

From Integral Ecology to Integral Economic: A Practical Road Map Model for Integral Development

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Abstract

The “**Economy of Francesco**” (EoF) is a serious and urgent invitation to transform the current economic thinking based on neoclassical economics. In “**Laudato Si**,” Pope Francis shows us the reality of growing economic inequalities, social and environmental degradation. The Pope shows us an intimate relationship between the poor and the planet’s fragility, our moral behavior (even our sins), and ecological degradation. The truth is that everything in the world is interconnected. In “Laudato Si,” Pope Francis moves our hearts to have an **integral, spiritual, and ecological conversion**. However, the EoF is a necessary spiritual and intellectual exercise and a real and practical transformation, transforming our current economics and finance methods. After the catastrophic global financial crisis in 2009, in a post-COVID era, this is the ideal time for a **great reset** in how we practice, live, and teach economics.

This paper shows that we do not have to reinvent the wheel in new economics thinking and practice because there are alternative economic models to the obsolete neoclassical model. So, I present the work of three culturally contextualized scholars and practitioners: Ronnie Lessem, Alexander Schieffer (1986, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021), who have been working on identifying Integral Economic Models in different parts of the world. They implement a 4-Worlds model integrating nature and community (in the south),

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cultural and spiritual dimensions (in the east), science and technology (in the north), and economics, finance, and enterprise (in the west) to form a practical Integral Ecological Economics that can be used as a road map for the Economy of Francesco.

Keywords: Economy of Francesco; Integral Ecology, Integral Economics; Educación; Medio Ambiente; Sostenibilidad; Producción y Consumo Responsables; Soberanía del Consumidor; Indicadores de Desarrollo y Bienestar.

Introduction

The financial crisis in 2009 brought high levels of unemployment, abrupt international disruption in economic growth, disinflation of assets' prices, and a disabling of credit markets. It also manifested the economics and finance theory crisis that shows the limitations of the current Neoclassical model, which is the default framework of thinking and teaching worldwide.

The COVID pandemic accelerated the realization that the current economic and financial frameworks are obsolete, and it is time for a change. In a post-pandemic era, we have a real opportunity for change and to create a positive impact.

As part of the change, it is necessary to examine existing methods and paradigms, identify and analyze current gaps in theory, practice and pedagogy, and develop and articulate new approaches that de-limit and compensate for the deficiencies in the economic discipline that have been highlighted in *Centesimus Annus* (1991) by St. John Paul II, in *Caritas in Veritate* (2009) by Benedict the XVI, and in *Laudato Si* (2015) by Pope Francis.

I believe that economics, as a profession and practice, requires an ever more multidisciplinary approach to articulation to more effectively ground its theory and outcomes to the realities of the human condition in which it is enacted. Such an interdisciplinary framework can be based on current and practical models that already use an integral ecological approach to economics. Ronnie Lessem and Alexander Schieffer (1986, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021) have been working for many years on such an integral ecological model which has been proven successful to transform individuals, businesses,

and communities using a more robust practical framework to the Neoclassical one, and which is aligned to the requirements of the Economy of Francesco.

This essay is divided into four parts. First, it describes the common message from Pope Francis predecessors and his uniqueness: *Theology of the People*; second, it shows the *four principles* of action in Pope Francis' thoughts, which are necessary for the Economy of Francesco; third, it presents the current work on integral economics which can be used as the foundation for the Economy of Francesco; finally, it provides some conclusions.

1. THE COMMON MESSAGE FROM POPE FRANCIS PREDECESSORS AND THE THEOLOGY OF THE PEOPLE:

Pope Francis published his second encyclical letter, "*Laudato Si: On the Care of Our Common Home*," on June 18, 2015, where he reminds us that *Business is a noble vocation directed to producing wealth and improving our world. It can be a fruitful source of prosperity for the areas in which it operates, especially if it sees the creation of jobs as an essential part of its service to the common good*" (LS 129). But, the business has to be integrated into respect for the environment, for humanity, and the common good: "*We urgently need a humanism capable of bringing together the different fields of knowledge, including economics, in the service of a more integral and integrating vision*" (LS 141).

Pope Francis echoed the core tenets outlined by Pope Benedict in his 2009 encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, emphasizing that putting the person at the center of the economy is crucial and that ethical and spiritual concerns should be favored over those of strictly material and technical nature. Our current and most recent Pope expands upon elements of concern already expressed by Saint John Paul II in his Papal encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* of 1987. In *Sollicitudo*, Saint John Paul II discusses the need to conserve and protect natural resources and develop economic practices that benefit society over the individual. Pope Francis followed with *Centesimus Annus* in 1991 where he states, "*Profit is a regulator of the life of a business, but it is not the only one; other human and moral factors must also be considered which, in the long term, are at least equally important for the life of a business*" (CA 35). Taken together, our Holy Fathers call upon us to have a holistic approach to business that seeks to foster human development, build capacity and dignity while also preserving our precious God-given resources.

It is clear that in Pope Francis' thought, there is a continuation with his predecessors. However, his uniqueness is his originality expression: *Cultura de Encuentro* that comes from the *Theology of the People* (SCANNONE, 2016, p.127), which comes from his personal experience as Bergoglio the Jesuit, the priest, the Bishop and Pastor, and the Cardenal in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and from the Latin America's experience.

There are *four principles (priorities)* of action that are necessary to put in practice to transform any reality for the wellbeing of the *Common Good*, which are part of the *Theology of the People*:

- (1) The priority of reality over the idea;**
- (2) The priority of unity over conflict;**
- (3) The priority of time over space; and**
- (4) The superiority of the whole over the parts (being more than the mere sum of the parts).²**

It is essential to understand the influence and the significance of the *Theology of the People* on Bergoglio as a Jesuit priest and a Cardenal in Argentina within the Latin American context. Because, now, as a pope, Francis keeps using this framework of thinking in his writings and talks. For example, Pope Francis articulated those principles (priorities) of action inspired by the theology of the people in his first encyclical *Lumen Fidei* (LF 55, 57) as a practical guide to living the *light of Faith* "capable of illumining all our relationships in society" (LF 54) in the midst of sufferings (LF 56-57).³

² Scannone explains that these four priorities are grounded very deeply in the historical development of Argentinean Caudillos. According to legend, these priorities are taken from a letter of Juan Manuel de Rosas, governor of Buenos Aires, to Facundo Quiroga, governor of La Rioja in Argentina, that concerns the organization of Argentina as a nation and that was written from the estate of Figueroa in San Antonio de Areco on December 20, 1834 (Scannone, 2016, p.128).

³ Pope Francis first encyclical *Lumen Fidei* issued on June 29, 2013, the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, less than four months after his election to the papacy. See https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20130629_enciclica-lumen-fidei.html

What is more, he also articulated those principles (priorities) of action in the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* issued on November 24, 2013 (EG 217–37)⁴ on “the proclamation of the Gospel in today’s world.” He presented them as a contribution emanating from Christian social thought “for the sake of the building up of a people” in the first instance, of the peoples of the world, but also of the People of God necessary to bring peace to Society which is a common good for all peoples (SCANNONE, 2016, p.128).

2. THE FOUR PRINCIPLES OF ACTION IN POPE FRANCIS’ THOUGHTS:

2.1 THE PRIORITY OF REALITY OVER IDEAS:

In his Encyclical letter: “Laudato Si” (LS), Pope Francis starts by applying the priority of reality over ideas. Part of our reality is that we are not behaving without considering the *whole* consequences of our actions which are responsible for our environmental degradation:

“We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will” (LS 2.)

In his recent book “*How to Avoid a Climate Disaster*,” Bill Gates also claims that we have to change our behavior. He says that we are adding 51 billion tons of greenhouse gases worldwide to the atmosphere every year. He claims that humans need to stop adding greenhouse gases to the atmosphere (GATES, 2021, p. 3).

The priority of reality over ideas is the practical principle of common sense because there is a double-sided tension between reality and ideas (see EG 231). For Pope Francis, ideas are a function of facts without being separated from them (Scannone, 2016, p.129). Otherwise, there would be a danger of manipulating reality or making a mistake: believing that we can create our own reality from our own ideas. Pope Francis calls the truth of objectivity (EG 232). According to him, this “principle has to do with the incarnation of the word as it is being put into practice.” He adds, “Not to put the word into practice, not to make it a reality, is to build on sand, to remain in the realm of pure ideas and to end up in a lifeless and unfruitful self-centeredness and

⁴ See https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html

Gnosticism” (EG 233) (Scannone, 2016, p.129). In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis says: “*realities are more important than ideas*” (LS 110, 201).

Another application of priority of reality over ideas in *Laudato Si* are:

- 1) **Shallow economic theoretical foundations:** for Pope Francis, this is manifested in economic models of consumption and distribution motivated by the interest of the “*deified market*,” following the only rule of maximizing profit at all costs (LS 56).
- 2) “**Rapidification**,” which is the continued acceleration of changes affecting humanity and the planet, is coupled today with a more intensified pace of life and work (LS 18).
- 3) The **modern excessive anthropocentrism** in which the individualistic human person is at the center of the universe and erased any fundamental reference to God because the human person becomes a god (LS 115, 117). On the contrary, this modern excessive anthropocentrism imposes the practical idea of dominion over the whole of creation.
- 4) The “**irrational confidence in progress and our human abilities**” says that nothing is impossible for us if we keep developing new and better technology. The problem here is that we change the focus of reality from God’s centrality to humankind’s centrality away from God. Pope Francis calls it the “*technocratic paradigm*,” which is dominated and driven by profits and not ethics (LS 19).
- 5) The “*technocratic paradigm*” creates an “*epistemological paradigm*.” But, unfortunately, this is a distorted and incomplete model or lens to see reality because it misses the wholeness and integration of our personal, human social, environmental, and relationship to God. Therefore, it is incomplete, limited, and flawed (LS 19).
- 6) The “**throwaway culture**” is motivated by the maximization of consumption and production founded upon development models based on fossil fuels’ intensive use that creates vicious circles (LS 22, 23, 24). This is a natural and severe economic cause that we need to change.

2.2 THE PRIORITY OF UNITY OVER CONFLICT

Pope Francis states that we cannot ignore conflicts, get caught up in them, or make them the key to progress. On the contrary, it is a matter of a “willingness to face conflict head-on, to resolve it and to make it a link in the chain of a new process. ‘Blessed are the peacemakers!’ (Matt 5:9)” (EG227).

This peace is not the peace of the cemeteries but a peace that we are responsible to construct. We have to overcome our divisions by creating a “communion of the differences,” that is, “a life setting where conflicts, tensions, and oppositions can achieve a diversified and life-giving unity” (EG 228), “a cultural covenant resulting in ‘a reconciled diversity’” (EG 230).

“This is not to opt for a kind of syncretism, or for the absorption of one into the other, but rather for a resolution that takes place on a higher plane and conserves what is valid and useful on both sides” (EG 228).

For Pope Francis, the ultimate foundation of the *Cultura del Encuentro* that he is promoting is not to remain blind to the reality of conflict but overcome that conflict by finding a higher and transcendent value that will benefit all peoples (Scannone, 2016, p.129).⁵

Pope Francis drives on the priority of unity over conflicts in *Laudato Si* when he describes four foundations for unity: **hermeneutical** (LS 65, 70, 92, 111, 138, 240), **ontological** (LS 66), **mission-oriented** (LS 67), and **ethical** (LS 68, 69).

⁵ Scannone says that Bergoglio had wanted to do his doctoral thesis on Romano Guardini, made inquiries into Guardini’s archives, and was devoted to his understanding of the dialectical dynamism of opposites (not in the Hegelian or Marxist sense) in order to apply this understanding to praxis and to history, since the unity that binds them together is fully given in Christ (EG 229). (Scannone, 2016, p.129).

2.3 THE PRIORITY OF TIME OVER SPACE:

The priority of time is the spiritual sense of the proper time for the right decision, whether existential, interpersonal, pastoral, social, or political. It is part of the Ignatian charism and is closely connected with the discernment of spirits. The **Theology of the People** has a practical application for prophets, pastors, and politicians.

Methol-Ferré uses this principle to evaluate the current signs of the times and the Latin American Church as a mature source of the ecclesial reflection (SCANNONE, 2016, p. 128). Pope Francis, as a Jesuit, is very familiar with the discernment of spirits; in practice, he does not ignore the question of space but looks at it instead from a temporal perspective (Scannone, 2016, p. 128). He crowns his considerations by saying, “Time governs spaces, illumines them, and makes them links in a constantly expanding chain, with no possibility of return” (EG 223). *In Evangelii Gaudium*, the Pope begins by asserting the priority of time over space. In fact, this means that starting “processes that build up a people” in history is more important than occupying positions (*espacios*) of power and/or possession (of, e.g., land or wealth) (EG 223, 224).

In his Encyclical letter: “Laudato Si,” Pope Francis applies the priority of time over space when he describes our human and spiritual interconnectedness. He reminds us that **we are *spiritually interconnected*** with God, other human beings, the environment, and the whole world or universe (LS 70, 92, 111, 138, 240).

For Pope Francis, the reality of our spiritual interconnectedness is based on our human nature. It is also a truth revealed by God as testified in Sacred Scripture. It is part of our human experience, which St. Francis of Assisi has modeled.

“Praise be to you, my Lord.” In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. “Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs” (LS 1).

Because we are *spiritually interconnected*, we can call the Earth our Sister, Mother Earth, because she sustains and governs us. Because we depend on her, and we are interconnected with the whole world (*LS 2*).

2.4 THE PRIORITY OF WHOLE OVER THE PARTS:

Pope Francis connects the principle of the priority of wholes over parts with the tension between globalization and localization (*EG 234*). This tension converges with the historical and cultural roots of the **Theology of the People**, situated socially and hermeneutically in Latin America and Argentina. Due to its emphasis on the incarnation of the gospel, it also converges with the transcultural aspect of the gospel, inculturating it in popular Catholicism.⁶

At this point, the Pope moves toward a higher synthesis using a holistic and integral lens to see the reality that does not erase the tensions but helps understand the deeper reality to find sustainable and transcendent solutions.

Pope Francis says: “Here, our model is not the sphere, which is no greater than its parts, where every point is equidistant from the center, and there are no differences between them. Instead, it is the polyhedron, which reflects the convergence of all its parts, each of which preserves its distinctiveness.” And almost immediately, he adds, “It is the convergence of peoples who, within the universal order, maintain their own individuality; it is the sum total of persons within a society which pursues the common good, which truly has a place for everyone” (*EG 236*). Without using the word, the Pope points to *interculturality* and the celebration of diversity within universality (SCANNONE, 2016, p. 130).

Pope Francis also offered the trinitarian foundation of this principle, which should lead us to live in a community that builds its unity in our common foundations and celebrates our

⁶ Scannone explains that COEPAL did not take globalization into account explicitly when it was still just emerging. Later it was considered by COEPAL’s successors, such as Methol Ferré, Gerardo Farrell, and the interdisciplinary investigations of the Grupo de Pensamiento Social de la Iglesia (“Group on Social Thought of the Church”) (Scannone, 2016, p. 130).

diversities (SCANNONE, 2016, p. 130). That is why, when properly understood, cultural diversity is not a threat to the unity of our communities and the Church.

We have to remember that we are not working alone. We are co-creators with God. Indeed, this is the work of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son, to transform our hearts and enable us to enter into the perfect communion of the blessed Trinity, where all things find their unity. It is the Holy Spirit who builds up the communion and harmony of the people of God. The same Spirit is that harmony, just as he is the bond of love between the Father and the Son. He brings forth a rich variety of gifts while simultaneously creating a unity that is never uniformity but a multifaceted and inviting harmony (*EG* 117). In Francis's approach, there is also the attraction of the beauty in applying this unity in our lives incarnated by many men and women of God, from which St. Francis of Assisi is the model.

In his Encyclical letter: "Laudato Si," Pope Francis prioritizes the whole over the parts when he invites us to have a true integral ecological conversion in our economic thinking and practices.

3. CURRENT WORK OF INTEGRAL ECONOMICS AS A FOUNDATION FOR THE ECONOMY OF FRANCESCO (EoF)

The need for a true integral ecological conversion echoed Lessem and Schieffer (2010, p. 8) claimed that the Anglo-Saxon version of the neoliberal capitalist model, which has ruled the economic world for more than fifty years, has failed. What is even more alarming is that despite the enormous negative effect of this economic approach, the world, by and large, is still using this obsolete model, which produced significant environmental, communal and human suffering, widespread materialism and consumerism, together with an ever increase in poverty and inequality, and also contributed to creating the enormous financial crisis in 2009 with worldwide severe adverse effects, which the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated.

Therefore, to make a true integral ecological conversion following "Laudato Si," in May 2019, Pope Francis invited young economists, entrepreneurs, and practitioners to gather in Assisi to make a pact to build a new, more inclusive, and sustainable economy. The event "Economy of Francesco" was supposed to take place in March 2020. The global pandemic made it necessary to change plans, and the event took place as a 3-days online event in November 2020, to which more than 1,500 people participated from 115 countries. At the end of the event, the young

economists and entrepreneurs published a final statement, which took the form of a message “to economists, entrepreneurs, political decision-makers, workers and citizens of the world.”⁷

Pope Francis calls for a new “**cultural change**” because we “lack the culture required to inspire and encourage differences marked by theoretical approaches, politics, educational programs and indeed spirituality, that cannot be fit into a single dominant mindset” (LS 111) of the Anglo-Saxon version of the neoliberal capitalist model. We also need a “cultural change” that transform our “life-style, models of production and consumption, and established structures of power which today govern societies” (CA 58).

Pope Francis calls for a new “cultural change,” an urgently needed “*culture of encounter*,” which is the opposite of the throwaway culture promoted by consumerism and individualism. This *culture of encounter* makes it possible for many voices to be heard around the same table to dialogue, consider, discuss, and formulate, in a polyhedral perspective, different aspects and possible responses to global problems involving our peoples and our democracies (FRANCIS, 2020, p. 3).

Like Pope Francis, Lessem and Schieffer agreed that the Anglo-Saxon version of the neoliberal capitalist model’s harmful effects is more evident in times of crisis. Therefore, the current post-Covid pandemic is the ideal opportunity to implement the “*great reset*” in new Economic Thinking. There is an urgent need for a different economic narrative because “the present world system is certainly unsustainable” (LS 61).

For more than forty years of Lessem and Schieffer (2010) research work sets the ideal path to create Pope Francis’s “Economy of Francesco” because it is based on the concept of true “**cultural change**” that respect the local and global cultures, it also encompasses the “*culture of encounter*” that is based on the synergies of spirituality, culture, nature, science, and enterprise, and it also includes the four *Principles of the Theology of the People*.

Lessem and Schieffer’s research work is based on the principle of **Reality over Ideas** because it is not based on an ad-hoc individual model like the Anglo-Saxon Neoclassical model, but it is based on *Transcultural Realities*. This is an integral development methodology applied to economics that acknowledges diverse reality viewpoints within each context and across the world. It captures this diversity by differentiating and integrating four archetypal worldviews or realities.

- **Southern Relationship-based** Viewpoint on Reality
- **Eastern Inspiration-based** Viewpoint on Reality
- **Northern Knowledge-based** Viewpoint on Reality
- **Western Action based** Viewpoint on Reality

⁷ See the "Economy of Francesco" final statement: <https://francescoeconomy.org/final-statement-and-common-commitment/>

Lessem and Schieffer's integral methodology starts by arguing that "all-pervasiveness of the existing Anglo-Saxon economic approach prevents any creative interaction with other 'non-Western' alternatives. Lessem and Schieffer's research (2010) shows that alternative economic approaches to Anglo-Saxon exist and could contribute to the renewal of new economic thinking, locally and globally, by including the full diversity of economic practices of the South, East, North, West.

Lessem and Schieffer's integral methodology (2010) is based on the principle of **Unity over Conflict** because in a true integral development approach, every social system needs to find, to be and stay sustainable, a dynamic balance between its four mutually reinforcing and interdependent 'worlds' and its 'center,' a living social system that consists of a:

- **South: the realm of nature and community**
- **East: the realm of culture and spirituality**
- **North: the realm of science and technology**
- **West: the realm of finance and enterprise.**
- **Center: the realm of reality and humanity**

Lessem and Schieffer's integral methodology (2010) is also based on the principle of **Time over Space** because on the individual level; it seeks a dynamic balance between heart, spirit, mind, body, and soul; or in other words, between our:

- **Southern Being => Heart**
- **Eastern Becoming => Spirit**
- **Northern Thinking => Mind**
- **Western Doing => Body**
- **Guided by the Inspirational & Integrating Center => Soul**

Lessem and Schieffer's integral methodology (2010) is also based on the principle of **Whole over Parts** because it seeks not only a dynamic individual balance of the human person but also extends its dynamic individual balance toward a dynamic balance among the individual, his or her community, the whole society, the environment and whole cosmos, which is necessary to get an integral impact, genuine development, and sustainability. Hence a sustainable 'integral' organization would have found a dynamic balance between its:

- **Southern Environmental or animate sector encompassing => Nature & Community => Realm of Relationship**
- **Eastern civic sector encompassing => Culture & Spirituality => Realm of Inspiration**
- **Northern public sector encompassing => Science & Technology => Realm of Knowledge**
- **Western private sector encompassing => Enterprise & Economics => Realm of Action**
- **Guided by its moral center encompassing => Religion & Humanity**

What is more, Lessem and Schieffer's integral methodology (2010) goes beyond the four *Principles of the Theology of the People* to include dynamics that are necessary for interconnectedness (transpersonal rounds) and transformational (Rhythms) balance. The framework for integral economics can be used at the microeconomic level, the integral development of an individual organization, and, at the macroeconomic level, the integral development of many organizations and societies. These are:

Transpersonal Rounds: Each particular development calling & challenge is to be followed through (or: fully 'rounded out'), traversing each Realm via four interconnected rounds:

- 1st Round of **Self Development**
- 2nd Round of **Organisational Development**
- 3rd Round of **Societal Development**
- 4th Round of **Uni-Versity Development**

Transformational Rhythms: Realities (worldviews), realms and rounds are altogether aligned with and are hence subject to fourfold transformational rhythms:

- **Southern formative and grounding (G)**
- **Eastern reformative and emerging (E)**
- **Northern (newly) normative and navigational (N)**
- **Western (wholly) transformative and effecting (E)**

These rhythms stimulate and enable dynamic and interactive processes towards authentically addressing the development calling & challenge at hand. They are designed to release the **GENE-ius** of a particular self, organization, community, and Society.

The interactive and dynamic engagement of all '4Rs' with a specific, central development calling and challenge, lodged within a particular local context and global setting, is reflected in the circular, integral framework of Integral Development.



Integral Development Model based on Lessem and Schieffer's integral methodology (2010)

4. CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that the “Economy of Francesco” (EoF) is a serious and urgent invitation to transform the current economic thinking based on neoclassical economics. In “Laudato Si,” Pope Francis shows us the reality of growing economic inequalities, social and environmental degradation. Using the framework of an Integral Ecology,” the Pope shows that there is an intimate relationship between the poor and the planet’s fragility, our moral behavior (even our sins), and ecological degradation. The truth is that everything in the world is interconnected. In “Laudato Si,” Pope Francis moves our hearts to have an integral, spiritual, and ecological conversion. This is an invitation to change the paradigms through which we see reality, strive for success, use science and technology to increase knowledge, and change how we behave in our businesses or run our economy.

This is the right time to start this conversion process after the catastrophic global financial crisis in 2009. In a post-COVID era, this is the ideal time for a great reset in how we practice, live, and teach economics. That is why the EoF is a necessary spiritual and intellectual exercise and a real and practical transformation, which is meant to transform our current economics and finance methods.

In this paper, I show three main ideas. First, there are four principles from the Theology of the People that shaped Pope Francis thinking in Laudato Si: the priorities of time (over space), unity (over conflicts), reality (over ideas), and the whole (over the parts).

Second, I suggest that these four principles from the Theology of People can be used to build the “Economic of Francesco” as a natural and practical framework to implement the call of an integral conversion.

Third, I show that we do not have to reinvent the wheel in new economics thinking and practice because there are alternative economic models to the obsolete neoclassical model.

Finally, I present the work of three culturally contextualized scholars and practitioners: Ronnie Lessem, Alexander Schieffer (1986, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021), and Robert Dellner (2020), who have been working on identifying Integral Economic Models in different parts of the world. This is a process of Neo-Associative Economics by incorporating self-sufficient economic models integrating nature and community in the south; developmental economic models integrating the cultural and spiritual dimensions of the east; social-economic models integrating science and technology from the north; and living and humanistic economic models integrating economics, finance, and enterprise based in the west.

I genuinely believe that Lessem- Schieffer- Dellner’s work on Integral Economics can benefit the initiatives created by “Laudato Si” and the Economy of Francesco.

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