

The theological contribution of Pope Francis for an inclusive economy

“an economy of all and for all” (Pope Francis 2016)

Exploring the idea of ‘common good’ is becoming a both theoretical and practical requirement, which is increasingly perceived, on the basis of three major reasons:

- ‘Common good’ has been in western culture the purpose of the social commitment for a long time, instead, now it is a ‘confused object’ which reveals a void of thought;
- The individualistic model of rationality ‘self-interested agent’ (cf. Rational Choice Theory) discloses anthropological inadequacy and social inefficiency;
- The philosophical approach of the social sciences needs to overcome the subject-object paradigm in order to put the relationship back at the center of inquiry.

Starting from Pope Francis’ teaching every economic theory and model of development intersects the theological and ethical reason. This intersection occurs on three different levels: in establishing the **value** assigned to ‘goods and services’; in supposing an **anthropological** model because the market economy adopts a specific concept about human being: rational, self-interested, maximizer; and in assuming a certain theory of **social** exchange in the interaction between buyers and sellers.

- a. Since Scholastic and Franciscan tradition, establishing the **value** of goods is a social process that involves the *communitas* (civil community). At the same time the market realizes not only an exchange among equivalent goods but also a reciprocal involvement among people. The essential aspect of reciprocity is that the exchange since its origins is inseparable from human relationships. The goods of trades are not separate from human beings who put them in place. In reciprocity the exchange ceases to be anonymous and impersonal but it becomes a weave of meanings, and values assigned to them.
- b. Relationship among human beings it either becomes a relationship of **recognition** or misrecognition. The recognition that the other gives to me, it results in affirming of my social existence. In this sense the common good is not a consequence or a result, an external outcome coming from the dynamics of social exchange but the common good is ‘the good of each one and of everyone’. It is the good of living together. The relationship is non-instrumental and non-exploitable good, but it is a good in itself since the beginning.
- c. One of the major contributions of which theology can give today to the economic and social science, is a deepening of the analogy between the mystery of Trinitarian relations with human relationships. *‘Each creature bears in itself a specifically Trinitarian structure’* (Saint Bonaventure). In this way, they make their own trinitarian dynamism which God imprinted in them from the creation. *«Everything is interconnected, and this invites us to develop a spirituality of global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity»*. (Laudato Si 239).