



On Ecological Economics: A Path to Authentic Prosperity for All

“Today, in view of the common good, there is urgent need for politics and economics to enter into a frank dialogue in the service of life, especially human life.”

Laudato Si’: On care for our common home, 189

In this reflection—third in a seven-part series on the *Laudato Si’* goals—we explore ecological economics, which recognizes “that the economy is a sub-system of human society”¹. This goal envisions an economy that works in the service of people and planet, providing access to dignified work while protecting creation and ensuring that present and future generations have the means to flourish.

Establishing ecological economics requires us to engage in sustainable forms of production and consumption, invest our communal and organizational resources and personal monies ethically, reject activities that harm people or planet, and support safe and fair labor. Cooperation at global and local levels is essential to bring this change about.

Political and economic leaders who prioritize positive investment of sustainable resources that support life and human dignity are essential. As individuals, we can commit to participating in the political process to the greatest extent possible and exercising choice in the products we use and the companies we support. We can make the effort to understand where our food, water, products, and materials come from and whether they are cultivated or created using sustainable means and fair labor. We can support our local economy and invest our money in our communities.

The alternative is to continue to invest in strategies and practices that destroy the very water we drink, the air we breathe, and the land on which we grow our food and build our homes. The alternative is to

Sisters of Holy Cross: Working against trafficking in Tacna, Peru.

By Sister Blanche Lamarre, CSC

When one hears ‘human trafficking,’ the reaction is often, “That doesn’t exist here. That’s big city stuff!” Our blindness prevents us from seeing the prevalence and enormity of trafficking.

As Sisters of Holy Cross, our Chapter directions call us “to commit ourselves to safeguard all of life, with special preference for women and children, trafficked and abused.” This has informed my ministry for the past seven years in Tacna, working with the anti-trafficking network Red Kawsay.

An educator most of my life, I was able to transfer my skills to working in civil society easily. The Red Kawsay network works against human trafficking through prevention, awareness-raising, networking and training efforts and participating in Peru-Chile border trafficking prevention.

Working at the local level, we are educating communities to understand the risk of human trafficking and empowering vulnerable people to recognize the strategies traffickers use to force or coerce others into slavery. We educate teachers and parents and place special emphasis on student outreach so that kids will be less vulnerable to the web of social media in which traffickers are so adept.

Each of us can engage in this work by partnering with local groups. Whether we are raising awareness to reduce the demand for trafficked labor, preventing vulnerable peoples from falling prey to traffickers, or promoting the use of sustainable goods and services, we can each make a difference here and now.

The Sisters of Holy Cross, an international congregation of women religious, arrived in Montreal, Canada in 1847 and presently minister in Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile, Haiti, Mali, Peru, United States, and Vietnam.

support scarcity, competition, conflict, and poverty. These are the very conditions that ensure an ample supply of vulnerable people who will suffer in dire circumstances, forced to flee their homelands, many of whom will be forced or coerced into human trafficking out of sheer desperation.

Human trafficking is just one such evil that results from an economic view that fails to acknowledge and support the intrinsic, inalienable value of every being. It is an evil that demonstrates how our apathy and the drive for personal wealth and degenerative consumption can destroy the very fabric of our society as well as individual lives.

As this example from the Sisters of Holy Cross in Tacna, Peru, demonstrates, each of us in our own local place can get involved at global and local levels through our personal choices and by participating in civil society to raise awareness of these evils. Together we can foster a new way of life supported and sustained by ecological economics.

References

- 1 “Ecological Economics,” <https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/laudato-si-goals/>

Suggested Reflection Questions

- What is currently happening in your area or what are you doing to encourage ecological economics?
- What opportunities do you see to promote ecological economics where you live and work?
- Which local movements, organizations, or other partners could you work with on this issue?

Action

- Learn where your food, water, and goods come from and whether they are ethically produced.
- Identify your local and global leaders and explore their stands on policies that impact your community.
- Make a personal commitment to advocate for change in your community.
- Connect with the Sisters of the Holy Cross **Our Time is Now** movement.

Prayer for Prosperity



In your infinite love, O God, you have blessed us with the richness of creation, the gifts of which hold the promise of prosperity for every being—brothers and sisters all. Yet in our blindness and greed, we have forgotten the true meaning of prosperity, that it is our relationship to you and to one another that gives us purpose. In our apathy, we have allowed pernicious systems to take root, systems that subjugate people and planet for the privilege and insatiable appetites of the few.

Grant us, Loving Creator, the wisdom and strength to right these wrongs, to give the economy its proper place in the service of people and planet, that we might fulfill our duty to care for our common home, ensuring that present and future generations might share in your bountiful love. Amen.