Catholic Healthcare Ethics in the Age of Pope Francis

October 10, 2014

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Healthy People, Healthy Planet:
Catholic Health Care and Pope Francis

“Some people wanted to know why the Bishop of Rome wished to be called Francis. Some thought of Francis Xavier, Francis De Sales, and also Francis of Assisi. I will tell you the story.”

St. Francis of Assisi is for the Church “the man of poverty, the man of peace, the man who loves and protects Creation.”

March 16, 2013

Healthy People, Healthy Planet:
Catholic Health Care and Pope Francis
Outline

I. Pope Francis’ Ecological Vision

II. Francis’ Means of Creation Care

III. Implications for Catholic Health Care Ministry

IV. Action Ideas for Catholic Health Care Ministry

V. Future Considerations: Papal Encyclical

Healthy People, Healthy Planet: Catholic Health Care and Pope Francis
I. Pope Francis’ Ecological Vision

1. Goodness of all creation

2. Humanity's unique place in creation

3. Connection between creation care and human welfare

4. Connection between creation care and peace

5. Humanity’s stewardship responsibility

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1. Goodness of All Creation

“The first chapter of Genesis, at the very beginning of the Bible, shows us that God delights of His creation, by repeatedly emphasizing the beauty and goodness of all things. At the end of each day, it is written: ‘God saw that it was good.’”

May 21, 2014

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1. Goodness of All Creation

“The first chapter of Genesis, at the very beginning of the Bible, shows us that God delights of His creation, by repeatedly emphasizing the beauty and goodness of all things. At the end of each day, it is written: ‘God saw that it was good.’”

“If God sees that Creation is something good and beautiful, we too must have this attitude, we must see that Creation is something good and beautiful.”

May 21, 2014

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2. Humanity’s Unique Place in Creation

All persons “are God’s handiwork, his creation.”

_Evangelii Gaudium_, no. 247

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2. Humanity’s Unique Place in Creation

All persons “are God’s handiwork, his creation.”

Evangelii Gaudium, no. 247

“In the eyes of God we [humans] are the most beautiful thing, the greatest, the best of creation…The gift of knowledge sets us in profound harmony with the Creator and allows us to participate in the clarity of his vision and his judgment.”

May 21, 2014

3. Creation Care and Human Welfare

“Thanks to our bodies, God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement”.

Evangelii Gaudium, no. 215
3. Creation Care and Human Welfare

“Thanks to our bodies, God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement.”

*Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 215

“The “many wounds [that] are inflicted upon humanity” due to “our failures in love and respect towards…the whole of creation.”

March 22, 2013

Creation Care and Peace

“Fraternity helps to preserve and cultivate nature”
(emphasis in original).

2014 *World Day of Peace*, no. 9
4. Creation Care and Peace

“Fraternity helps to preserve and cultivate nature”
(emphasis in original).

2014 World Day of Peace, no. 9

“Peace to the whole world, torn apart by violence linked to drug trafficking and by the iniquitous exploitation of natural resources! Peace to this our Earth!”

2013 Urbi et Orbi Easter Message

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5. Human Stewardship of Creation

“The Christian view of creation includes a positive judgment about the legitimacy of interventions on nature…”

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5. Human Stewardship of Creation

“The Christian view of creation includes a positive judgment about the legitimacy of interventions on nature…

“if these [interventions] are meant to be beneficial and are performed responsibly, that is to say, by acknowledging the “grammar” inscribed in nature and by wisely using resources for the benefit of all, with respect for the beauty, finality and usefulness of every living being and its place in the ecosystem.”

2014 World Day of Peace Message, no. 9

“Creation is not a property, which we can rule over at will; or, even less, is the property of only a few.”

May 21, 2014
5. Human Stewardship of Creation

“God destined the earth and all it contains for all men and all peoples so that all created things would be shared fairly by all mankind under the guidance of justice tempered by charity.”

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 171; cf. Gaudium et Spes, no. 69.

5. Human Stewardship of Creation

“We are driven by greed and by the arrogance of dominion, possession, manipulation and exploitation; we do not preserve nature; nor do we respect it or consider it a gracious gift which we must care for and set at the service of our brothers and sisters, including future generations.”

2014 World Day of Peace Message, no. 9
5. Human Stewardship of Creation

The universal destination of all goods is “the essential condition for facilitating an effective and fair access to those essential and primary goods which every person needs and to which he or she has a right.”

2014 World Day of Peace Message, no. 9

II. Francis’ Means of Creation Care

• Charity

  • “Response to immediate needs and specific situations.”

  Pope Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est, no. 31

• Justice

  • “Concerns the structural dimension of problems and their respective solutions.”

  Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 201
Charity

- “Our personal sins: our failures in love and respect towards God, towards our neighbour and towards the whole of creation.”
  
  2013 Palm Sunday Homily

- “Become [an] agent of God’s mercy, [a] channel through which God can water the earth, [and] protect all creation.”

  2013 Urbi et Orbi Easter Message

Justice

- “I would like to make an appeal to those in possession of greater resources, to public authorities and to all people of good will who are working for social justice: never tire of working for a more just world, marked by greater solidarity! No one can remain insensitive to the inequalities that persist in the world!”

  2013 World Youth Day
Justice

• “Confronting seriously the problem of global warming requires … strengthening, deepening and consolidating the political process on a global level” in order to alter “the current dominant models of consumption and production.”

Message via Vatican Secretary of State to 2014 U.N. Climate Change Summit

III. Implications for Catholic Health Care
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IV. Action Ideas for Catholic Health Care

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practicegreenhealth.org

noharm.org

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Clean Power Plan

- December 1, 2014: Public comment period ends
- June 2015: EPA issues state-specific CO2 emission targets
- June 2016: States submit CO2 reduction plans
- 2030: CO2 emissions reduced 30% from 2005 levels

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IV. Action Ideas for Catholic Health Care

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http://goo.gl/SKP2AA

http://goo.gl/TrQLDr

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- 565 gigatons of CO2 by 2050
- 2,796 gigatons of CO2 in known reserves
- Legislation obstruction
- "Carbon bubble" & "Stranded assets"
- Institutional mission
- Moral responsibility & Fiscal prudence

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http://goo.gl/I2xEld
http://goo.gl/CTacwJ
IV. Action Ideas for Catholic Health Care

greenfaith.org/programs/divest-and-reinvest
http://gofossilfree.org

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Future Considerations: Papal Encyclical

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Future Considerations: Papal Encyclical

- Expected publication: Early 2015
- “Human ecology/natural ecology”
- Earnest plea regarding climate change

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Conclusion

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