



Is Inequality of any Kind an Obstacle for Social Integration and Participation? Towards an Integral Ecology

José T. Raga

The world of the 21st century presents itself to contemporary man as a blend of fascination and unsatisfied disquiet, an uneasiness that escalates into anxiety in the face of so many ills and injustices afflicting millions of people, countries and continents. The anguish of many is either a mere statistic for those who do not suffer from it or an issue of little interest to those who believe their calling is to decipher the enigmas of the universe or immerse themselves in the vain profundities of a would-be philosophical knowledge of the “man of the future”, today more than ever pictured as the *homo faber*.

A simple individual, enslaved by the anguish of new discoveries that might ensure greater well-being, more pleasure, a more leisurely life – at least for those who have had the privilege of understanding its importance – accepts that, for natural reasons that cannot be contravened, there is a line, imaginary in its definition but real in its existence, that divides the world’s population into two blocks: those who participate in the beneficial scenario of technical sophistication, its consumerism and its wastefulness, and those who live enslaved, also due to severe lack of material goods, by the violence of so many, though they may be liberated in their spiritual dimension.

Blessed Paul VI expressed it very well: “Human society is sorely ill. The cause is not so much the depletion of natural resources, nor their monopolistic control by a privileged few; it is rather the weakening of brotherly ties between individuals and nations”.^[1]

The sick man, the man who lives in social solitude must be healed, because he does not feel part of the community to which he belongs. He scorns and distances himself from those who are less privileged, those he considers have nothing to offer him but love; a value these individuals rarely reflect on.

I believe it is fair to acknowledge that in today’s world there is a great disparity between technological progress and the stagnation and regression of moral values. Man merely becomes another cog at the service of technological success, as if technological breakthroughs could be separated from the unwavering humanity of the human being, the author of such progress.

The reality is that when we contemplate a dissected, fragmented, divided society that lives in complete continuous social conflict, in a latent or more often simply silent fight of people against people, there arises a question of necessity, a question that demands an answer. Has man lost his humanity and affiliation? Could the vices of the present destroy the *raison d’être* of the human family itself? Is selfishness, and its closest ally, protectionism and multi-violence, the detonator that sparks conflict amongst men? To what point does the objective fact of inequality justify an aggressive exclusive society?

I. Inequality versus equality

If I had to establish a principle at the beginning of these lines, I would articulate it by saying that men are essentially equal and accidentally different. This means they are equal due to their intrinsic human nature but there are great differences in their biological and psychological dimensions. Inequality in capacities, aptitudes, abilities, attitudes, physical make-up, corporal beauty, etc., arises from these dimensions.

Having completed the physical work of creation, “God said, «Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves»... God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying to them, «Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth...»” (*Gn 1:26-28*). The essence of man, of each and every man, can be deduced from this text – his condition of being in the image of God – and herein resides the reason for equality between men, between all members of the human family.

Having been created in the image of God is the source of the essential equality of all men and where the inalienable dignity of all human persons is founded; a source from which fundamental rights emerge. These belong equally to all members of the human family, regardless of sex, race, language, religion, or social and economic status.

This equality, in itself and because it inherently belongs to all men and remains within them for days without end, superseding humiliation, marginalisation and exclusion, prevails and must prevail over whatsoever accidental grounds for differentiation that might be appreciated between them, because these differences would lack any kind of meaning, even biological meaning, if the essence that makes us all equal did not exist.

As Aristotle said, "So, too, there are many senses in which a thing is said to be, but all refer to one starting-point; some things are said to be because they are substances, others because they are a process towards substance, or destruction or privations of qualities of substance, or productive or generative of substance, or of things which are relative to substance, or negations of some of the things or of substance itself. It is for this reason that we say even of not-being that it *is* not being".[2]

Therefore, the human being appears as the substance of reference for a whole series of attributes, whose existence necessarily depends on the essential being, the being of substance. The Stagirite went on to say that they "...are called substance because they are not predicated of a subject but everything else is predicated of them... is the cause of their being, as the soul is of the being of animals... The essence, the formula of which is a definition, is also called the substance of each thing".[3]

That essence, the substance, constitutes the unique principle that shapes the human being as a being, the only category that exists independently from all others; the existence of those other categories, however, depends on the existence of substance, to which they must necessarily refer. Based on this reasoning, Aristotle stated the following: "...substance is primary in every sense – in formula, in order, in knowledge, in time. For of the other categories none can exist independently, but only substance. And in formula also this is primary; for in the formula of each term the formula of its substance must be present".[4]

The substance of the being is the essence of the being itself, that essence which for us has its origin in the divine filiation and which makes up the subject himself, man, who is the same as all men in this dimension, regardless of their attributes. Due to the subject's dignity and primacy, he can never be the attribute of anything. Thus, "... The essence of each thing is what it is said to be in virtue of itself... What, then, you are in virtue of yourself is your essence".[5] Is it precisely this that the egoism of the "I" cannot accept? Do we prefer to focus on the attributes, as differentiating elements, in order to build the walls that will isolate some men from others, as if they were antagonistic livestock?

Ortega himself detached from human life the most accidental part of it: the biological part. When delving into the importance of culture, he said: "The reality we tend to call 'human life', our life, that of each of us, has nothing to do with biology or the science of organic bodies... the primary and truest meaning of the word 'life' is not biological, but rather the biographical meaning... It means the sum of what we do and what we are, that terrible chore... of sustaining oneself in the universe, of carrying oneself and directing oneself amongst the things and beings of the world. «Living is, verily, dealing with the world, addressing it, acting within it, occupying oneself with it»".[6]

And it is this dealing with the world and occupying oneself with it where the differentiating elements amongst men coalesce as something additional to their essential equality. Here biological elements, which are not very determining, and biographical elements come together. The latter are composed of the balance of our attitudes before the world and their shortcomings. And our determination is present through effort, through commitment to those who might need us, those who lack resources, love, company, the marginalised and excluded, commitment to those who constitute the existential peripheries. Ultimately, it is a matter of the vital use of the many gifts received from God in order to put use them at the service of the community, at the service of the entire human family.

It was Cicero who distinguished between these two levels of the human person or, to express it in his terms, the existence of a double person: the level of equality amongst all men and the level on which the features of inequality and the differentiation between men become evident.

"We must also think that nature has, to put it one way, endowed us with a double person", said Cicero. "We must also grasp that nature has endowed us with what we may call a dual role in life. The first is that which all of us share by virtue of our participation in that reason and superiority by which we rise above the brute beasts; from this the honourable and fitting elements wholly derive, and from it too the way in which we assess our obligation. The other is that which is assigned uniquely to each individual, for just as there are great variations in physical attributes (for we see that some can run faster and others wrestle more strongly, or again, one has an imposing appearance, while another's features are graceful), so our mental make-up likewise displays variations greater still".[7]

There are two levels or two aspects of the human person (or *double person*, as termed by Cicero): one, which corresponds equally to all men, determining their equality, and the other constituted by the characteristic part

of each person and which, therefore, expresses differentiation. The first dimension, that which is common to all men, is where all virtues have their origin, "honourable and fitting elements". For let us not forget that "fitting elements" is everything that is in accordance with the excellence of man, precisely to be found in that part of his nature that distinguishes him from other animals.

We are not referring to a double person, if we give the term the meaning ascribed to it by traditional Christian thinking, but rather to two aspects or levels of the same person, *man*, which coalesce, without disassociation or conflict, in the single human being. St. Augustine, on being asked what man is, did not hesitate to say that man is "... a rational soul within a body – *it being understood that* – a rational soul that has a body does not make two persons, but rather a single man".[8] That is to say, that man, and only man, combines within himself these two levels: the more noble level, which makes him equal to all men and distinguishes him from other created beings, and also from animals, which is of a spiritual nature, the soul; and the second level, of a material nature, the body, in which the different characteristics of each man are appreciated, the particularities on which inequality is based.

Augustine's insight sheds light on Cicero's perception of the contradictory confluence of what he considers as two persons who, whether willingly or otherwise, end up merging into a single person. On the other hand, in Cicero's vision of man's two persons, the nobler one, that sets man apart from animals, is the person which lies equally in all men, making them equal in themselves; that is, equal in their essence; with the differences being attributable to the dimensions which belong singularly to each man; a singularity which confers differentiation and in this differentiation, inequality.

Aristotle established that body and soul make up a substantial unit, the human person. The soul is what presides over the vital functions. Aristotle expresses it thus: "...since it is the soul by which primarily we live, perceive, and think: – it follows that the soul must be an account and essence, not matter or a subject. For, as we said, the word substance has three meanings – form, matter, and the complex of both – and of these, matter is potentiality, form actuality. Since then the complex here is the living thing, the body cannot be actuality of the soul; it is the soul which is the actuality of certain kind of body".[9]

He would later point out that this body – *a certain kind of body* – is not constituted whimsically, but always based on the potential which enables it to receive that perfect reality which is in the soul, in order to accomplish its mission. Therefore, he added and specified that "... the soul cannot be without a body, while it cannot *be* a body; it is not a body but something relative to a body. That is why it is *in* a body, and a body of a definite kind... It comes about as reason requires: The actuality of any given thing can only be realized in what is already potentially that thing... From all this it is plain that soul is an actuality or account of something that possesses a potentiality of being such".[10]

Regarding the above, it is worth mentioning that the essential equality of all men is as natural as the inequality which, by chance, is in every singular person and which belongs to him based on the different faculties, aptitudes, attitudes... of each individual with respect to the other members of the human family. Therefore, the first cause of differentiation between humans appears in the aforementioned story of creation [Gn. 1:26-28], as a consequence of the command to *be fruitful and multiply*, for which purpose sexual inequality is necessary – *male and female he created them*.

In this sense, the assertion of St. Gregory that in a state of innocence all would have been equal, deserves consideration. "Where there is no sin, there is no inequality" [*Moral XXI*], given that prior to original sin, no wrongdoing occurs, from which it can be logically deduced that everybody was equal. To this, the response of St. Thomas Aquinas is categorical. So too is the conclusion to which we would arrive from the most superficial observation of the accidental attributes of two new born babies, which would range from differences in gender, to those arbitrary differences associated with skin colour, height, corpulence, beauty or even tendencies to cry or smile, and movement of body and limbs.

His words, in the quest to explain inequality and the reasons for it, leave no margin for doubt:

"...in the primitive state there would have been some inequality, at least as regards sex, because generation depends upon diversity of sex. And likewise as regards age; for some would have been born of others...

Moreover, as regards the soul, there would have been inequality as to righteousness and knowledge. For man worked not of necessity, but of his own freewill, by virtue of which man can apply himself, more or less, to action, desire or knowledge; hence some would have made a greater advance in virtue and knowledge than others.

There might also have been bodily disparity. For the human body was not entirely exempt from the laws of nature...

So we may say that... some would have been born more robust in body than others, and also greater and more beautiful, and all ways better disposed...

The cause of inequality could be on the part of God... so that the beauty of order would the more shine forth among men. Inequality might also arise on the part of nature... without any defect of nature".[11]

It is clear from the Angelic Doctor that the causes of inequality are numerous, but, in addition to those that may come from God or from nature, many come from man in the form of his sin. They come from the man who, renouncing God, reacts against the inherent equality of all human beings, sowing conflict, violence, marginalisation, exclusion and the rejection of those who are his brothers, thereby converting space that should be common into exclusive private territory.

J.J. Rousseau who, unlike T. Hobbes, compares primitive man, free of violence by nature to the *homo homini lupus* of the latter, also addresses inequalities amongst men in a civilised and potentially cultured society. He does so with clear differences with respect to St. Thomas and Cicero. He says, "I conceive two species of inequality among men; one which I call natural, or physical inequality, because it is established by nature, and consists in the difference of age, health, bodily strength, and the qualities of the mind, or of the soul; the other which may be termed moral, or political inequality, because it depends on a kind of convention, and is established, or at least authorized, by the common consent of mankind. This species of inequality consists in the different privileges, which some men enjoy, to the prejudice of others, such as that of being richer, more honoured, more powerful, and even that of exacting obedience from them".[12]

He devotes special attention to the second type of inequality and the role that society plays in this, though he would later clarify by saying that, "... we may easily perceive that among the differences, which distinguish men, several pass for natural, which are merely the work of habit and the different kinds of life adopted by men living in a social way. Thus a robust or delicate constitution, and the strength and weakness which depend on it, are oftener produced by the hardy or effeminate manner in which a man has been brought up, than by the primitive constitution of his body. It is the same thus in regard to the forces of the mind; and education not only produces a difference between those minds which are cultivated and those which are not, but even increases that which is found among the first in proportion to their culture; for let a giant and a dwarf set out in the same path, the giant at every step will acquire a new advantage over the dwarf".[13]

But, rising above accidental inequalities, of the most varied types, the cruellest form of inequality is created by man due to his selfishness: economic, cultural, social and environmental inequalities... is the inherent equality of all men with respect to his brothers, with respect to humanity as a whole, because it is the will of God, engraved on our very being from the moment of conception.

There are few occasions in which a declaratory legal text is open to just a single interpretation. We refer to the text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights when it clearly states that, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood".[14]

We acknowledge that we are human beings, naturally – for we are thus in birth and we were thus prior to being born – and that we are free, equal and rational human beings. The responsibility for our acts and decisions, and our capacity for good and the negation of good (evil, which causes us to deny ourselves) is deduced from our free will and rationality. And, above all, we acknowledge that we are equal, with the same rights, the same dignity and called upon to make up a family through fraternal behaviour towards each other.

Are we really who we proclaim to be? It is necessary to look inside ourselves so as not to live in the fiction of what we are not, in order to recognise ourselves and to amend our behaviour if it is not in accordance with the path of salvation. As Pope Francis said, "Whoever accepts the Good News of Jesus is able to acknowledge the violence within and be healed by God's mercy, becoming in turn an instrument of reconciliation".[15]

II. The violence of deliberately sought-after inequality

Let us begin with an indisputable principle: "An ethics of fraternity and peaceful coexistence between individuals and among peoples cannot be based on the logic of fear, violence and closed-mindedness, but on responsibility, respect and sincere dialogue... the threat of mutual assured destruction are incapable of grounding such an ethics".[16] It is the new man who is called upon to respond to the call of the marginalised, the excluded, and the rejected, in order to work towards the restoration of the world God wished for.

We are faced with inequality, which, although not socially promoted, as Rousseau claims, is at least accepted and justified by society, without pausing to examine the unequal starting conditions of men and the results of their efforts to survive. It is true that political and social structures do little to improve the conditions of the least privileged. However, it is no less true that, avoiding structuralist refuges, which mute the enthusiasm of the least committed, there is no human commitment, a commitment of the "I" to reach out to the brother who needs me, the "YOU", with the will to destroy the artificial "I / YOU" antagonism for the purpose of building a "WE" associated with life in a fraternal community. It is the Lord who asks this of us!

Why this isolationism from human problems? Why do we allow ourselves to be dazzled by what is accidental in a person and renounce the essential that makes all of us equal? Or, to look at it from another perspective, why, forgetting the essential, which makes us equal, do we reject people because of the accidental attributes – race, religion, economic status, culture, nationality, etc. – we believe we perceive within them? Is it the method of analysis or is it prejudices that lead us to divert the focus of attention from the problems in the world? Is the opulent world ready to reach an understanding of the problems experienced by underdeveloped countries? Do we believe that depression, marginalisation and exclusion belong to the natural world?

The real problems of the world cannot be contemplated from top, where the opulent world resides, to bottom, because the distance is so great that its magnitude and intensity would be difficult to appreciate. It is necessary to invert the order. One must put oneself alongside those who suffer in order to comprehend the extent of their suffering – including death – and rise in search of the solution to so many deficiencies, in all orders, embracing the human family as a whole. The route, therefore, is not from the macro to the micro. On the contrary, it is from the micro to the macro.

Entrenching oneself in a position of opulence, which brings together the elite who enjoy that category, is tantamount to opting to ignore the real world by building a fictitious space without references, without relationships and naturally, without commitments. He who is at the top feels inequality is something natural and his brothers' problems do not concern him. In fact, he feels superior, privileged as a result of merits that he does not possess and do not correspond to him but which serve the purpose of isolating him from other mortals. The social group in which he lives will help anchor him in the delusion of this fundamental error.

At the top, the *essence of being*, which as Aristotle correctly observed is the *being himself*, in which equality shines is forgotten and our attention is arrogantly drawn to the accidental attributes of the being. These accidental attributes enable us to establish, with personal criteria driven by self interest, comparisons which flatter our presumption, because we consider ourselves to be better than the rest of humanity, and above all better than those most in need.

"...inequalities in point of credit and authority become unavoidable among private persons the moment that, united into one body, they are obliged to compare themselves one with another, and to note the differences which they find in the continual use every man must make of his neighbour. These differences are of several kinds; but riches, nobility or rank, power and personal merit, being in general the principal distinctions, by which men in society measure each other... the harmony or conflict between these different forces is the surest indication of the good or bad original constitution of any state: I could make it appear that, as among these four kinds of inequality, personal qualities are the source of all the rest, riches is that in which they ultimately terminate, because, being the most immediately useful to the prosperity of individuals, and the most easy to communicate..."[17] And there we have the four categories enumerated – *wealth, nobility or rank, power and personal merit* – which debase man and enslave him in his true being, making him capable of injustice, including the injustice of disregarding those around him.

These comparisons are based on the prevalence of the "*I*" as opposed to the "*WE*". The fact that the comparison is made reflects the will to focus on the accidental, because comparison between what is equal makes no sense. The comparative analysis is based on the position and criterion of he who compares and is far from what might be demanded of objective analysis. Good and evil are what we consider such classifications to be worth. Once again the analyst who is disconnected from the world emerges, a world he only contemplates through images that are not always real.

In other words, it is a scenario from which we are sure that we will emerge in a favourable position, marginalising those we consider to be inferior and, therefore, unworthy to share space and sociability. And, thus, in that world, "*IMAGE*" assumes a much greater significance than "*BEING*", and appearance is more significant than reality. *What one is*, is less important than *what one appears to be*. Hence the need to cultivate attributes and, even more so, attitudes which lead us to enjoy a good reputation, so that we can be the centre of attention for people in our circle, who are also valued quantitatively and qualitatively for what they represent and not for what they are.

"I could show how much this universal desire of reputation, of honours, of preference, with which we are all devoured, exercises and compares our talents and our forces: how much it excites and multiplies our passions; and, by creating an universal competition, rivalry, or rather enmity among men, how many disappointments, successes, and catastrophes of every kind it daily causes among the innumerable pretenders whom it engages in the same career. I could show that it is to this itch of being spoken of, to this fury of distinguishing ourselves which seldom or never gives us a moment's respite, that we owe both the best and the worst things among us, our virtues and our vices, our sciences and our errors, our conquerors and our philosophers; that is to say, a great many bad things to a very few good ones".[18]

A necessary consideration emerges in the light of what we have been saying. Is this the man; that man created in the image and likeness of God? Pascal says that,

“Man is obviously made to think. It is his whole dignity and his whole merit; and his whole duty is to think as he ought. Now, the order of the thought is to begin with self, and with its Author and its end.

Now, of what does the world think? Never of this, but dancing, playing the lute, singing, making verses, running at the ring, etc., fighting, making oneself king, without thinking what is to be a king and what to be a man”.[19]

From this it can be deduced that man seems inclined to focus his attention on the attributes of the being – the accidents – which are what make us different, rather than focusing on the being, in which he would find unity in the essence, when, above all, he has to decide on what he is, on his role and responsibility in the community to which he belongs.

The sense of belonging raises the question of the functions and responsibilities to the community, a community that we call *human family* – family due to the fact that its members share the same father – in which, owing to its very nature, relationships among members are essentially relationships of fraternity, because saying “children of the same father” is the equivalent of saying *brothers*. This family is seen as divided by envy, selfishness and individualism. This family is divided by the violence within its objectives and many of its members feel excluded and do not occupy the smallest space in the hearts and minds of their brothers. They simply do not exist.

Can we go back and rectify the errors of our ways? Can we find the ignored, abandoned brother and receive him joyfully into the heart of the family? Pope Francis is categorical in this respect: “We are always capable of going out of ourselves towards the other. Unless we do this, other creatures will not be recognized for their true worth; we are unconcerned about caring for things for the sake of others; we fail to set limits on ourselves in order to avoid the suffering of others or the deterioration of our surroundings. Disinterested concern for others, and the rejection of every form of self-centeredness and self-absorption, are essential if we truly wish to care for our brothers and sisters and for the natural environment. These attitudes also attune us to the moral imperative of assessing the impact of our every action and personal decision on the world around us. If we can overcome individualism, we will truly be able to develop a different lifestyle and bring about significant changes in society”.[20]

Life, everyday life, has enveloped us in a cloud of materialism, hedonism, individualism and aggression, which has blinded us and rendered us incapable of seeing what in every place at every moment is clear and transparent: brothers who suffer from marginalisation and exclusion, who feel hunger, who die prematurely as a result of their living conditions, who seem to have no right to a life project filled with hope, with the yearning to contemplate a home in which children can grow up at the heart of the family.

Withdrawing from the awareness and experience of all this deprivation, and failing to seek ways of resolving it will ultimately be acknowledged as the great sin of the 21st century. A century of abundance, waste, and disdain, which we deliberately distance ourselves from so that the face of suffering – which is the face of Christ – does not appear to us, because even its image is uncomfortable for us in our *iter* of an easy life.

We close our doors and hearts, in the knowledge that there are multitudes of brothers outside, awaiting our compassion. We consider ourselves the owners of our space and the means for our well being, without feeling summoned by the many whose lives are at risk due to the scarcity of resources needed for subsistence.

Pope Francis said that, “The Jubilee of Mercy that ended in November [2016] encouraged each one of us to look deeply within and to allow God’s mercy to enter there. The Jubilee taught us to realize how many and diverse are the individuals and social groups treated with indifference and subjected to injustice and violence. They too are part of our «family»; they too are our brothers and sisters”.[21]

Let us hope that we share this compassion that God has for each of us with our brothers. By focusing our attention on the attributes which accompany their being and which are frequently used to value their worth, thereby underlining the differences between some and others, we forget to consider what their being is in itself, its greatness, simply due to the fact of being human, a condition in which we are all equal.

We fail to recognise the essential, whilst emphasising the accidental: skin colour, height, corporal strength, sporting ability, intelligence, eloquence with words, etc. All of these are truly important attributes but, in relation to the human being, are merely accidents.

III. The violence of economic inequality

Allow me to begin this section with a passage from Pope Benedict XVI, which, as an economist, initially upset me and invited me to reflect, with no time limit, on its contents. He said that: “In the list of areas where the pernicious effects of sin are evident, the economy has been included for some time now. We have a clear

proof of this at the present time. The conviction that man is self-sufficient and can successfully eliminate the evil present in history by his own action alone has led him to confuse happiness and salvation with immanent forms of material prosperity and social action. Then, the conviction that the economy must be autonomous, that it must be shielded from “influences” of a moral character, has led man to abuse the economic process in a thoroughly destructive way... these convictions have led to economic, social and political systems that trample upon personal and social freedom, and are therefore unable to deliver the justice that they promise”.[22]

In all probability, the economy is where the most conducive scenario to self-sufficiency, although also to humility, lies, because, in times of success, we attribute this success to our own ability and acumen, without acknowledging external participation, while in times of recession, we hold the system liable. Moreover, the tendency to express everything in material terms, to establish monetary equivalents for human and social dimensions, is more common in the field of economics than in most other fields of knowledge. The responsibility is ours, not of the science of economics, and when the system is responsible, it is the responsibility of a system created by us.

As we embark along the path of acquiring goods and accumulating wealth, due to the belief that economic status determines the condition of the human being, we are fertilising the road to violence, marginalisation and exclusion. In this sense, greed is the worst travelling companion. With the exquisiteness that characterises the thinking of Blaise Pascal, it is worth remembering the words he wrote warning of the danger of dividing society by taking possession of the goods intended for all humanity. “«This dog is mine», said those poor children; «that is my place in the sun». Here is the beginning and the image of the usurpation of all the earth”.[23]

Pascal’s sensitivity in attributing to those innocent children the origin of the sense of ownership and the possibility of usurpation contrasts with a similar idea, albeit one expressed with greater violence in the famous passage by Jean Jacques Rousseau, in which the Geneva-born writer says: “The first man, who, after enclosing a piece of ground, took it into his head to say, «This is mine», and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. How many crimes, how many wars, how many murders, how many misfortunes and horrors, would that man have saved the human species, who pulling up the stakes or filling up the ditches should have cried to his fellows: Be sure not to listen to this imposter; you are lost, if you forget that the fruits of the earth belong equally to us all, and the earth itself to nobody!”[24]

What is surprising in this passage is the drastic transformation that civil society causes in that man, who in a primitive state was gentle, took from nature only what he needed to sustain himself, without acquisition or accumulation, because the future did not feature amongst his concerns. In consequence, without grounds for fighting with his fellows, there are no exclusionary rights, in contrast to T. Hobbes’ *man is wolf to man*, which we also find previously in Plautus, in an equivalent sense.

A man who, subsequent to his civic transformation, embarks upon the road to property as an exclusive and exclusionary right, which the Romans identified as *ius utendi, fruendi et abutendi*, unaware of its social function and the universal destination of the goods of creation for all humankind, opens the door to violence and exclusion.

As is the case in so many other fields of inequality, we are also speaking of forced economic inequality, which, if possible, holds even greater danger, because economic inequality results in other inequalities which curtail the lives of men and humiliate their dignity. Therefore, faced with this problem and before examining it in greater depth, it is worth formulating a question for the purpose of posing it to ourselves.

The question should be worded as follows. How can we live a Christian life if we fail to appreciate incompatibility between our waste – a product of our opulence – and the precarious situation of so many millions of people, of entire continents, who are heading towards early and certain death because they lack the minimum conditions to lead a life in accordance with the dignity which they are entitled to as people?

The Popes are eloquent, with an eloquence that molests the developed world because it denounces our responsibility for action or, at least, tolerance and lack of consideration, that lies behind the problem of inequality, above all when this inequality excludes the least among us from participation, even unequal participation. This divides society, the human family, into two unconnected worlds – rich and poor – because connecting these worlds is also a source of inconvenience.

These eloquent sentences send true shock waves through the consciences of men of good faith, and consequently cannot be ignored or silenced. More often than not, we are aware of their existence but we fail to give them adequate consideration. Thus, we are frequently reminded of the story of creation in Genesis. Have we considered that “The world was created for everybody and a few wealthy people struggle selfishly to take ownership of it”?[25] A consequence of this struggle is the usurpation of goods and wealth that belong to all men, thereby enslaving the deprived and condemning, in their behaviour, the usurpers for their actions.

Very shortly prior to this, we read that, “The bread which you hold back belongs to the hungry; the coat, which you guard in your locked storage-chests, belongs to the naked; the footwear mouldering in your closet belongs to those without shoes. The silver that you keep hidden in a safe place belongs to the one in need. Thus, however many are those whom you may have provided for, so many are those whom you wrong”.[26]

St. Basil’s text leaves little margin for doubt or self-interested interpretation that might serve to ease our conscience with its reference to acquisition beyond need, which continues to be one of the endemic evils of society in the 21st century, as it was in the 4th. An evil which, given our attitude to economic issues – particularly to riches – and human endeavour itself in a competitive world, could be said to be growing, as opportunities for the acquisition of superfluous goods and wealth are also growing.

Nearing the very end of the 4th century and also reflecting on the phenomenon of accumulation and hoarding of goods beyond those needed for the satisfaction of unavoidable needs, it was said to us that “what you possess in reality belongs to another”: in this case, he is referring to God.[27] In this sense, we once again encounter St. Ambrose, who denounces the conceit of false charity, saying: “When giving to the poor, you are not giving what is yours; rather, you are paying back what is his. Indeed, what is common to all, and has been given to all to make use of, you have usurped for yourselves alone”.[28]

Following the word of the aforementioned Holy Fathers, the question formulated a few lines ago still demands a response. It even requires a reformulation of the same question so that nobody can remain ignorant of the problem. Therefore, now that we are a decade and a half into the 21st century, we ask: How much appropriation of goods and wealth occurs at present, without consideration for our brothers who lack even the most essential? In St. Ambrose’s terms, where will the inequality and usurpation end?

Let us take in isolation the most significant of the economic variables – income or product – to establish, *ab initio*, a framework of economic inequality, without renouncing the option of later considering more far-reaching aggregated indicators in human and social terms.

Thus, Graph I shows Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *per capita* in five of the wealthiest countries – we have omitted the country with the highest GDP p.c., Luxembourg, because of its specific characteristics – and in ten of the poorest, accompanied in all cases by the Gini coefficient, which shows inequality of incomes in each of the countries.

It should be observed that we are not comparing the richest people with the poorest, but rather the average income per person in the wealthiest countries with the average income per person in the poorest countries. Regardless of that average income, which is just an illustrative figure that does not fully demonstrate how the community really lives, the Gini coefficient tells us how equally or unequally income is distributed in each case and to what extent the real distribution of income approximates or is distant from that average income. Given an average income, the Gini index expresses that the more inequality there is, the greater the deviation from this average value will be, both for those who find themselves in the upper part of the distribution and those in the lower part.

Therefore, comparing the average values for each of the countries, we observe that the income of the average resident of Norway is one hundred and fifteen times higher than that of the average resident of the Central African Republic. Similarly, the average income in Switzerland is ninety-eight times higher than that of the Central African Republic. Average income in the United States is ninety-four times higher than in the Central African Republic, and so on.

We have decided not to include Luxembourg, with a GDP *per capita* of 93,553 USD, adjusted for purchasing power parity, as in the other cases. This is equivalent, in comparative terms, to one hundred and sixty-six times that of the Central African average. Of the ten poor countries featured in the graph, the least poor has a GDP *per capita* of 2.4 times greater than the poorest country, the Central African Republic, which shows that the countries mentioned move within a very tight bracket, one that is very distant from the wealthiest countries.

Moreover, if we focus on the Gini coefficient values, we can see that the Central African Republic, along with its low income level, has a high degree of inequality – a Gini coefficient of 56.2 – which denotes that, in addition to average poverty, the disparity between incomes is such that we can assume, with no fear of error, that there are people in that African country who are wealthier than those with the highest incomes in Norway, where income is by far more evenly distributed, with a Gini coefficient of 25.9.

Note that the higher the Gini coefficient, the higher the inequality in distribution, with 100.0 being the value that represents the greatest inequality and 0.0 the value that represents the greatest equality – the latter would be the coefficient of a society where incomes were completely equal. Here lies, therefore, the first great gulf of economic inequality, that of personal income, or to be more specific, Gross Domestic Product per capita.

GDP is the resource which humanity depends on in order to satisfy its needs across all environments. From this value it is easy to deduce that a large number of people, in quite a few countries – those in the graph are merely a sample – will have needs, even needs that are inescapable in terms of survival, which will go unsatisfied. This results in malnutrition and death, while in other countries, life unfolds in a scenario of excessive consumption and wastefulness, and backs are turned to those who suffer the opposite situation.

For the most disadvantaged, lack of sufficient income will result in further difficulties that will leave a mark on their lives: lack of health, education, lower life expectancy and an abundance of hunger and malnutrition. There are a number of parameters where it does not make sense to make comparisons of a quantitative nature, because the endowment of goods and services represented are only present in the most favoured countries, while there is great and insulting deprivation in poor countries, which makes survival difficult or impossible.

Let us abandon, for the moment, the comparison between rich and poor and the contrast of situations between countries suffering from greater or lesser poverty, for this could result in a distorted picture. For now, let us focus on the poorest countries for the purpose of uncovering the statistical levels of poverty afflicting them.

Let us look at poverty rates in the poorest countries, focusing on two parameters: the percentage of the population with incomes of less than 1.90 USD per day, adjusted for purchasing power parity; and the percentage of the population living in extreme multidimensional poverty.[29]

Graph II shows the poverty rates of the ten poorest countries, including for each of them the values of the aforementioned two parameters for the year indicated in the graph, which is the year in which the surveys to determine poverty rates were carried out.

It is not easy to ignore the fact that 77.1% of the population of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has an income of less than or equal to 1.90 USD per day. It is, of course, true, for those wanting to allay qualms of conscience, that 1.90 USD in a developed or wealthy country is not the same as in a poor country, where this amount will afford access to a greater quantity of goods.

That is undoubtedly the case. But one's conscience cannot remain at ease if we consider that the 1.90 USD in question is adjusted according to the purchasing power of different countries and is, in each case, equivalent to the purchasing power of 1.90 USD in the United States in the year 2011. A similarly serious situation is to be found in Burundi and in Liberia. 2010 surveys showed that 77.7% of the former's population had incomes of 1.90 USD or less, while 68.6% of the population of Liberia led their lives with a daily income of no more than 1.90 USD per day.

Moreover, when speaking of severe multidimensional poverty, there are situations worthy of consideration and alarm. We are speaking of those who do not have access to at least 50% of the goods and services that are essential to a dignified human existence. This means that the precarious situation in which these people find themselves at present will persist until the elimination of the deprivation, which impedes access to a decorous and dignified life, as befits people with inalienable human rights.

This is the case of Niger, where 73.5% of the population does not have access to more than 50% of the goods and services without which human existence is deficient and, sometimes, unviable. The same can be said of Burkina Faso, where 63.8% of the population is severely deprived of those goods and services that are essential for a dignified life, and Guinea-Bissau, where 58.4% of the population lives in severe multidimensional poverty.

There is no great distance between the remaining countries represented in the graph and the three examples cited above. Although smaller percentages of their populations have incomes of less than \$1.90 a day or find themselves in a situation of severe multidimensional poverty, their situation is still a denouncement of the indifference or, at least, the lack of diligence shown by wealthy countries in alleviating problems of this nature.

Another dimension of this poverty, an intermediate position between the concept of poverty and death by malnutrition, is the food deficit from 2012 to 2014, expressed as a kilocalorie deficit per person per day. Particularly alarming are the cases of Haiti, with a deficit of 510 kilocalories; Zambia, with a deficit of 415 kilocalories; the People's Republic of Korea, which has a deficit of 344 kilocalories, in stark contrast to its arsenal of weapons, including nuclear weapons; Namibia, with a deficit of 315 kilocalories. As is the case in all these countries, this deficit is per person per day.

In a selection of fifteen poor countries, those with the lowest food deficit –Swaziland and Mozambique – have deficits of 186 kilocalories and 195 kilocalories respectively. The remaining countries all have deficits of more than 200 kilocalories per person per day. In contrast, in developed countries, the problem is one of obesity, excess fat and health deficiencies associated with an excess of nutrients.

One of the goods/services considered essential for people with scarce resources to be able to envisage a change in their situation, entering a human and social dimension in which access to knowledge plays a

dominant role, is the good or service that falls within the framework of the concept of “education”. And here, we will once again establish a comparison between rich and poor countries, at least for some levels of education.

Investment in knowledge or, to use another expression, education, is a medium and long-term investment, in terms of both time, and personal and material economic resources. The aim is to achieve a more cultured society, with greater knowledge of the economic, political and social times in which it lives, a society of a given community of men and women ultimately better qualified to address the challenges posed by the world of today, and indeed the world at any time in history.

Without the capacity to avail of an opportunity, this opportunity will go unnoticed by the community. This capacity is the positive result of the educational process. A process which not only begins from a flagrant inequality but one that perpetuates the inequality between wealthy and poor countries, to the detriment of the latter, condemning them to poverty for endless days.

Three parameters are represented in Graph III, as the most significant in an educational process, which is far from consolidated. The first – represented in blue – corresponds to adult literacy, i.e., literacy amongst people over fifteen years old. The second – in red – is the percentage of the population aged twenty-five or over who have at least completed secondary education. The third parameter – in yellow – is the number of people dropping out of primary school, expressed as a percentage of the cohort of primary school students.

The graph shows comparative figures for five wealthy countries and five poor countries. Without the need to go into specifics, it can be observed that in the wealthy countries, only the red column is visible, representing the percentage of the population of twenty-five years and over who have completed secondary education. The wealthy country with the lowest percentage has a value of over 89.5%, while in the country with the highest percentage, Canada, 100.0% of the population has completed secondary education. The rate of people dropping out of primary school is hardly noticeable. Primary school dropouts can only be observed in Denmark, Germany and Norway, with respective rates of just 0.5%, 3.5% and 0.4%, while the phenomenon is non-existent in the remaining wealthy countries. Similarly, the blue column – literacy amongst people of fifteen years and over – is not visible, because all adults in these wealthy countries are considered to be literate.

The opposite situation can be observed for the poor countries. The five countries represented have very partial literacy amongst those over the age of fifteen. The best situation is to be found in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with a literacy rate of 77.3%, which is tantamount to an illiteracy rate of 22.7%. However, in the country with the second best situation, Sierra Leone, less than half the adult population is literate (48.1%), meaning that there is adult illiteracy of 51.9% of this cohort. Niger, with an adult literacy rate of 19.1%, in other words, an illiteracy rate of 80.9%, is the country in the worst situation.

If we look at the percentage of the adult population (population of 25 years and over) that has completed secondary education, the situation is significantly worse, as one may expect. Once again, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has the highest percentage of completion of secondary education, with a rate of 24.6% of the cohort, while Chad has the worst situation, with just 5.5% of this population group having completed secondary education.

The other side of the coin in terms of these results, insofar as they can be rated, is primary school dropout rate, which ranges from the highest dropout rate of 53.4% in the Central African Republic to the lowest rate of 35.6% in Niger.

The figures presented are worrying in themselves. What is more, although we are dealing with figures, we should avoid engaging in a simple statistical interpretation of them in order to evaluate the social significance of low rates of literacy and secondary education completion amongst the populations of poor countries, as well as the significance of the high primary school dropout rate in these countries. Might the need for children and adolescents to work be the cause of school dropouts? Or might the distance to school and transport limitations be what leads to the high dropout rate? Probably a combination of the two is what ultimately explains the dropout rate.

This is neither a once-off issue nor an anecdotal one. We are faced with a real problem which, in the medium and long term, will hinder possibilities of growth in knowledge and competences in order to better avail of the resources that would enable these people to lead a dignified life. The person who drops out of school today will be illiterate tomorrow and his possibilities of development will be permanently reduced.

The educational process is inescapably irreversible. He who decides to abandon the path at the beginning will be left outside forever, because he will not have access to the final stages if the preliminary stages have not been completed. It must be acknowledged that the fate of today’s illiterate adult is to remain illiterate forever. Or, expressed in another way, so as not to end the discussion with such fatalism, we can certainly say that

great efforts will be required in the future if today's illiterate adult is to return to school to recover the ground that has been lost at the outset.

In fact the efforts made are laudable but the results are not so encouraging. Educational structures, official international bodies, NGOs, missionary actions and the contribution of volunteers all deserve our commendation, though *the harvest is rich but the labourers are few*; in which case, as in similar cases, the Scriptures propose the solution: "ask the Lord of the harvest, to send out labourers to his harvest" [*Mt 9:37-38; Lk 10:2*; with an equivalent meaning, *Jn 4:35-38*].

What has been said regarding educational shortcomings in poor countries can also be said about health conditions, focusing our attention on two worrying parameters: infant mortality – live-born children who do not live beyond the age of one year – and child mortality – live-born children who do not live beyond the age of five.

The data for these two parameters are shown in Graph IV, which also includes a third statistic, the number of doctors. This is because we believe that, of the variables that can influence survival, in addition to nutrition, drinking water supply, wastewater treatment conditions, diseases associated with living conditions and standards, etc., the number of physicians and medical professionals, as well as healthcare equipment, is exceptionally relevant.

Here, once again, comparison of wealthy countries and poor countries cries out to the former, in the heartrending voice of the latter. Once again, the comparison is between five very developed countries and five countries which, with a certain degree of euphemism, we classify as "developing" countries. Although the development process is very slow, it serves to circumvent the cruelty that would be associated with classifying these countries as "underdeveloped".

The five rich countries represented in the graph have an infant mortality rate – live-born babies who do not survive their first year – ranging from 29 children per 10,000 live-born babies in Denmark, which has the highest mortality rate of these countries, to 20 children per 10,000 live-born babies in the cases of Norway and Japan.

In contrast, in the poor countries, we have Central African Republic, which has the highest mortality rate, with 915 children per 10,000 live-born babies, followed by Sierra Leone with 871, Chad with 850, Democratic Republic of the Congo with 745 and Niger with 571.

If a conscience actually exists, in the light of these figures, which are more than mere statistics, how can we allow 955 of every 10,000 live-born babies to die without reaching the age of one in Central African Republic, while in Norway and Japan, only 20 babies fail to reach this age?

And the difference is even more alarming if we analyse mortality rates for children of less than five per 10,000 live-born babies. Looking at the rich countries in the graph, we observe that in the worst case, that of Denmark, 35 children per 10,000 live-born babies die before the age of five, followed by Sweden with 30, Japan and Finland with 27, and Norway with 26.

However, if we look at the poor countries, the most unfavourable figure once again corresponds to Chad, where 1,387 children do not reach the age of five; followed by Central African Republic, with 1,301; Sierra Leone, with 1,204; Congo Democratic Republic, with 983 and Niger with 955. Has the indisputable innocence of these 1,387 children who die before the age of five been sullied by some sin or great failing that has not permitted them to experience the same conditions in Chad as they would have in Norway?

If they were permitted to do so, of the 1,387 children who die before the age of five in Chad, 1,361 would survive and deservedly live their lives with the same rights and the same dignity as the residents of Norway. What is happening to prevent the international community of nations, rich and poor, from making superhuman efforts to enable all people to have the same right to a dignified life?

I know it will be said that resources are scarce, but they can never be so scarce or so poorly distributed as to cause the massive death of our brothers and sisters, people with the same right as us to enjoy a dignified life, while we, with our universities and our governments, are not willing, through our regulations, to take effective measures, rather than simply making speeches, that would bring us closer to solving the problem of the poor world.

As we have mentioned, Graph IV also shows a third variable, which is very worthy of consideration in terms of infant and child mortality. We are referring to the number of physicians and the great imbalance in this respect between rich and poor countries. For illustrative purposes, I would also like to remind you that Medical Schools at Universities in rich countries erect barriers to entry for those who feel the vocation to practice this noble profession.

How many students who have been denied access to medical studies would have been happy to care for the health of the poor, in poor countries, and how many poor people would have seen their lives extended?

These restrictions to entry make more sense if the aim is to protect the income of those who do have access to Medical Schools, but the ultimate objective of the University is to fulfil the social function of spreading scientific and human knowledge and to attend to the needs of humanity, of humanity as a whole, rich and poor.

In the light of the evidence provided by Graph IV, we can see a correlation, which does not require any special or sophisticated calculation, between the number of doctors and a reduction in mortality rates. The relationship is inversely proportional. The more doctors there are, the lower the mortality rates of children under the age of one and under the age of five.

Therefore, countries that are well equipped with doctors, such as Norway, with 42.8 doctors for every 10,000 people, Sweden, with 39.3, Denmark, with 34.2, Finland, with 29.1 and Japan, with 23.0, for every 10,000 people have, as we have seen, very low infant and child mortality rates in all cases.

In contrast, high infant mortality rates and mortality rates for children younger than five correspond to countries with very low numbers of physicians, although it may seem cruel to acknowledge this fact: 0.2 doctors for every 10,000 people in the cases of Niger and Sierra Leone, 0.4 doctors in Chad, 0.5 in the Central African Republic and, in the poor country with the highest number of doctors, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1.1 doctors for every 10,000 people.

It would be reasonable to suppose that decisive action over the number of doctors in poor countries would improve mortality rates for infants and children under the age of five. It is inadmissible to consider the mortality rates in these countries natural. What is clear from the dramatic results observed is that they can be attributed to a lack of health professionals, a lack of physicians, aggravated by the dispersion of the population in their settlements, and the transport and communications difficulties that hinder the mobility of doctors and patients.

Having come to this point, and now that we are ready to reach a conclusion on the effects of economic inequality on the populations of poor countries, it is worth looking at another figure, which is very representative of the figures we have already considered. We are referring to life expectancy at birth. For this purpose, we will also compare rich and poor countries, as we are incapable of accepting that the reason for inequality could be and must be due to one's place of birth, race, religion or social condition.

Quite another thing is to consider the natural reasons for the inequality in life expectancy to be the same as those that differentiate between rich and poor, in other words, unequal conditions of life in its entire scope and particularly those conditions to which we have paid special attention: disposable income and the lack of it, i.e., poverty; availability of sanitary and medical resources to guarantee adequate health; and sufficient instruction/education to enable access to available resources, particularly human resources.

By life expectancy we mean the number of years a newborn child will live, if all other current conditions – infant, child and adult mortality rates – remain constant.

It is indeed true that the improvement of current life conditions and the life conditions throughout the life of the newborn child would have an indisputably positive effect in terms of extending the life expectancy threshold at birth. In fact, life expectancy, which has increased in wealthy countries over the course of history and the course of more recent history, has had a similar trend in poor countries, which are more exposed to viral diseases, diseases associated with the hygiene of living conditions, the availability of drinking water, wastewater treatment facilities, and the elimination of insects that carry/transmit disease and pandemics.

As with the previous graphs we have seen, Graph V shows life expectancy values for five rich (developed) countries, and, by way of contrast, the same parameters for five poor (developing) countries. The values show the number of years that a child born on the date corresponding to the figure is expected to live – also with the current probability of success or failure in the calculation. Because they are not the same, life expectancy for men and women is shown separately on the graph, with life expectancy of women being higher than that of men in all cases. The graph also features a third column, which corresponds to the average life expectancy of the population in question.

Once again, there is an alarming disparity in the life expectancy of the population in highly developed countries – rich countries – and countries where the degree of development is low – poor countries. If we focus on average life expectancy, in order to avoid entering into a very lengthy commentary on the figures, through which we would achieve nothing, we can see that the average life expectancy of the five rich countries represented ranges from 79.7 years in the United States, the rich country with the lowest life expectancy, to 83.1 years in Switzerland, the country with the highest life expectancy.

However, looking at the poor countries on the right-hand side of the graph, average life expectancy ranges from 59.1 in the country with the highest life expectancy, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to 51.3 years in Sierra Leone, the country with the lowest life expectancy. Three of the countries have a life expectancy range of between 51.3 and 51.9 years.

Some may say that this inequality must be taken as an incontrovertible fact with no room for discussion because, in accordance with their reasoning, this is not a situation limited to the world of “what is” but a situation that ends up being transmitted and integrated into the world of “what must be”. In other words, not only are things the way they are, but they cannot possibly be any other way.

But those of us who firmly defend that we are all equal, that all of us are equally entitled to the same dignity, as human beings and children of the same God, do not find a satisfactory response that enlightens us as to why a person born in Switzerland has the *right* to live 31.8 years longer than somebody born and living in Sierra Leone due to circumstances beyond his control.

The Swiss person has done nothing of merit to entitle him to enjoy a long life, a long life of good quality, we should add, and neither has the citizen of the Sierra Leone committed any infringement or offence against the human community to deserve a life of inferior quality and one that is almost thirty-two years shorter. It is difficult to accept that inequality of this type does not result in indignation and rebellion against what is presumed to be the established order, an order created by men and not the order desired by God.

We already know that we are dealing with two groups with a great distance between them in all orders of life: on the one hand, wealthy North America, Europe and Japan, and, on the other, poor Africa and Asia, and some Latin American countries. But that is where the problem lies. And what is not admissible is the premise that acknowledgement of the problem is, at the same time, the justification for a conclusion which, even on the surface, is perverse in itself. And such a premise is even less admissible when it is presented by the rich, cultured group who have such wide access to criteria and information.

Many will say that the problem is so big that we have to admit that we are powerless to solve, or even mitigate, it. Opinions on this matter are very far from being unanimous. Those of us who consider ourselves incapable of such a great task were capable of, and continue to be capable of, enriching ourselves and our most immediate surroundings. We know of instruments and ways of enhancing the lives of the less privileged. The first condition is awareness that these people exist and that they are waiting, like Lazarus at the door, to receive our consideration and help.

One of the most effective measures, which we have preferred not to include as such in this study, is direct investment of rich countries in poor countries in order to strengthen their economies. Is there really a will to develop poor countries when foreign investment in Ireland in 2015 accounted for 85.5% of GDP, while foreign investment accounted for 1.5% of GDP in Burkina Faso, 5.5% in Chad and foreign investment in the Central African Republic was so small that it can hardly be represented on the graph, a shameful 0.2% of the country's GDP?

Private capital flows from abroad represented 19.3% of GDP in Ireland, 8.5% in Switzerland, 14.6% in Norway and 4.5% in the Netherlands, while in Niger, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the values were negative –more capital outflows than inflows – and accounted for 8.4%, 9.1% and 3.0% respectively of their GDPs.

Does this mean that we should entrust everything to the official development aid of the international institutions? It is, without doubt, the least effective of the aid provided because it only provides money through channels that are not always the most appropriate for the purpose of solving the human, economic and social problems of a community that suffers and dies from hunger. It might ease consciences but it does no more than that. Those whose situation is improved are not those in need.

IV The violence of environmental inequality

There is a fundamental principle that precedes us when we enter into the fascinating world of the environment and its conservation, which brings with it such great responsibilities. We cannot fail to mention the principle to which we refer, despite the fact that it is self-evident: nobody, no single person or nation, no matter its relevance, can assume ownership of the environment in which we live.

In the previous section we mentioned economic goods and we recalled the thoughts of the Holy Fathers on the holding of goods and wealth. It was patently clear that the goods of creation, i.e., all the goods at the disposal of humanity, exist precisely for the purpose of humanity. The objective of these goods is to satisfy the needs of all men, without difference or distinction, insofar as all are equal in dignity and rights. And we do not need to remind ourselves that one of the most significant rights is the right to a dignified life.[30]

It is undoubtedly true that this proclaimed right is infringed in more than a few situations, where people are condemned to severe poverty, a poverty that can even lead to death. It is a case of rights being infringed by an unfeeling society, which does not consider, or does not even wish to consider, those who lack everything, even a voice.

In the case of the environment, the situation is even more evident. The intrinsic nature of the environment is that of a public good which belongs to humanity. In consequence, protection of the environment is the responsibility of humanity as a whole. This responsibility, as we have just pointed out, has one particular feature: it exceeds the limits of any local or state jurisdiction, or any intermediate body.

It is a common, global good – *global commons* – for which the responsibility lies with each of its subjects and the exercise of this responsibility lies with the world community of states, within their own jurisdictions. The damage caused to the environment in a northern country is transmitted to the countries of the south, just as environmental damage with its origins in the east has ramifications for living conditions in the west. Nobody is disconnected from the environment and everybody depends on its conservation.

We should point out that in recent years – perhaps since the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit (Brazil) in June 1992,[31] the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change of May 1992[32] and its development and entry into force through the Kyoto Protocol of December 1997[33] – there has been, at least publicly, great awareness of the challenge associated with conserving the environment, as a resource at the service of all, for a healthier life and more sustainable development.

It is more difficult to ensure that this public awareness also takes root within each person, to the point of changing lifestyles, consumption and production habits and that ultimately, on a micro scale – each subject within his very being – has effectively started out on the path towards environmental conservation, reducing contaminating emissions and repairing the degradation that has occurred in large areas and which affects numerous populations.

True conservation of the environment cannot merely mean signing large conventions and making them public on a macro scale, with little repercussion on the daily actions of people, who consider that their attitude, whatever it might be, will have little influence on the fate of the environment, its condition and its sustainability. Nor can environmental objectives be achieved by the activity of a group of environmental apostles – scientists from certain fields – who disseminate the message of world apocalypse around the globe, due to the damage being caused by humanity to the environment.

And this is even less appropriate when the apostolic task carried out turns out to be compatible with people, institutions and countries with high levels of pollution and environmental degradation. Responsibility for the environment, which is common to all, cannot be turned into a scenario in which action manifests itself in what must be said but not so much in what must be done.

It seems natural for the work of environmental apostleship to be mainly carried out by countries and people with high-level scientific qualifications, who can speak with authority on conservation targets and the risks emanating from the attitudes of people with respect to both consumption and production. This is tantamount to saying that the provision of information on the issue of the environment will generally be the responsibility of countries and people with high-level scientific/professional qualifications. It is important, however, that these qualifications be allied to moral qualification in terms of what is said and what is done.

It is, therefore, the wealthy countries that warn the world of the environmental risks of greenhouse gas emissions, which seems normal. What is not so normal is that, given the available data, rich countries are fully responsible globally for carbon dioxide emissions.

Graph VI shows CO₂ emissions *per capita* per annum in metric tons in eight developed countries, albeit with different levels of development, whose emissions are greater or equal to nine tonnes per person. It also shows countries whose emissions are less than 0.1 tonnes per person and annum.

Inequality in emissions reminds us of inequality in incomes between rich and poor countries. On the one hand, we observe countries whose emissions are between sixteen and nineteen metric tons per person per annum: Luxemburg, with annual emissions of 18.7 Mt/p.c.; the United States of America, with annual emissions of 16.4 Mt/p.c.; Australia, where emissions are 16.3 Mt/p.c. per annum. A further three countries – Canada, the Republic of Korea and Norway – have emissions of between eleven and fourteen metric tons per person per annum (17.5 Mt/p.c., 11.8 Mt/p.c. and 11.7 Mt/p.c. respectively). Finally, a further two countries produce emissions of between nine and eleven metric tons: Japan 9.8 Mt/p.c. and Netherlands 10.8 Mt/p.c.

In contrast to those emission levels, none of the fourteen poor countries represented has emissions higher than 0.1 metric tons per person per annum. All of them, with the exception of Burundi, Chad and Congo Democratic Republic, which have zero CO₂ emissions, have the same level of emissions, 0.1 Mt/p.c. per annum. Every year, each resident of Luxemburg releases into the atmosphere a volume of carbon dioxide equivalent to 187 times that emitted by a resident of Madagascar, Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Ethiopia, Malawi, etc.

The same can also be said about Australia, with emissions equivalent to 160 times higher; Canada, which has an equivalent emissions level of 135 times higher; the Republic of Korea, 118 times greater; Norway, 117 times higher; Netherlands, 108 times higher, etc. How can we repair the environmental damage caused by some, which also affects the living conditions of others who have very low emissions, or none at all? Are the instruments associated with the trading of emissions rights sufficiently satisfactory?

In any case, it is not a question of some people emitting in exchange for others not emitting. The objective is more ambitious. It is a question of polluting less. The trading of emissions rights simply enables the countries that pollute the most – the most developed countries – to buy emissions permits, the cost of which they will try to recover in the prices they charge, with the condition that the less developed countries continue to be less developed in order to be in a position to sell their excess rights – in theory, all their rights – to those who require them. It is a way of perpetuating the differentiation between rich and poor, in the emission of pollutants as well as in other areas.

To avoid sentencing countries that do not emit pollution – poor countries – to remaining poor, the only alternative is to reduce emissions in highly polluting countries. Moreover, these are the countries which, with very un-exemplary apostleship, warn us all of the risks of deteriorating air quality, water quality, soil quality, etc.

Are developed countries willing to reduce final consumption by a third in order to reduce the use of energy resources, gas emissions, and to recycle domestic and industrial waste? If not, time will deliver an irrevocable sentence to the detriment of everybody, and also to the detriment of those who have done nothing to deserve this penalty.

The reason for the rich countries' high CO₂ emissions, apart from the high consumption level resulting from their high income levels, is also related to the sources of the energy consumed in these countries. Graph VII shows four indicators. Two of these refer to the origin of the primary energy supply, distinguishing between energy that comes from fossil fuels – highly contaminating – and energy that comes from renewable sources – which pollutes very little or not at all. The other two indicators refer to the supply grid, i.e., the energy consumption points – families, companies and the public sector.

The latter two indicators, those associated with the consumption points, are determined by the electrification rate, which in turn is conditioned by each country's economic level – income and distribution of income – and very related to population distribution in the territory, which largely determines the unit cost of electricity transmission. When expressing the electrification rate it is, therefore, worth distinguishing between urban and rural areas, as the graph does.

Predictably, in the six developed countries represented in the graph, and in most developed countries not represented, the electrification rate for both rural and urban populations is 100%. In other words, there is total electrification that covers all the citizens' needs regardless of their place of residence within the country analysed.

The situation is very different in the ten developing countries and, sadly, this will come as no surprise. Nepal has the highest electrification rate of the countries represented here. 76.3% of the total population has access to electricity, while 71.6% of the rural population has access to the electricity supply.

These relatively high rates for a developing country in Asia are not representative of the situation in countries on the African continent. For example, the United Republic of Tanzania has an electrification rate of 15.3% of the total population and just 3.6% of the rural population. The situation is similar in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where electrification covers 16.4% of the total population but only 5.8% of the rural population. Mozambique and Zambia have similar electrification rates, while the remaining poor countries represented on the graph have slightly higher rates.

We are presented with quite a different scenario when we analyse the supply of primary energy and distinguish between that which comes from fossil fuels and that which comes from renewable sources, in both cases as a percentage of the total energy supply. The data represented in Graph VII could not be more eloquent for those who transmit constant messages about the environment and insist on the need to use clean energy rather than contaminating energy.

All the developed countries represented on the graph, and those who are not represented, have an energy consumption for which they should ask the forgiveness of countries that do not pollute or pollute less. For example, 91.6% and 95.5% of total energy consumed in Australia and Japan respectively comes from fossil fuels, with renewable sources accounting for just 8.4% of the total in Australia and 4.5% of the total in Japan.

These two countries are followed very closely by the Netherlands, where 95.3% of total energy consumed comes from fossil fuels, with renewables accounting for 4.3%. The three remaining countries, Germany, the

United States and the United Kingdom, are in an equivalent bracket, with fossil fuels accounting for 87.6%, 92.1% and 95.6% of total energy consumed respectively. In the same countries, in the same order, renewable sources account for 12.4%, 7.9% and 4.4% of total energy.

Moving across to the right-hand side of the graph, where the developing countries are represented, we can observe three levels of access to renewable energy sources: countries in which renewables account for between 90% and 100% of the total energy supply (Ethiopia, with 93.5%; Democratic Republic of the Congo, with 96.0% and Chad, with 90.6%), countries where renewables account for between 80% and 90% of total energy (Zambia, with 88.2%; Nepal, with 84.7%; United Republic of Tanzania, with 88.2%; Nigeria, with 86.5% and Mozambique, with 88.4%), and countries in which renewables account for between 70% and 80% of total energy (Ivory Coast, with 74.4% and Togo, with 72.7%).

This shows a use of renewable energy which is excellent in all senses, both in terms of sustainability and in terms of the emission of contaminating gases. This high percentage of renewables with respect to the total volume of energy consumption means that the use of dirty energy from fossil fuel is extraordinarily low. This is the case of the countries where fossil fuels account for a higher percentage of total energy, such as Togo and the Ivory Coast, with 27.3% and 25.6% respectively, and countries where fossil fuels account for the lowest percentage of total energy, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with 4.0%, Ethiopia, with 6.5%, Chad, with 9.4%, or Mozambique, with 11.6%. It can be said that the energy supply structure of all of these countries plays a decisive role in achieving pollution reduction and environmental sustainability objectives.

Some will say that this is not exclusively attributable to the merit of these countries because their economic and human development is very low, resulting in very low consumption of goods and services and very low production of goods, all of which are a significant source of pollution in rich countries, which have very high consumption and production. Nevertheless, when low levels of development cause the death of many, it has to be concluded that the universal economic and social order is corrupt, putting climate targets before the very life of the human being, while life is a good and a right par excellence.

The other side of their contribution to a clean environment is associated with the exploitation of natural resources, and the road to their depletion, as well as the status of a resource that is essential for human life: freshwater. Both indicators are represented in Graph VIII.

The depletion of natural resources in poor countries should be a cause for special concern, not just in these countries but in wealthy countries also. The extent of the problem can be observed with great force in Angola, Mauritania and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where depletion between 2010 and 2014, expressed as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product, was 24.5%, 20.7% and 31.08% respectively. It can also be observed, albeit with less intensity, in Burkina Faso, where the figure was 10.9%, Niger (13.7%), Malawi (10.8%), Mali (10.6%) and Nigeria (6.6%).

Contrasting this rate of depletion with the same indicators in developed countries, we observe that, apart from Australia, with a rate of 3.8%, the rate of depletion of natural resources is no higher than 1.0% in all cases. Is this a case of hoarding what is one's own and exploiting what belongs to others? It seems more than likely that this is the case.

The situation is somewhat different in the case of freshwater extraction between 2005 and 2014, expressed in this case as a percentage of total renewable water resources. Germany has the highest rate of extraction, with extraction equivalent to 21.4% of total water resources, followed by France and the United States with extraction of 14.1% and 13.6% respectively. Below these countries comes the Netherlands, with extraction of the equivalent of 11.8% of total water resources, the United Kingdom, with 5.5% and Australia, with 3.9%.

In the poor countries, the situation is very different from the one we have just described. The country with the highest extraction rate is Mauritania, with 11.8%, followed by Malawi, with 7.9% and Burkina Faso, with 6.1%. All of the remaining poor countries have extraction rates of less than five percent. Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have the lowest extraction, with rates of 0.5% and 0.1% respectively.

Ensuring a global supply of freshwater suitable for the satisfaction of the human needs of the entire population, regardless of income, is an obligation and a responsibility that falls on those who have more: more technology, more resources, more wealth. We will immediately see the devastating effects of lack of water fit for human consumption amongst the least privileged populations.

Graph IX shows the effects of environmental deficiencies on some populations, those of poor countries, in contrast to the immunity that seems to reign in wealthy countries; environmental deficiencies that are not necessarily caused by those who suffer their consequences.

None of the three parameters represented on the graph – deaths of children under the age of five per 100,000 children of the same age, caused by outdoor pollution; deaths of children under the age of five per 100,000

children of the same cohort, caused by indoor air pollution, and, in relation to poor water quality, deaths of children under the age of five per 100,000 children under five due to poor water quality, sanitation and hygiene – have a statistically significant effect in developed countries.

Of these three parameters, the values for the first – deaths due to outdoor pollution – are the lowest, and range from two deaths per 100,000 live-born children under the age of five in Rwanda to twenty-one deaths in Afghanistan. We would not want to create the impression that this is a low number of deaths and is, therefore, unworthy of attention. The avoidable death of a single person – child, adolescent or adult – must always be considered as one death too many.

The graph paints a very different picture for the other two parameters in developing countries. The figures for deaths of children under the age of five caused by indoor air pollution, are such that no conscience can remain unaffected. This is especially the case for those of us for whom love for our brothers and sisters, and particularly those most in need. We can see that the less needy are not obliged to address these life-threatening challenges.

Of the ten countries represented in this graph, four have over 1,000 deaths of children under the age of five per 100,000 children under five. This means that these deaths account for over 1% of the base population. In Sierra Leone, 1,207 children under the age of five per 100,000 live children under five; in Afghanistan 1,183 children under the age of five per 100,000 live children of the same cohort; and in Niger, 1,023 children under the age of five per 100,000 live children of the same age will not reach the reference age of five years old.

All of the other six remaining poor countries fall within the range of between 600 and 900 children of less than five years old dying as a result of indoor air pollution: Burundi, where 897 children under the age of five die per 100,000 live children under five, i.e. 0.9%; in Rwanda 803 children of every 100,000 will die for the same reason; in Mali, the figure is 703 children; 676 children will die in Liberia; 648 children will die in Guinea-Bissau; and finally, 644 children under the age of five per 100,000 live children of the same age will die, due to indoor air pollution in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Finally, the third cause of death we are looking at is death resulting from poor quality of water and/or deficiencies in sanitation and hygiene. In this respect, five of the ten countries represented in the graph, some with figures that are truly worrying, have rates of over 1,000 deaths per 100,000 children of less than five years old. This is the case of Angola (1,266 deaths of children of less than five years old for every 100,000 children of the same age), Afghanistan (1,405 deaths of children of less than five years old for every 100,000 children of the same age), Sierra Leone (1,473 deaths per 100,000), Burundi (1,088 children dead per 100,000 live children), and Niger (1,229 deaths). All of these children die due to poor quality of water, sanitation and lack of hygiene, with quality of water being the most significant of these causes of death.

We are saying that, due to these causes, children in this age group of up to five years old die, in percentages that range from 1.1% and 1.5% of the total reference population (children of under five years old). In the remaining countries represented in the graph, the child mortality rate due to these causes is 0.8% in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and 1.0% in Rwanda; rates which, in any case, are sufficiently shocking as to evoke the commitment of the international community to mitigate them, with absolute priority over any other objective. We are not speaking of what the life of men will be like in five hundred years if we fail to conserve the environment. We are speaking of the lives of those who do not reach the age of five at present.

Before concluding this analysis of how environmental conditions have an unequal effect on rich and poor countries, we would like to provide, due to their significance, data on two indicators that once again highlight the difference in the suffering of populations due to external causes. In some cases – the case of developed countries – the capacity exists to mitigate the effects of environmental threats and in other cases – the case of developing countries – this capacity does not exist, due to economic level, lack of technical capacity and lack of effective foreign cooperation.

We refer to the living conditions of the population in their settlements in the physical environment. Here, we examine two parameters: the first is the parameter of populations affected by natural disasters, expressed as the annual average for the period 2005-2012 per million people; the second is the percentage of the population that lives on degraded land, with respect to the total population of the country in question. Graph X provides data on the two parameters for six wealthy countries that have traditionally expressed great concern for environmental conservation, and ten poor countries.

It is undoubtedly true that the nature of the two parameters is very different, in theory. In contrast to natural disasters, which, *prima facie*, can be said to be circumstantial events, land degradation is a problem of a structural nature and, as such, will influence, even in the long term, the lives of those who settle in the degraded area. Nevertheless, and despite what we have just said, we would allow ourselves the option of casting doubt on the circumstantial nature of natural disasters, due to the repetitive coincidence of these circumstances in certain types of countries and not in others.

There are great differences between developed and developing countries for both indicators. In three of the six countries represented – the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden – there is no population affected by natural disasters, while in the other three, the affected population is small – 7 people of every million in Finland, 12 in Norway and 14 in Ireland.

If we look at developing countries, the case of Niger stands out, with 97,330 people affected per million of population, followed by Lesotho, with 60,491, Burkina Faso, with 48,243 and so on, until we come to the country with the lowest number of people affected of those represented in the graph, Ethiopia, with a total of 25,871 of every million people affected by natural disasters. What these cold statistics are telling us is that, in Niger, an average of 9.7% of the total population of the country is affected by natural disasters every year. In Lesotho, 6.1% of the population suffers the consequences of natural disasters. In Burkina Faso, the figure is 4.8% and in Ethiopia, the least affected of the countries represented, 2.6% of the population is affected.

There is a greater range of inequality in the percentage of the population living on degraded land, with all the risk this implies for health, sustenance and, simply, survival. In the case of the six developed countries, 0% of the population in Finland is affected by this indicator, while in the other countries, the affected population ranges from 0.2% in Norway to 8.5% in the case of Denmark, with values of 5.4% in the Netherlands, 0.5% in Ireland and 0.3% in Sweden.

These figures bear no relation to those for the developing countries. Burkina Faso, with 73.2%, has the highest percentage of the population living on degraded land, followed by Ethiopia, with 72.3% and Lesotho, with 63.6%. In the remaining countries, apart from Kenya and Niger, with 31.0% and 25.0% respectively, the percentages range from 39.3% in Cambodia to 59.5% in Mali. In other words, in five of the ten poor countries represented in the graph, over 50% of the population (of these, Eritrea with 58.8% has the lowest percentage) live on degraded land. Meanwhile, the developed world observes these figures with a high degree of indifference.

V. Inequality, integration, cooperation

These are three phenomena that affect the human being positively or negatively and, due to their very nature, they require a social scenario in which to be manifested and to unfold in one way or another. None of the three are abstract in nature: inequality is produced from some with respect to others; integration is also produced from some with others; and cooperation appears when the group as a whole addresses a common objective. Therefore, the actors are always human persons, called upon to live in community. However, at times, some build barriers to prevent entry of others.

Let us put forward the view that man, by nature, is a social being. The story of creation tells us that after creating man, and subsequent to situating him in a fruitful orchard, the Lord God said “It is not right that the man should be alone. I shall make him a helper” [*Gn.* 2:18]. The likeness and non-isolation is confirmation that the will of God was to create a social man, who, with his fellows, would give rise to the human consortium, the human family as a nucleus of vertical relationships between successive generations, as well as intra-generational, horizontal relationships.

The contrary would be to commit to that deviated anthropocentrism, which designs a life project of negation of the very mission of the human being in the world, in society, in nature, resulting in the selfishness that recognises nothing that is not proprietary and quantifiable. In the words of Pope Francis, “When human beings place themselves at the centre, they give absolute priority to immediate convenience and all else becomes relative... sees everything as irrelevant unless it serves one’s own immediate interests”.[34]

It is when integration becomes impossible, for it will surely be incompatible with one’s own immediate interests, that cooperation will not be possible, except when it is an instrument to serve one’s own interests, which, because they are immediate, are always ephemeral and, therefore, expire. And this is finally, when inequality finds terrain that is conducive to marginalisation, exclusion and rejection.

In fact, inequality, orchestrated as a tool of discrimination and exclusion, only makes sense within that human nucleus – it cannot be called society because there are no recognisable links between its members – in which selfishness is the king. It becomes the only recognised value and is pursued by solitary members of a group of individuals with an individualist vocation.

In a society of singular people, as opposed to isolated individuals, what is important is man in himself, considered as thus. All else is accidental, as we saw at the beginning of this paper. In this way, there is no margin for appreciation of inequality because, as men, we are all equal in dignity, children of one and the same father and, therefore, with a common affiliation and, in consequence, with an indomitable fraternity, which sustains the permanent relational bonds amongst all its members.

That common affiliation, that fraternity, also formally recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a duty of human beings,[35] is the only thing capable of constituting the substrate for the creation of a harmonious, integrated, cooperative society, as opposed to the exclusions resulting from a selfish, aggressive, exclusive society. In such a society, exclusion is produced by the incompatibility of the objectives of brotherhood and solidarity with the objectives that evidently characterise a selfish society, which feels itself self-sufficient without the need for anybody, because perfection does not feature amongst its preferences.

This being the case, inequality is no excuse for exclusion. First of all, what is important about man is his essence, his condition as a rational, free being, the owner of an inalienable dignity, a member, due to a relationship of fraternity, of the entire human family; ultimately, man equal to man by the design of the Creator. Based on that equality, which is substantive, the signs of inequality, even natural inequality, are multiple but they are all accidental, accessories; they are thus because they are integrated within man and, for that reason, some are not more unequal than others. All are unequal to each other.

We already saw at the beginning of these pages that this inequality which accompanies the human being, was present from the first moment of creation, according to the Angelic Doctor: differences in sex, age, physical configuration, corporal strength, skills, capabilities, etc. All these differences are to be found in any family, without being the cause of the marginalisation of some and the predominance of others. All are equal, because the shining brilliance of essential equality makes the different conditions of each member imperceptible.

Can we imagine a family in which there was discrimination between tall and short children, or between those with golden hair and blue eyes, and those with dark eyes and hair? Why then, in the human family, does the natural integration between whites and people of colour not occur, or integration between brothers from urban and rural areas, or between people from different territorial origins within a single nation –North/South – or between the rich and the poor?

These problems, which already exist, although they remain hidden in an environment of national community, are multiplied when we contemplate humanity in its global dimension. Moreover, as we broaden the contemplated scenario, the inequalities which have their origin in the very condition of men are mixed with great ease with inequalities derived from some imposing upon others, where the strong marginalise the weak, when it is clearly evident that we are all equal by nature from the first moment we see the light of day.

Or could it be that it is convenient to foster inequality from above in order to ensure better living conditions at the top? The practice of keeping slaves on a formal basis in the past – though not so long ago – in order to undertake major construction work and economic operations for the benefit of the exploiters, with the exclusion of the slaves, is perhaps still carried out, though without the same formality of slavery, with substantive and objective conditions that are similar to those of the past.

Perhaps it is convenient to keep entire continents in ignorance, with high levels of illiteracy, precarious health, and an absence of markets for goods and raw materials that would enable them to exploit their natural resources, with the acquiescence of corrupt governments, who accept the stimulus to corruption formulated by the exploiters of their natural resources.

Now that the world has reached such levels of inequality and exclusion, we cannot wait with our arms folded, provided that we are not encouraging such exclusion, for the great problem of humanity today to solve itself. The gap between some and others is of a magnitude that requires world action from all of humanity; action from a humanity convinced of the need to take another direction, a direction in which the equality inherent to men predominates, as opposed to the inequalities promoted by the privileged for their benefit, with the exclusion of those who have nothing, although they owe nothing. On the contrary, they are creditors of a historical social debt, a debt there is no desire to settle.

We are speaking, without palliatives, of an internal conversion of humankind, which cannot be achieved by an anecdotally peripheral attitude. We must enter into the heart of the problem. “This conversion [*as Pope Francis says*] calls for a number of attitudes which together foster a spirit of generous care, full of tenderness. First, it entails gratitude and gratuitousness; a recognition that the world is God’s loving gift, and that we are called quietly to imitate his generosity in self-sacrifice and good works... It also entails a loving awareness that we are not disconnected from the rest of creatures, but joined in a splendid universal communion. As believers, we do not look at the world from without but from within, conscious of the bonds with which the Father has linked us to all beings”.[36]

We have created and are feeding a society of plots of land, of sealed compartments, where, rather than rebelling against the injustices of the world, instead of being a spokesperson for the *voiceless*, we adopt an attitude of complicity and self-righteousness, displaying tolerance of the intolerable, on the pretext of respect for opinions,

acts and beliefs that are different from ours, when the problem is a universal human problem and not one of acts or beliefs.

What is necessary is a strong conviction that would generate an associated commitment, a commitment of all human beings, within which there is no place for plots of land; a total commitment to an all-embracing purpose, a purpose that cannot be divided into separate, unconnected accounts.

The world, rich and poor, is witnessing an account in permanent imbalance, an account in which the shortfall of some can only be balanced with the excess of others. "Our commitment does not consist exclusively in activities or programmes of promotion and assistance... but above all an attentiveness which considers the other «in a certain sense as one with ourselves».[37] This loving attentiveness is the beginning of a true concern for their person which inspires me effectively to seek their good. This entails appreciating the poor in their goodness, in their experience of life, in their culture, and in their ways of living the faith".[38] It is the opposite to rejection, exclusion, marginalisation, to the inequality sought or promoted to satisfy our immediate interests, in exchange for the loss of our soul; the loss, right now, of our sense of humanity, enchained to a presumed freedom, without responsibility, which we will be asked to account for.

This is the true problem of the world. It is the most urgent problem and, without doubt, the one that most requires a solution, because we are talking about the living conditions of men today. And even the environment, which resonates with a powerful world voice much stronger than the voice of the poverty, hunger and death of so many people who lack everything, seems to have turned its back on poor countries and seems to have decided to exacerbate their fate.

The Holy Father proclaimed that "... the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet: "Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest [Bolivian Bishops' Conference, *Pastoral Letter on the Environment and Human Development in Bolivia* «*El universo, don de Dios para la vida*» (March, 23 2012), num. 17]".[39] We have spoken of this and presented data on it, in the section entitled '*Violence of environmental inequality*'.

A wide omni-comprehensible and integrated vision of man and of the environment in which he lives is necessary; that is to say, an "integral ecology". In the words of Pope Francis: "When we speak of the «environment», what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it... Given the scale of change, it is no longer possible to find a specific, discrete answer for each part of the problem. It is essential to seek comprehensive solutions which consider the interactions within natural systems themselves and with social systems".[40]

VI. Conclusions

At the beginning of these pages, we presented the content they sought to deal with as a question: *Is inequality, of any kind, an obstacle for integration and cooperation?* In our opinion, the conclusion of the ensuing discussion proves that it is not. Inequality is not an obstacle for integration and cooperation. The obstacle to integration and cooperation, the barrier to the construction of a harmonious, fraternal and caring society, albeit an unequal one, is man. The man who feels superior to others and who, to express it in one way, feels he is more of a man and, if he were to be reminded of God, would surely feel he was more the son of God than the rest of humanity. That man is the barrier.

As with so many ills of this world, including those of times gone by, the great evil that has led man to chaos, the violent confrontation of wars, invasions and slavery, has been greed, selfishness, lust for power, the need to possess, hunger for gain, surrounding himself with wealth at the cost of the misery of many, having greater consideration for his pets than his neighbours, very often using the latter for his own needs. This selfishness is competitive and, as such, exclusionary. Two greedy beings cannot occupy the same space at the same time, for they will end up destroying each another.

It is this selfishness, the building block of the way things are done at present, which fosters and benefits from inequality, which is why it creates it. It highlights the differences between men over the very equality that characterises all human beings. What is more, in his erroneous vision, equality does not exist, because if it did, it would eliminate his spirit of prevalence and make it meaningless.

Inequality must be fostered to enable one to feel superior. Therefore, we change the dimension of inequality and make it substantive rather than accidental. And we hide the feature of essential equality because, this equality, which is intrinsic to man due to his human condition, is not seen by the eyes of the body, nor is it made public in the social sphere. It is only understood from the eyes of the spirit, from a sense of transcendence, which holds no interest for the greedy, because transcendence is not sold in the markets. This man, the enemy

of society and of himself, aspires to the privilege which sets him apart from others as his fundamental objective in life. He aspires to enjoy what he knows others can never have. In other words, he strives to be unique, in what is accidental, naturally, but we have already said that the essential dimension of the human being holds no interest for him.

Being a person is equivalent to being a generator of community, not of isolation, for we have already said that man is, since his origin, a social and sociable being. The *communitas* is only conceivable when it is made up of people with dignity, who know themselves to be free and responsible and who desire to share their objectives and their efforts to achieve those objectives.

The greedy and the covetous, he who feels privileged by the submission of others, in a model of inequality that has been sought-after and promoted, rejects the idea of the *communitas* and, to replace it, implements the *immunitas*; an environment that enables him to feel secure because others can never occupy the economic, social and political position he holds. Other people, in the widest dimension of the term, persons and peoples, are peripheral and do not interest him in the least.

However, the end of this path, along which he constructs inequality to serve his own needs, leads him to a situation that is far more complex, a situation unknown to him because he has never attempted to be aware of it. The materialist, the greedy person, he who covets all that can be owned, will end up feeling profoundly alone. He is surrounded only by goods but not by loving relationships to fill his spirit. Solitude will lead him, perhaps subconsciously, for he does not even realise that he is alone, to aggression in order to prevent the proximity of people he believes to be exclusively motivated by dispossessing him of part of what he owns.

He lives in a spiral of violence, solitude and exclusion of all human beings who are alien to him. Sometimes, even his own family is the object of exclusion because he considers it to be a factor external to himself, in the same way that he has always considered the rest of humankind. This miserly individual – and there are more of them than we might imagine – also feels excluded, albeit it from above. For this reason, he does not accept social blending and does not know what it is to share. The reality is that he does not find it easy to socialise, to form relationships, with his fellow man, be they close to him or distant from him. He relates, competitively, with those who are present in the scenarios on which his success, wealth and power depends, but his humanity is empty.

His life is an itinerary for the building of walls. Walls without bricks or mortar, but walls which divide humanity with greater force than physical walls. These are the spiritual, moral walls which divide men according to the dignity afforded or denied them; without consideration of the fact that nobody, no human being, can grant or remove the dignity of the human person, a dignity inherent to him because he is the Son of God, by the will of the Father.

At most, and this is by no means insignificant if it is played with irresponsibly, he can acknowledge or fail to acknowledge the dignity of man, an intrinsic dignity that cannot be taken away by anybody. This is what has been done throughout history by several dictators, who have humiliated the human person and denied them the possibility of exercising their rights, rights that are born precisely of their dignity.

While natural inequality, that inequality which occurs in the text of creation, the inequality that exists at the heart of the family – a heart of understanding and love – is an opportunity for personal enrichment, enrichment of the soul, of the senses and the feelings and an opportunity for the exercising of virtues, the inequality that is promoted or used to serve one's own interests, hinders life in society and generates violence amongst its members.

While natural inequality broadens the horizons of man, who would otherwise be convinced of an impoverished uniformity, and enables him to learn of different ways, different criteria, different attitudes and abundant initiatives, imposed inequality encloses man in an increasingly violent vicious circle. This natural inequality creates commitment to the fraternal community, urging the need to share, to make common the resulting fruit. It is the spiritual greatness of the *communio*, which is characteristic of the *communitas*, in which all feel themselves equal despite their differences, despite the inequality in which nature itself has placed them.

Therefore, the origin of the problem of exclusion and rejection in today's world is inside man. It is he who is called to *conversion*, a conversion through which the Lord God, in his holy name, made good his promise to the house of Israel: "I shall give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you; I shall remove the heart of stone from your bodies and give you a heart of flesh instead" [Ezk 36:26].

VII. Bibliography

- Aristotle, *Metaphysics*. Translated by W.D. Ross. Book IV (#), 2, 1003b 5-10. In *The Complete Works of Aristotle – The Revised Oxford Translation*. Edited by Jonathan Barnes; Volume Two Bollingen Series LXXI · 2. Princeton University Press; Chichester, West Sussex 1984.

- Aristotle, *On the soul*. Translated by J.A. Smith. Book II, 2, 414a 12-19. In *The Complete Works of Aristotle – The Revised Oxford Translation*. Edited by Jonathan Barnes; Volume One. Bollingen Series LXXI · 2. Princeton University Press; Chichester, West Sussex 1984.
- Akyüz, Yilmaz, *The financial crisis and the global south: a development perspective*. Pluto Press. New York, 2013.
- Atkinson, Anthony B., *Public economics in an age of austerity*. Routledge. Abingdon, Oxon, 2014.
- Atkinson, Anthony B., *The economics of inequality*. Clarendon Press. London, 1975.
- Benedict XVI, Encyclical letter *Caritas in veritate*. Rome, June 29th 2009.
- Blanchard, Oliver; Romer, David H.; Spence, Michael and Stiglitz, Joseph E. (eds.) *In the wake of the crisis: leading economists reassess economic policy*. MIT Press. Cambridge, Mass. 2012.
- Bakker, Matt, *Migrating into financial markets: how remittances became a development tool*. University of California Press. Oakland, 2015.
- Banerjee, Abhijit and Duflo, Esther, *Poor economics: a radical rethinking of the new way to fight global poverty*. Public Affairs. New York, 2011.
- Cicero, *On Obligations* (De Officiis). Translated with an Introduction and Explanatory Notes by P.G. Walsh. Oxford University Press. Oxford; New York, 2000.
- Deaton, Angus, *The great escape: health, wealth, and the origins of inequality*. Princeton University Press. Princeton, 2013.
- Eisenstein, Louis, *The ideologies of taxation*. Harvard University Press. New York, 2010.
- Francis, Apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*. Rome, November 24th 2013.
- Francis, Encyclical letter *Laudato si'*. *On care for our common home*. Rome, May 24th 2015.
- Francis, *Message for the celebration of the Fiftieth World Day of Peace*. January 1st 2017.
- Galbraith, James K., *Inequality and instability: a study of the world economy just before the great crisis*. Oxford University Press. Oxford, 2012.
- Goldin, Ian and Winters, L. Alan, *The economics of sustainable development*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, 1995.
- Heal, Geoffrey, *Endangered economies: how the neglect of nature threatens our prosperity*. Columbia University Press. New York, 2017.
- Huber, Peter J.; Nerudova, Danuše and Rozmahel, Petr (eds.), *Competitiveness, social inclusion and sustainability in a diverse European Union: perspectives from old and new member states*. Springer International Publishing. Cham, 2016.
- Kohli, Harinder S., *The world in 2050: striving for a more just, prosperous, and harmonious community*. Oxford. New Delhi, 2016.
- Lang, Franz Peter and Ohr, Renate, *Openness and development*. Physica-Verlag. Heidelberg, 1996.
- Lavelle, Kathryn C., *The politics of equity finance in emerging markets*. Oxford University Press. Oxford, 2004.
- Lewis, Michael, *Boomerang: travels in the new third world*. W.W. Norton & Co. New York, 2012.
- Lundahl, Mats and Ndulu, Benno J., *New directions in development economics: growth, environmental concerns and government in the 1990s*. Routledge. London, 1996.
- Ndulu, Benno J. (ed.), *The political economy of economic growth in Africa, 1960-2000*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, 2008.
- OECD Environment Directorate, Environment Policy Committee, *Policies to promote sustainable consumption: an overview*. Working Party on National Environmental Policy. Policy Case Studies Series. ENV/EPOC/WPNEP (2002) 18/FINAL. July 2nd 2002.
- Papadimitriou, Dimitri B. (ed.), *The distributional effects of government spending and taxation*. Palgrave. Houndmills, 2006.

- Pascal, Blaise, *Pensées* [Thoughts]. Translated by W.F. Trotter. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Grand Rapids. MI. July 10th 2002; Original text, from Léon Brunschwig edition.
- Paul VI, Encyclical letter *Populorum progressio*. Rome, March 26, 1969.
- Pickett, Kate E. and Wilkinson, Richard G., "Immorality of inaction on inequality". *BMJ (British Medical Journal)*, 8 February 2017, Vol. 356.
- Pouw, Niky and Baud, Isa (eds.), *Local governance and poverty in developing nations*. Routledge. New York, 2012.
- Redclift, Michael (ed.), *Sustainability: critical concepts in the social sciences*. Routledge. London 2005.
- Rousseau, John James, Citizen of Geneva, *A Discourse upon the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality among Mankind*. Printed for R. and J. Dodsley, in Pallmall. London MDCCLXI. [Goldsmiths'-Kress Library of Economic Literature: Reel 0777, Doc. 09727. Microfilm. Woodbridge Conn. Research Publication, 1976].
- Sachs, Jeffrey D., *The age of sustainable development*. Columbia University Press. New York, 2015.
- Sachs, Jeffrey D., *The end of poverty: how we can make it happen in our lifetime*. Penguin. London, 2005.
- Sachs, Jeffrey D., *The price of civilization: economics and ethics after the fall*. Bodley Head. London, 2011.
- S Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Benziger Bros. Edition, 1947.
- Schramm, Gunter and Warford, Jeremy J., *Environmental management and economic development*. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Washington, 1989.
- Spatz, Julius, *Poverty and inequality in the era of structural reforms: the case of Bolivia*. Springer. Berlin, 2006.
- Standing, Guy, *The precariat: the new dangerous class*. Bloomsbury Academic. London, 2011.
- Stiglitz, Joseph E., *The price of inequality*. Norton. New York, 2012.
- Stiglitz, Joseph E.; Adlin, Aaron S. and DeLong, J. Bradford (eds.), *The economists' voice: top economist take on today's problems*. Columbia University Press. New York, 2008.
- Stiglitz, Joseph E. and Greenwald, Bruce C., *Creating a learning society: a new approach to growth, development, and social progress*. Columbia. New York, 2015.
- Therborn, Göran, *The killing fields of inequality*. Polity. Cambridge, 2013.
- Tuomala, Matti, *Optimal redistributive taxation*. Oxford University Press. Oxford, 2016.
- United Nations, *Framework Convention on Climate Change*. Adopted at New York City on May 9th 1992.
- United Nations, *Framework Convention on Climate Change*. Adoption of the Paris Agreement. Paris, November 12, 2015. FCCC/CP/2015/L.9.
- United Nations General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on September 25th 2015. A/RES/70/1.
- United Nations, *Human Development Report 2015. Work for Human Development*. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). New York 2015.
- United Nations, *Human Development Report 2016. Human Development for Everyone*. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). New York 2016.
- United Nations, *Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change*. Adopted at Kyoto (Japan) on December 11th 1997.
- United Nations, *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*. Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), June 3rd to 14th 1992.
- United Nations, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. General Assembly –Resolution 217 A. Adopted and proclaimed on December 10th 1948.
- Weisbrot, Mark, *Failed: what the 'experts' got wrong about the global economy*. Oxford University Press. Oxford, 2015.

- Wilkinson, Richard G., *Poverty and progress: an ecological model of economic development*. Methuen & Co. London, 1973.
- Wilkinson, Richard G., *The impact of inequality: how to make sick societies healthier*. Routledge. London 2005.
- Wilkinson, Richard G.; Pickett, Kate E. and De Vogli, Roberto, "Equality, sustainability, and quality of life". *BMJ (British Medical Journal)*, 2 November 2010, Vol. 341.

End Notes

*I am very grateful to Prof. Vittorio Hösle, University of Notre Dame (USA), Prof. Jörg Guido Hülsmann, University of Angers (France), Prof. Paul Siu-Nam Lee, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Prof. John McEldowney, Warwick University (United Kingdom), Lubomir Ml#och, Charles University at Prague (Czech Republic), Prof. Louis Sabourin, Université du Québec (Canada), and Prof. Stefano Zamagni, Università di Bologna (Italy), for their kindness, appreciation and encouraging comments to this paper. Any responsibility for errors and insufficiencies are exclusively the author's.

[1] Paul VI, Encyclical letter *Populorum progressio*. Rome, March 26, 1969; num. 66.

[2] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*. Translated by W.D. Ross. Book IV (#), 2, 1003b 5-10. In *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, The Revised Oxford Translation. Edited by Jonathan Barnes; Volume Two Bollingen Series LXXI · 2. Princeton University Press; Chichester, West Sussex 1984, p. 1584.

3 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*. Translated by W.D. Ross. Book V (#), 8, 1017b 10-23. In *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, The Revised Oxford Translation. Edited by Jonathan Barnes; Volume Two Bollingen Series LXXI · 2. Princeton University Press; Chichester, West Sussex 1984, p. 1607.

4 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*. Translated by W.D. Ross. Book VII (#), 1, 1028a 31-35. In *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, The Revised Oxford Translation. Edited by Jonathan Barnes; Volume Two Bollingen Series LXXI · 2. Princeton University Press; Chichester, West Sussex 1984, p. 1625.

5 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*. Translated by W.D. Ross. Book VII (#), 4, 1029b 12-15. In *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, The Revised Oxford Translation. Edited by Jonathan Barnes; Volume Two Bollingen Series LXXI · 2. Princeton University Press; Chichester, West Sussex 1984, p. 1626.

6 Ortega y Gasset, José, "Misión de la Universidad". *Revista de Occidente*. Madrid 1930; pp. 107-109. [Translation by the author].

[7] Cicero, *On Obligations* (De Officiis). Translated with an Introduction and Explanatory Notes by P.G. Walsh. Oxford University Press. Oxford; New York, 2000. Book I, marg. num. 107, p. 37.

[8] St. Augustine, *In Iohannis Evangelium*, XIX, 15. In an analogous sense, *De quantitate animae*, XIII, 22; also in *De moribus Ecclesiae*, I, 27, 52. The Latin text is: "*Anima habens corpus non facit duas personas sed unum hominem*". Sancti Aurelii Augustini, *In Iohannis Evangelium*, XIX, 15. Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina XXXVI. Turnholti. Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii. 1954, p. 199 [Translation by the author. The expression between dashes is mine].

9 Aristotle, *On the soul*. Translated by J.A. Smith. Book II, 2, 414a 12-19. In *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, The Revised Oxford Translation. Edited by Jonathan Barnes; Volume One. Bollingen Series LXXI · 2. Princeton University Press; Chichester, West Sussex 1984, p. 659.

10 Aristotle, *On the soul*. Translated by J.A. Smith. Book II, 2, 414a 19-28. In *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, The Revised Oxford Translation. Edited by Jonathan Barnes; Volume One. Bollingen Series LXXI · 2. Princeton University Press; Chichester, West Sussex 1984, p. 659.

[11] St. Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Benziger Bros. Edition, 1947. Part. I, q. 96, a. 3.

[12] John James Rousseau, Citizen of Geneva, *A Discourse upon the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality among Mankind*. Printed for R. and J. Dodsley, in Pallmall. London MDCCLXI, p. 6. [Goldsmiths'-Kress Library of Economic Literature: Reel 0777, Doc. 09727. Microfilm. Woodbridge Conn. Research Publication, 1976].

[13] John James Rousseau, Citizen of Geneva, *A Discourse upon the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality among Mankind*. Printed for R. and J. Dodsley, in Pallmall. London MDCCLXI, pp. 88-89. [Goldsmiths'-Kress Library of Economic Literature: Reel 0777, Doc. 09727. Microfilm. Woodbridge Conn. Research Publication, 1976].

[14] United Nations, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights". Resolution of the General Assembly 217 A (iii) of the United Nations, adopted and proclaimed on 10 December 1948, art. 1.

- [15] Francis, "Message for the celebration of the 50th World Day of Peace. Jan 1st 2017". Vatican 08.12.2016, num. 3.
- [16] Francis, "Message for the celebration of the 50th World Day of Peace. Jan 1st 2017". Vatican 08.12.2016, num. 5.
- [17] John James Rousseau, Citizen of Geneva, *A Discourse upon the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality among Mankind*. Printed for R. and J. Dodsley, in Pallmall. London MDCCLXI, pp. 168-169. [*Goldsmiths'-Kress Library of Economic Literature: Reel 0777, Doc. 09727. Microfilm. Woodbridge Conn. Research Publication, 1976*].
- [18] John James Rousseau, Citizen of Geneva, *A Discourse upon the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality among Mankind*. Printed for R. and J. Dodsley, in Pallmall. London MDCCLXI, pp. 169-170. [*Goldsmiths'-Kress Library of Economic Literature: Reel 0777, ...*].
- [19] Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* [Thoughts]. Translated by W.F. Trotter. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Gran Rapids. MI. July 10 2002; Original text, from Léon Brunschwig edition; num. 146. [*Equivalent to num. 210 in Chevalier edition, and to 620 in Lefuma edition*].
- [20] Francis, Encyclical letter *Laudato si'* on care for our common home. Rome, May 24th, 2015, num. 208.
- [21] Francis, "Message for the celebration of the 50th World Day of Peace. Jan 1st 2017". Vatican 08.12.2016, num. 5.
- [22] Benedict XVI, Encyclical letter *Caritas in veritate*. Rome, June 29th 2009, num. 34.
- [23] Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* [Thoughts]. Translated by W.F. Trotter. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Gran Rapids. MI. July 10th 2002; Original text, from Léon Brunschwig edition; num. 295. [*Equivalent to num. 231 in Chevalier edition, and to 64 in Lefuma edition*].
- [24] John James Rousseau, Citizen of Geneva, *A Discourse upon the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality among Mankind*. Printed for R. and J. Dodsley, in Pallmall. London MDCCLXI, p. 97. [*Goldsmiths'-Kress Library of Economic Literature: Reel 0777, Doc. 09727. Microfilm. Woodbridge Conn. Research Publication, 1976*].
- [25] St. Ambrose (c. 340-397), *On Naboth*, III, 11.
- [26] St. Basil the Great (c. 329-379), Homily VII.
- [27] St. John Chrysostom (347-407), Homily on the parable of rich man and Lazarus" (*Lk* 16:19-31).
- [28] St. Ambrose (c. 340-397), *On Naboth*, XV, 53.
- [29] By "multidimensional poverty" we mean deprivation in homes or people in the areas of health, education and standard of living. A person, family or country is more or less poor depending on the number of areas in which deprivation is suffered. In this respect, "Extreme" or "Severe Multidimensional Poverty" is understood to occur when deprivation scores 50% or more of the thresholds.
- [30] United Nations "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights". General Assembly – Resolution 217 A – adopted and proclaimed on December 10th 1948; art. 22. "*Everyone... is entitled... through national effort and international co-operation... of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality*".
- [31] *Vide* United Nations "Rio Declaration on Environment and Development". Rio de Janeiro (Brasil), June 3rd to 14th 1992.
- [32] *Vide* United Nations "Framework Convention on Climate Change". Adopted at New York City on May 9th 1992.
- [33] *Vide* United Nations "Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change". Adopted at Kyoto (Japan) on December 11th 1997.
- [34] Francis, Encyclical letter *Laudato si'*. On care for our common home. Rome, May 24th 2015; num. 122.
- [35] *Vide* ref. footnote no. 14.
- [36] Francis, Encyclical letter *Laudato si'*. On care for our common home. Rome May 24th, 2015, num. 220. [*what appears in brackets is mine*].
- [37] St. Thomas Aquinas, *S. Th.*, II-II, q. 27, a. 2.
- [38] Francis, Apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*. Rome 24.11.2013, num. 199.
- [39] Francis, Encyclical letter *Laudato si'*. On care for our common home. Rome May 24th, 2015, num. 48.
- [40] Francis, Encyclical letter *Laudato si'*. On care for our common home. Rome May 24th, 2015, num. 139.