele Forscher wurden ermutigt, die Erforschung der Ursachen von Krisen intensiv in Angriff zu nehmen. Der Autor hält es für wichtiger, nach Wegen zu suchen, um die Wirtschaft so zu implementieren, dass sie dem Gemeinwohl und einem gemeinsamen Zuhause dient. Den Weg zur Erneuerung der Wirtschaft sieht der Autor in erster Linie in der Richtung beschrieben, die Papst Franziskus in *Laudato si'* vorstellte. Also unterbreitet er die These, dass im Lichte von *Laudato si'* die (christliche) Spiritualität eine wichtige Rolle in der Ökonomie spielt. Um die These zu bestätigen, definiert der Autor kurz Ökonomie und Spiritualität. Anschließend werden grundlegende Orientierungen vorgestellt, die auf der Analyse in *Laudato si'* beruhen und eine wirtschaftliche Erholung ermöglichen könnten. Zum Schluss schildert der Autor, wie eine erneuerte christliche Spiritualität und ein Dialog den Einzelpersonen und Gemeinschaften helfen können, grundlegende Richtlinien für eine neue Ökonomie festzulegen.*

**Schlüsselwörter**

Ökonomik, neue Ökonomie, Christentum, Spiritualität, ökonomische Spiritualität, Gemeinwohl, gemeinsames Zuhause, *Laudato si'*, Dialog

**Ivan Platovnjak**

**Rôle de la spiritualité (chrétienne)  
dans l'économie à la lumière de *Laudato Si'***

**Résumé**

*Les crises économiques mondiales du début du troisième millénaire ont révélé les conséquences néfastes pour l'ensemble de la société et de l'environnement générées par le mythe de l'économie « déifiée ». De nombreux chercheurs ont été encouragés à commencer une exploration intensive des causes des crises. L'auteur croit qu'il est plus important de chercher des moyens de mettre en œuvre l'économie de manière qu'elle serve le bien commun et la maison commune. L'auteur voit la voie du renouvellement de l'économie inscrite principalement dans la direction présentée par le pape François dans *Laudato si'*. Or, il propose la thèse selon laquelle, à la lumière de *Laudato si'*, la spiritualité (chrétienne) joue un rôle important dans l'économie. Pour confirmer la thèse, l'auteur définit brièvement l'économie et la spiritualité. Vient ensuite une présentation des orientations fondamentales basée sur l'analyse de *Laudato si'* qui pourraient permettre la reprise économique. Finalement, l'auteur décrit comment une spiritualité et un dialogue chrétiens renouvelés peuvent aider les individus et les communautés à établir les principes de base pour une nouvelle économie.*

**Mots-clés**

économie, nouvelle économie, christianisme, spiritualité, spiritualité économique, bien commun, maison commune, *Laudato si'*, dialogue