Laudato Si and Climate Justice

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Integrative Justice

- Rectificatory/Restorative
- Commutative
- Distributive
- Social
- Participatory
- Inter-generational
- Equity

Climate Justice
An Analysis of the Encyclical Letter

- Encyclical Letters are “Position Papers” of the Catholic Church.

- Laudato Si offers no academic argumentation but an appeals to everyone to address the climate change crisis – it is a call to conversion in personal lives, social structures and policies.

- Laudato Si applies – for the first time – the social-ethical methodology that has been developed in Catholic Social Ethics.
The six steps of the Encyclical Letter

1. Perception and description of the status quo
2. Biblical hermeneutics as one among other perspectives
3. Ethical analysis: the role of humans in increasing or reducing suffering
4. Ethical orientation: Integral ecology
5. Ethical judgments and actions
6. Ethical motivation and education
1. The Analysis of Climate Change: Status Quo

- The way we live now: Pollution, depletion of natural resources, loss of biodiversity
- Decline in quality of life and breakdown of society
- **Global inequality**
  - *Ecojustice is a question of social justice!*
- Weak Response: Complacency: denial, delay, indifference
- Opinion Wars: Pluralism of opinions are welcome, BUT we all need to address the crisis
2. Biblical Hermeneutics

- Religion is one possible interpretation among others

- The bible’s point of view:
  - Threefold relation: God, creation/environment/earth, and human
  - Goodness of every creature, beyond utility
  - Human Responsibility as care for the earth and the other
2. Biblical Hermeneutics

This interpretation provides

- A narrative of creation and history
- Poetic imagination of a life not at the expense of but with nature and environment
- An ethics of relationality
3. Ethical Analysis – The Role of Humans

- Technology defines modernity
- Globalization of the technological paradigm
- Crisis and effect of anthropocentrism:
  - Culture of Mastery
  - Global injustice
- Ethics of Anthropocentric Utilization vs. Integral Ecology

The "Option of and for the Poor" requires to take the position of those affected most by climate change.
4. Ethical Orientation: Integral Ecology

- Environmental
- Economic
- Social ecology
- Cultural ecology (indigenous cultures)
- Ecology of everyday life (urban and rural planning)
5. Ethical Judgment and Actions

- **Policies**
  - Sustainable and diversified agriculture
  - Energy resources
  - Energy efficiency
  - Management of forests and marine resources
  - Access to drinking water

- Civil movement is ahead of international politics
5. Ethical Judgment and Actions

- The Strategies followed so far:
  - Equal share of costs
    - penalize poorer countries
  - accountability and rectificatory justice
    - no will to follow through
  - carbon credits
    - does not reduce the consumption
  - reformulation of development as sustainable development
    - requires subsidies, technology transfer
    - no will to realize
5. Ethical Judgment and Actions

- Reformation of governance structures
  - fragmentation of regulation
  - no mechanisms of enforcement in place
- Needed is: A consent on a system of regulation
- global world political authority
5. Ethical Judgment and Actions

- **Local initiatives and policies:**
  - Energy cooperatives
  - Local legislation

- **Political realism:**
  - Transitional technologies, but: with ‘exit strategy’ and binding commitments

- **Initiatives:**
  - Energy efficiency and conservation
  - Transport infrastructure
  - Agriculture and sustainable production
5. Ethical Judgment and Actions

- **Dialogue and Transparency**

- **Prospective environmental impact assessment**
  - From the start
  - Interdisciplinary
  - Transparent
  - Linked to studies on impact on labor conditions, local economies, and public safety
  - Risk assessment
5. Ethical Judgment and Actions

- Application of Criteria for the Prospective environmental impact assessment:
  - Purpose
  - Means
  - Priorities
  - Location and Time
  - Beneficiaries
  - Cost distribution, management & administration of restoration/rectificatory justice
  - Precautionary principle: reversal of burden of proof
  - Correction: Reassessment in light of new information
5. Ethical Judgment and Actions

- **Politics and Economy**
  - Opposition to profit-oriented economy and separation of financial and real economy
  - Opposition to infinite growth and consumption as condition market capitalism
  - Productivity by
    - Recycling
    - Energy efficiency
    - Ecological innovation
5. Ethical Judgment and Actions

- Containment of growth in regions/areas of over-consumption
- Redefinition of progress
- Debunking the image-enhancing rhetoric of ecological and social responsibility
- Fair assessment of social and environmental costs for profits
5. Ethical Judgment and Actions

Politics must:

- Apply **Subsidiarity** (“…freedom to develop the capabilities present at every level of society, while also demanding a greater sense of responsibility for the common good from those who wield greater power” (143))
5. Ethical Judgment and Actions

- Implement Differentiated responsibility
- Develop Foresight and long-term policies
- Endorse and enforce new interdisciplinary approaches
5. Ethical Judgment and Actions

- **Religions in dialogue with Science**
  - Science is not the only interpretation of creation/nature/environment and humanity

- **Aesthetics of Nature**

- **Ethical principles “find expression in different languages, including religious language”**
5. Ethical Judgment and Actions

- Religion is a source for motivation, critique, encouragement
- Religion is a social movement of believers
6. Ethical Motivation and Education

- Promotion of a new lifestyle, spirituality
- Covenant between humanity and the environment
  - Education to solidarity, responsibility, and compassionate care
  - Ecological citizenship
  - Laws, moral norms, and virtues go hand in hand
6. Ethical Motivation and Education

Spaces of education
- Aesthetic education
- Spiritual education
IN SUM....

Climate Ethics is Social Ethics and Social Ethics must become Climate Ethics