Introduction

The encyclical *Laudato Si’* was published in June 2015, some months before the COP21, the international conference on climate held in Paris in December of that same year. The encyclical arrived at the “right moment” to encourage countries to sign an agreement which would eventually be hailed as historic by the whole of the international community. Indeed, the previous summit held in Copenhagen in 2009, which had defined the ob-
jectives at the climatic level for the second phase of the Kyoto Protocol (2013-2020), had been deemed very disappointing. The stakes for the COP21 were, in this context, particularly important: an ambitious agreement for the period coming after 2020 was needed, as was a more universal reach for this agreement, in order to overcome the duality characterising the pathways of developed and developing countries. The eventual agreement went a long way to fulfilling these expectations. A very ambitious objective was agreed in terms of the global warming level not to be exceeded (+1.5°C). Furthermore, the agreement is universal in character, having been signed by almost all countries. Of course, these commitments do not yet suffice to reach the objective and the concrete measures to apply the agreement have yet to be cleared. But a major step has been taken with this ambitious and universal agreement which opens up a new process, with objectives set to be revised on annual basis. In this sense, the agreement fits into the perspective of the encyclical. Furthermore, the encyclical has contributed to supporting the negotiators who pushed in favour of an ambitious decision. As a proof, French government members were the first to echo the conclusions of the encyclical.

As for the content, the encyclical gives a well-founded and well-argued analysis concerning the current ecological crisis, showing directly the extreme gravity of the problem. In this sense, the pope has joined the chorus of the wider ecological movement which, for a long time, has been raising awareness among the general public about this major issue. But, the encyclical also, by proposing the notion of “integral ecology”, addresses the question in an original manner. Rather than focusing the debate on the sole relation to nature and the sole management of natural resources, the pope questions, starting with the ecological question, the
sheer meaning of life as a whole: of human life with respect to every living being, of individual and collective lifestyles and of the meaning given to the idea of progress. The link between the ecological crisis and lifestyle is hardly a new one. However, in the encyclical the type of interdependence stressed between all living beings and all dimensions of life takes a singular and structural dimension. This interdependence is particularly obvious between two kinds of links stressed in the encyclical: the one between human poverty and soil poverty, and the one between spiritual experience and the ecological dimension.

Significantly, if the impact of the encyclical has been important in the political world and among ecological movements, it has also been important in the religious world and among Christians in particular. Not only has the document given support and legitimacy to Catholic actions in favour of protecting the environment but has also spurred ecumenical and interreligious action. Indeed, the three major streams of Christianity — Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox — have organised several joint events within the frame of the COP21 and do work together around common initiatives. For example, “Creation Time” is an initiative put into place at the third Ecumenical Gathering in Sibiu, Romania, in 2007. This “Creation Time” is celebrated every year between the 1st of September and the 4th of October. And since 2015, Pope Francis has reinforced this initiative by instituting the 1st of September as the “World Day of Prayer for the Safeguard of Creation”.

_De facto_, one can say that _Laudato Si’_ arrived at the “right moment”: the encyclical inscribes itself into a continuity with the classical defence of nature but, and at the same time, tries to bring something new by substantially linking the Christian faith and ecological concerns. In this general frame, the economic dimension is revisited, starting most notably
with the notion of progress. The classical notion of progress, founded purely on economic growth, makes no sense from the perspective of an “integral ecology”. Progress must be redefined by taking into account all dimensions of life and the whole world of living beings. Here we begin to discover a major shift in the conception of the economy itself, of its finality, and of its place in society.

In this paper, we will focus our analysis on the economic dimension. In order to do this, we will begin by presenting the general vision of the encyclical within which the vision of the economy takes form and shape. Secondly, we will focus our gaze upon the economic dimension, around the notion of progress. Finally, we will develop this new conception of progress into calls for action at the micro- and macro-economic levels, by linking together Laudato Si’ and the apostolic exhortation Evangelii Gaudium.


In a general way, one can say that the encyclical Laudato Si’ (LS) beautifully brings to fruition the appeal sent out fifty years ago by Pope Paul VI to become a “Church making a conversation out of itself”.¹ This encyclical places itself, in its form as well as in its content, in a dialogue with the world.

This dialogical stance is present from the outset. The encyclical begins by indicating that it does not only address Christians, and in this sense it falls into a continuity with the social encyclicals which, since John XXIII,

¹ Paul VI, Ecclesiam Suam, August 6, 1964.
address “all men of good will”. But something new is also introduced with respect to the addressees of this latest encyclical: this expression does not appear on the flyleaf but in the body of the encyclical, in a broader way aimed at “any person inhabiting this planet”, and most of all, taking the form of an urgent appeal to dialogue.

I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all (LS, 14).

This appeal to dialogue later translates into three elements at the formal level, which favour its putting into use. First, the language the Pope uses differentiates itself from the one which characterises Church documents. The Pope speaks the language of ordinary people, using words and expressions which make his discourse easily accessible beyond the frontiers of the Church. Second, the text structure takes the form of a dialogue between the Church and the world, alternating between chapters revolving around the world (chapters I, II and V) and ones which reference more the Christian tradition (chapters II, IV and VI). A continuous coming and going between societal questions and biblical and ecclesiastical references gives the text its tempo. Finally, the Pope pays attention to what other people have to say, referencing inside his text a host of different groups or communities:

- the work of the scientific community;
- local Church documents: more than 15 episcopal conferences or regional conferences are quoted (South Africa, Mexico, Australia, Portugal, New Zealand, Paraguay, the Philippines, Bolivia,
Germany, Patagonia, the USA, Canada, Japan, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, the Latino-American Episcopal Conference);
• the declarations of other Christian faiths and notably those of Patriarch Bartholomew;
• the thought of a Sufi sage;
• the efforts of ecologist movements who have long been working on these questions and who are responsible for an awakening about them.

This appeal to dialogue thus favoured by the form chosen, is nourished at the content level by a discourse the Pope himself qualifies as “joyful and troubling” (LS, 246). This ambivalence characterises the whole of the reflection which regularly alternates between a tragic assessment and praise, between clamour and thanksgiving, between a cry of anguish and gratitude. Consequently, the document is characterised by references both alternate and inseparable to life and death. As if one could not be explained without the other. It is also a way of associating the ecological crisis to the mystery of death and resurrection. This ambivalence is emphasised as soon as the document opens through the image, taken from Paul’s letter to Romans, of an Earth which “groans in travail”\(^2\) (LS, 2). Pain and the promise of a new life thus characterise the eye brought to the ecological crisis.

Without claiming to thoroughly repeat the elements of the encyclical, we suggest some key ideas which seem to us to account for its foundations and for its main propositions. We present them around three core principles, which are associated to three key notions, which themselves translate into three outcries strongly proclaimed by the encyclical.

\(^2\) Rom 8:22.
1.1. Three Pillars: Everything Is Linked, Everything Is Given, Everything Is Fragile

The first pillar is constituted by an expression which constantly comes up in the encyclical: **everything is linked**. There exists a structural link between our relation to the Earth, our relation to the other and our relation to God. Owing to the fact that **everything is linked**, the relational dimension appears as central. The environment itself is defined as a relation, i.e. the one between nature and the society which lives in it.

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 (LS, 139).

This entanglement between nature and humans assumes there is a common destiny between all living beings, and therefore between humans, plants, and animals. But this relation is not an instrumental one. The priority given to humans has led many to believe that the Earth’s only function was to serve human needs. Pope, however, reminds us that nature possesses its own existence and finality in the whole of creation. And he appeals to humans, not only for them to “respect” nature, but most of all for them to put themselves “in […] communion” with all living beings (LS, 220).

Among the different links highlighted by the encyclical, one is particularly emphasised: the one between human poverty and soil poverty. The ecological and social questions cannot be separated as if they were independent of each other.
Today, however, we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor (LS, 49).

The second pillar is the constant reminder that everything is given, i.e. that the Earth we inhabit as well as all its fruits constitute a gift we received for free. This gift is linked with one of the great principles of the Church’s Social Thinking: the universal destination of goods, keeping in mind that this principle is superior to property rights (LS, 158). The Earth does not belong to us, we are bequeathed it to keep it and make it fruitful. The Earth with all its goods is a gift from God which must benefit all of humanity and not only those who are able to appropriate it.

The earth was here before us and it has been given to us (LS, 67).

Acknowledging this gift must lead first and foremost to an attitude of “gratitude and gratuitousness” (LS, 220). Thus, Saint Francis’ hymn — which gave the encyclical its name — is inscribed into the body of the text as an invitation to praise God for this gift received (LS, 287). In the same way, the two prayers which close the document fit into this attitude of gratitude and praise.

Finally, the third pillar of the encyclical can be formulated by the expression: everything is fragile. The Pope constantly goes back to the fragility of all creation: not just human life but the whole ecosphere as well. However, not only is this fragility a call to protection, but it most of all solicits human creativity to engineer a “new beginning”. Thus, the “groans in travail” mentioned at the beginning of the text echo the quota-
tion from the Earth Charter which the Pope quotes word for word at the end of his document:

As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning [⋯] Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life (LS, 207).

No new beginning is possible without fragility, no creation is possible in a situation of abundance, no new life is possible without going through death. Fragility thus appears as a source of life. Thus, this harrowing cry emerging when one sees a ruined Earth and a denigrated humanity, becomes an invitation to create rather than to repair.

One can say that these three affirmations — everything is linked, everything is given, everything is fragile — constitute three pillars around which the encyclical is built, as three essential convictions which weave the background on which the document takes its form.

1.2. Three Notions: Integral Ecology, Creation and Dialogue

Each of the three pillars mentioned above can be associated to a key notion. Starting from the fact that everything is linked, the text introduces the concept of “integral ecology” which refers to all the dimensions that make life possible, namely, the natural, human and social spheres. This

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3 The Earth Charter is an international declaration, officially launched on June 29th, 2000, at the Hague. Its redaction followed a lengthy consultation process begun in 1994, as a means to develop a world consensus on the values and the principles required for a sustainable future.
notion resonates with the “integral development” introduced by Paul VI in the encyclical *Populorum Progressio*. Development was then defined as the development “of each man and of the whole man”: i.e. it concerns the whole of the dimensions of human life (physical, psychical, spiritual and relational) and all human beings. The social question thus becomes international. With the notion of *integral ecology*, the notion of development is once more broadened: no longer limited to human life but integrated into the life of all living beings.

*Integral Ecology* is the title of the encyclical’s chapter IV, in which are specified the different dimensions one must take into account and integrate: environmental, economic, social and cultural. This integral whole, which is to be built constantly and is at the heart of daily life, confers a renewed content to yet another central notion in the Church’s Social Teaching: the *common good*. The text reminds us of the definition of the common good given by *Gaudium et Spes*, namely, “those conditions of the social life whereby men, families and associations more adequately and readily may attain their own perfection”.

However, one can say that the concept of *integral ecology* emphasises the importance of the common good’s relational dimension. It is not enough for everyone to get access to the goods necessary to have a dignified life, but all the links between every living being must be integrated around a “common”, i.e. they must be links of communion.

Then, one can associate the “everything is given” principle to the idea of *creation*. “The Gospel of Creation” is the title of the encyclical’s chapter II. A shift is also suggested in respect to this notion. The privileged place humans enjoy in creation made them forget the “proper value”

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4 *Populorum Progressio*, 14. 42.
5 *Gaudium et Spes*, 74. 2.
of other creatures before God. Yet, each creature possesses potentialities which enable them to participate in the achievement of creation. In this way, the Pope warns us against a “distorted anthropocentrism” which would lead us to think of nature as a collection of objects at the service of human life. He reminds us thus that:

Each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God’s infinite wisdom and goodness (LS, 69).

Finally, the “everything is fragile” principle can be associated with the idea of “dialogue”. As previously indicated, the fragility of humans and nature is presented as the promise of a new possibility, rather than as a problem to be solved. However, this new possibility does not provide a singular answer to an “issue”. A clear invitation is made to create a dialogue between diverse opinions so as to find integral answers (LS, 60). Thus, chapter V presents lines of approach and action in favour of an integral ecology, and is structured around several forms of dialogue to be established: a dialogue about the environment in international politics, a dialogue aiming at renewed national and international politics, a dialogue and an accountability in decision-making processes, a dialogue between politics and the economy, a dialogue between religions and the sciences. The appeal to dialogue opening the encyclical thus becomes the principal watchword to be put into use. There is no unique and predefined solution. There are multiple solutions to be built, through a dialogue between diverse opinions.

Three key notions — integral ecology, creation and dialogue — are thus proposed in order to address the ecological question. Three notions which do not suffice to answer the problem but rather they tell us how to
situate ourselves with respect to the problem. The question does not lie with doctrinal notions which tell us what to do or what not to do, but rather with points of reference to help us decide, each from where we are, in favour of life.

1.3. Three Outcries: the Common Home, the Ecological Conversion and the Cultural Revolution

Three appeals run through the encyclical with such a force that they can be heard as outcries. A first appeal is associated with the expression used in the encyclical’s subtitle and which constantly emerges all along the text: “care for our common home”. In this expression, on the one hand, one finds the idea of a planet as a house where each would feel at home. In this sense, the home concerns nature, but also the city:

There is also a need to protect those common areas, visual landmarks and urban landscapes which increase our sense of belonging, of rootedness, of ‘feeling at home’ within a city which includes us and brings us together (LS, 151).

And on the other hand, the idea of “common” concerns all living beings, but also the universal human family. In this sense, the Pope talks about the “ecological debt” the North owes the South and about the need to recognise “differentiated responsibilities” owing to the fact that the North benefited more than the South from the fruits of the Earth (LS, 52).

Then, comes the appeal to an “ecological conversion”. The term “conversion” belongs to the spiritual field. Owing to this fact, the expression ecological conversion clearly indicates that a relation to nature is a
spiritual experience. In order to operate, first a change in lifestyle and the educational process is required. From there some consequences follow at the collective level: joy and peace, civil and political love. Finally, this conversion expresses itself through sacramental signs and becomes a space for celebration. Owing to this fact, the ecological conversion integrates and articulates the different dimensions of life: spiritual, material, political and liturgical. The integrality, which associates humans to nature, touches in this way all levels of human life.

Through each of these dimensions of the ecological conversion to which the Pope invites us, there is always a shift to be operated. The change in lifestyle aiming at escaping consumerism is based on the invitation to escape oneself, to abandon an autoreferential attitude, in order to pay attention to the impact of each of our actions on others and on the environment (LS, 208). The sobriety thus appealed to is presented as a liberating experience allowing us to discover what really gives value to life (LS, 223). Love in social life, which we have to rediscover, is sustained by the awakening to our need for each other (LS, 229). Rest and the Eucharist are also suggested as a way of inscribing our action into a receptive and gratuitous dimension (LS, 237). One and the same movement gathers the different dimensions of ecological conversion: the movement towards decentering. Of escaping oneself, not in a sacrificial approach, but on the contrary as what allows us to discover the real source of life, the one which builds itself in alliance with others, with nature and with God.

Finally, the third outcry favours a “cultural revolution”. The word “revolution” clearly expresses that a simple readjustment is not what is required to respect nature, but that a profound transformation is needed, a change of “paradigm”.
It is not enough to balance, in the medium term, the protection of nature with financial gain, or the preservation of the environment with progress. Halfway measures simply delay the inevitable disaster. Put simply, it is a matter of redefining our notion of progress (LS, 194).

Redefining progress assumes a cultural revolution for the problem is to redefine the quality of life, not only with respect to the sole material comfort, but relatively to what is a source of meaning for individual and collective life. The ecological crisis is, for the Pope, a human and moral crisis. To cope with it, changing the techniques of production or the energy sources is not enough. A profound transformation regarding the finality of life in society is necessary.

These three outcries — inviting us to care our common home, to an ecological conversion, and to a cultural revolution — not only echo the clamour mounting from the entrails of the Earth and from the poorest populations, but also reverberate with the promise of a new possibility.

Through these three pillars, these three concepts and these three outcries, one can see the scope and the complexity of what Laudato Si’ says. The document is not solely a simple appeal to respect nature but, rather, a signpost towards a new conception of life. And owing to this fact, the encyclical introduces innovations at the anthropological, political and spiritual levels.

The anthropological innovation lies in the establishment of a structural interdependence between humans and nature: plants and animals are not at the service of human life, they possess their own value and their existence is conceived in a symbiosis with humans. The innovation guides us past an instrumental relation between humans and nature to a relationship of existential reciprocity.
The political innovation also presents itself in terms of interdependence: the symbolic relation to nature must translate into concrete political measures in order to avoid over-exploiting nature. Moreover, and more generally, the innovation also translates into new forms of organisation for social life. A basic criterion is given, namely, dialogue. Dialogue must regulate human relations at every level: local and international, political and economic, scientific and religious. Dialogue thus appears as a way to establish a symbiotic relation not only with nature, but also between all human communities, whatever their culture, their religion or their economic level of development.

Finally, the spiritual innovation also appears in terms of interdependence: through our relationship with nature we can also relate to God. Nature reminds us of this primal experience of gift and gratuitousness, which should characterise and guide all our life. The ecological conversion to which we are invited is first and foremost a spiritual conversion for it touches on the meaning of life and not only on our lifestyles.

Within the framework of this global vision presented by *Laudato Si’*, underlying its central notion of integral ecology, we can now direct our gaze, more particularly, on the economic dimension.

2. Economic Perspective: A New Definition of Progress

*Laudato Si’* makes frequent references to the economic sphere of life. The integral approach proposed in the document invites us to shift the outlook we cast upon this particular, yet central, aspect of our lives. The economy is everywhere, having become a prime criterion defining our
individual and collective choices. Economics has, for the most part, been responsible for the degradation of the environment. But its predominant role often leads us to treat the economy as a separate problem, something to be solved before every other problem: the economy determines decisions to be taken in all other dimensions of human life. On the contrary, *Laudato Si'* invites us to consider the economy in an integrated manner, and not apart from the other dimensions. The innovation at the economic level lies mostly in the way its finality and its place in our individual and collective choices are conceived.

The notion of progress, which we briefly touched on earlier, reveals the radicalness of this change of outlook on the economy, to which the encyclical invites us.

For new models of progress to arise, there is a need to change ‘models of global development’; this will entail a responsible reflection on ‘the meaning of the economy and its goals with an eye to correcting its malfunctions and misapplications’ (LS, 194).

In order to think through this new meaning for the economy, the encyclical provides us with points of reference. We emphasise three of them, which appear as fundamental criteria in order to change the outlook on the economic dimension: the common good, limits and the creativity.

The *common good*, also touched on earlier, and a central reference of the Church’s whole Social Thought, appears as the main criterion in order to rethink the economy. It challenges the absolute finality given to any economic choice, whether individual or collective: the maximisation of profits. The Pope qualifies this maximisation principle as a “misunderstanding of the very concept of the economy” (LS, 195). The economy must serve life — human and natural, material and relational — and must
be not a tool to accumulate wealth. The economy is not called upon to allow everyone to satisfy their gradually increasing needs, but to contribute to a collective well-being. Owing to this fact, progress cannot be measured in terms of economic growth. Progress falls under the collective well-being of all inhabitants of our common home rather than under the quantity of produced goods or of profits made.

However, what the common good aims at also assumes a shift in how one experiences limits. Two approaches hinge on the idea of limits. On the one hand, favouring the common good over profit maximisation implies that one escapes a logic of accumulation based on the illusion of infinite growth. One must then take into account the finiteness of nature and human beings, as well as the inequality in the distribution of available goods. The Pope thus condemns “the insatiable and irresponsible growth” and demands that limits be put, going so far as “accept[ing] decreased growth in some parts of the world” (LS, 193). Limits are mostly material ones, which question the idea of progress as infinite growth. But the Pope also reminds us that limits should not be imposed on everyone in the same way, for some countries have benefited more from the riches of Creation. On the other hand, limits are also associated with the suggested lifestyle, characterised by “sobriety”. Importantly, sobriety is presented as a “liberating experience”:

Happiness means knowing how to limit some needs which only diminish us, and being open to the many different possibilities which life can offer (LS, 223).

Limits are liberating because they allow humans to become creators. And a veritable sign of progress would precisely be creativity at the service of the common good rather than maximisation of profits.
Such creativity would be a worthy expression of our most noble human qualities, for we would be striving intelligently, boldly and responsibly to promote a sustainable and equitable development within the context of a broader concept of quality of life. On the other hand, to find ever new ways of despoiling nature, purely for the sake of new consumer items and quick profit, would be, in human terms, less worthy and creative, and more superficial (LS, 192).

A new definition of progress therefore supposes that one redefines the meaning of the economy starting from the common good rather than from profit maximisation, starting from limits rather than from infinite growth, starting from creativity rather than from the possibility of consuming goods. These proposals to redefine progress as well as the economy are in accordance with the reflections and proposals put forward by several contemporary schools of thought. We shall talk more precisely about three of them.

First, there is the work developed these past years around the search for new richness indicators. In France, in 2008, the President of the Republic asked Joseph Stiglitz and Amartya Sen — Nobel Prize laureates for economics — to preside over a commission for “the measurement of economic performances and social progress”. The commission delivered its report in 2009 and since then, the research on alternative richness indicators (other than the sole indicator of GDP) has increased dramatically. Sure, economic growth remains the most used indicator to measure a country’s level of development but, in the scientific field, the research on these questions is no more the sole concern of the heterodox schools.

The theory of Amartya Sen (2003) is a major reference for all the works which nowadays purport to think and measure development in other ways. In France, some major contributors on these questions include
Jean Gaudrey and Florence Jany-Catrice (2012), as well as Patrick Viveret (2003) and Bernard Perret (2011). The work done by all these authors stems from the same criticism echoed by *Laudato Si*’: development and progress cannot be reduced to economic growth alone. Taking into account the ecological and social dimensions leads them first to a broadening or a completing of the GDP indicator in order to measure the produced riches. But, then they all question, in different ways, the merchant rationality underlying this basic indicator and they all suggest alternative logics. For example, Amartya Sen talks about development as freedom and Bernard Perret talks about the ecological imperative. In this way, the search for a conception of progress based on something else than the profit maximisation principle is continued.

Another school of thought echoing *Laudato Si*’s economic approach is currently named “social-ecology”. Eloi Laurent (2015) finds in the encyclical the same interpretation principle employed in social-ecology: the interdependence between the social question and the ecological question. More accurately, for Laurent, there exists a direct and reciprocal link between social inequality and ecological crisis. On the one hand, climate imbalances, lakes drying, species becoming extinct are first and foremost the consequences of a human mode of development characterised by inequality. On the other hand, the ecological crisis turns against humans and makes inequalities explode. As for the Pope, the clamour of the poor and the clamour of Earth stem from the same problem and requires common and non-separate answers; for social ecology, poverty and damages to the environment fuel each other.

Finally, one last school which reverberates within *Laudato Si*’s economic approach is called “civil economy”, of which Stephano Wamagni and Luigino Bruni (2004, 2009) are major proponents. Building on the
work of the eighteenth-century economist, Antonio Genovesi (Villeri, 1959), they propose an economic alternative which does not oppose the market, but, on the contrary, conceives of it differently: a market which leaves a place to gift and to gratuitousness. Their approach has already been taken up in the encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* by Benedict XVI. And even if, in *Laudato Si’*, one often finds a harsher critique regarding the market, the possibility of conceiving of market economics differently, rather than relinquishing them altogether, is also present.

These resonances between *Laudato Si’* and contemporary economic schools of thought, which try to think of the economy, development and progress on renewed bases, highlight the encyclical’s message even more. The utopia proffered by *Laudato Si’* which defines progress in terms of the common good is not some castle in the air from which to condemn reality, but rather an ambitious mechanism for the transformation of reality. We will, in the next part, try to define concrete avenues of transformation aiming at this new horizon of a “good life”.

3. Conclusion: Calls for Action at the Micro- and Macro-Economic Levels

We turn to the apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, in order to find landmarks and avenues of transformation which will help to put the grand vision of *Laudato Si’* into practical use. Actually, some references from this first document are repeated in the encyclical.

We first take up an image presented by the exhortation, an image that can illustrate well the idea of a “common home” proposed by the encyclical. It is the image of the polyhedron, which the Pope differentiates from
the sphere. In the sphere, its parts have disappeared, they have fused, whereas in the polyhedron, each part keeps its singularity, and together they constitute a totality. In the sphere, each point is equidistant from the centre: harmonisation becomes standardisation. Whereas in the polyhedron, each point occupies a unique and different place. A common home under the guise of a polyhedron would be a home where differences would not be erased as in the sphere, but drawn into dialogue. The whole is not the result of a fusion, but of a connecting with each other, whilst respecting the singularities of each part.

However, beyond the image, one finds in *Evangelii Gaudium* the proposal of four rules (chapter IV). These rules were separately repeated in *Laudato Si’*, as well as the exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*. This repetition highlights that these rules constitute proper beacons for the Pope. It is therefore interesting to clarify the meaning given to each of these rules in relation to *Laudato Si’*. We will begin by enunciating them:

- Reality is more important than ideas.
- The whole is superior to the part.
- Unity trumps conflicts.
- Time is superior to space.

The first rule shall be analysed in a general way and the three others shall be associated with each of the three pillars identified in *Laudato Si’*. For each of these three rules, we will present first the general link with the encyclical and then a concrete expression of the rule in terms of possible actions. These actions will be clarified, on the one hand, at a micro-economic level, in order to identify new “lifestyles”, and on the other hand, at
a macro-economic level, looking for signs of a new kind of society or model of development.


The apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG), clarifies the meaning of this rule in the following way:

There also exists a constant tension between ideas and realities. Realities simply are, whereas ideas are worked out. There has to be continuous dialogue between the two, lest ideas become detached from realities. It is dangerous to dwell in the realm of words alone, of images and rhetoric. So a third principle comes into play: realities are greater than ideas. This calls for rejecting the various means of masking reality: angelic forms of purity, dictatorships of relativism, empty rhetoric, objectives more ideal than real, brands of ahistorical fundamentalism, ethical systems bereft of kindness, intellectual discourse bereft of wisdom (EG, 231).

According to this rule, reality is not a “brute matter of fact” to be corrected but a “place of revelation”. Ideas, as well as norms, can never account in an integral way for reality’s complexity and diversity. The exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* clearly illustrates this gap with the always complex and plural reality of the family and with the Christian dogma about the family.

However, this rule also tells us something about the way one has to situate oneself with respect to ideas or with respect to knowledge in general. It warns us against the ineluctable reduction of reality to ideas and it invites us to confront and reformulate ideas with respect to reality.
Owing to this fact, this rule invites us to situate ourselves with respect to the ecological crisis, as it is a place of revelation rather than a problem to be solved: a place which reveals something new about the meaning of life, a place which provokes a shift in our image of a good life, a place which manifests a new form of God’s presence in history.

Starting from this principled stance one can now approach the three other rules, trying to bring out proposals for more concrete actions.

3.2. Second Rule: The Whole Is More Important Than the Parts

This rule could very quickly be misinterpreted as a postulation that the collective trumps the individual. But this meaning is not conveyed by the exhortation which clearly states that “the whole is greater than the part, but it is also greater than the sum of its parts”. The Pope concretely expresses the rule in the following way:

There is no need, then, to be overly obsessed with limited and particular questions. We constantly have to broaden our horizons and see the greater good which will benefit us all. But this has to be done without evasion or uprooting. We need to sink our roots deeper into the fertile soil and history of our native place, which is a gift of God. We can work on a small scale, in our own neighbourhood, but with a larger perspective. Nor do people who wholeheartedly enter into the life of a community need to lose their individualism or hide their identity; instead, they receive new impulses to personal growth (EG, 235).

The whole is superior to the parts precisely because the whole cannot be reduced to the sum of its parts: the whole is not solely a question of
numbers, it is mostly a question of relations. What links all the parts together makes the whole. Owing to this fact, there exists a relation of interdependence between the whole and its parts: the part structures the whole and the whole fuels each part. In this way, there is a structural interdependence between the individual and the collective, between the local and the global, between the micro- and the macro levels. This interdependence translates into a double attitude to be entertained: the particular must always be put into the perspective of the whole and the totality must be rooted in each particular situation.

This rule can be associated with the first pillar we identified in *Laudato Si’*: *everything is linked*. The “common home” is not only a space of gathering but is mostly a place to be put into a relation. The dialogue to which the Pope recurrently invites us in the encyclical constitutes the key of this putting into a relation. The interdependence between the whole and the parts takes form within Creation, not only with respect to the human community but with respect to all living beings. This communion signifies then that each being, whether human or natural, must be put in the perspective of Creation as a whole, but also, that Creation must be rooted into each particular situation.

Translating this rule to the level of lifestyle leads one to question the criteria which determine our choices for consuming and saving. A choice to consume is usually done in order to maximise the satisfaction of our needs, and choice to save is made in order to maximise the profit to be obtained. The encyclical, however, asks one to take into account the impact of our choices on other living beings: the impact on the environment and the impact on the producers. Today, there exists commercial and financial practices which seek to reduce negative impacts on the environment and to have positive impacts on the person(s) who produce(s) the
goods we consume, as well as on the person(s) who benefit(s) from the money we save. For instance, *fair trade* aims at allowing small producers from Southern countries to be able to sell their products in Northern markets, and to do so at just prices. On the financial side of things, *micro-credit* allows persons who have been excluded from the classical banking system to gain access to financing solutions allowing them to develop profitable activities. In order for these practices to develop, consumers and money savers must include in their criteria of choice, not only their personal interest, but also the interests of the producer, of the investor, and of nature. The problem is not to renounce individual satisfaction in favour of other people’s interest, but on the contrary, to integrate and articulate the interests of other living beings with my personal interest. The problem is to transition from independence to interdependence.

At the macro-economic level, individual choices concerning consumption or money saving which take into account the impact on others assume that one thinks differently about the organisation of trade. In the classical market one always starts from the hypothesis that consumers and producers, i.e. demand and supply, have opposing interests. Transitioning from independence to interdependence assumes that one thinks of the market in terms of “co-production”: consumers integrate in their choices the producers’ interest, and producers integrate in theirs the consumers’ interest. From personal interest, we transition thus to mutual or shared interest. From concurrence, we transition to cooperation. Trade logic must thus be thought of differently (Perret, 2015; Bruni and Zamagni, 2009). This change in logic characterises the sector called “social and solidarity economy”.

However, this change in logic also assumes a change in the criteria one uses to evaluate economic activity. The problem is to evaluate the
activity not only with respect to the profit generated but also with respect to its “social and environmental utility”, i.e. its impact on society, its capacity to create social links, and its ecological footprint (Perret, 2011).

These shifts at the level of individual choices and of the organisation, as well as the evaluation of the economic activity prefigure a different conception of progress. *Laudato Si’* invites us to a progress which is not considered solely with respect to the maximisation of personal interests but also, and most importantly, with respect to the type of relation one establishes with others and with nature. Its model of progress sees that richness pertains not only to a material order, but also and mostly to the relational order.

### 3.3. Third Rule: Unity Is Superior to Conflict

This third rule can seem quite trivial in its formulation. However, the rule, founded on the “communion” of differences and not on their suppression, supposes a completely non-trivial conception of unity:

> [I]t becomes possible to build communion amid disagreement, but this can only be achieved by those great persons who are willing to go beyond the surface of the conflict and to see others in their deepest dignity. This requires acknowledging a principle indispensable to the building of friendship in society: namely, that unity is greater than conflict. Solidarity, in its deepest and most challenging sense, thus becomes a way of making history in a life setting where conflicts, tensions and oppositions can achieve a diversified and life-giving unity. This is not to opt for a kind of syncretism, or for the absorption of one into the other, but rather for a resolution which takes place on a higher plane and preserves what is valid and useful on both sides (EG, 228).
This rule fits well into the earlier mentioned image of the polyhedron: unity does not erase every component’s particularities but draws them into a “communion”, i.e. dialogue. The explanation of this rule adds some interesting references in order to understand this building of communion. The exhortation proposes the concept of “social friendship”, thus conveying the idea of a society represented not by its uniformity but by the quality of the relations it fosters. Unity, in this way, appears as a “multiform reality” where tensions breed something common and something new. Finally, the unity aimed at is signified by “peace”, considered not as a simple compromise but rather as the construction of a “new and promising synthesis”.

This rule revolving around unity can be put into perspective with the second pillar identified in the encyclical, Laudato Si’: everything is given. In other words, the experience of giving makes the “un-appropriation” necessary to construct the proposed unity possible. The unity built from personal properties becomes a simple compromise. For example, consider the case of “joint ownerships”: every proprietor tries to defend first their personal property. On the other hand, the unity built from what is given to us becomes a communion. The “common home” that Laudato Si’ invites us to build refers to this type of unity which takes form from a received gift.

This rule gives us, moreover, concrete images about the form this “common home” can take: the form of a social friendship, of a multiform society, and of peace. This model of social organisation strongly resonates with Hannah Arendt’s approach which talks about the political importance of friendship (Arendt, 1974).

In terms of lifestyle, the unity brought up by this rule can be associated with the “symbiotic” relations which characterise nature. Indeed,
when one observes nature, one sees a strong interdependence between plants and animals, marked by a life cycle whose effect is that the former’s waste becomes the latter’s resource. Nature also invites us to fit into this symbiotic cycle and to escape what the Pope calls the “waste culture”. Living in symbiosis supposes that everyone sorts their waste so that they can be recycled but also to consume goods until the end of their life rather than changing them when trends change. However, symbiosis also supposes that we make flexible one of the very foundations of our modern societies: personal property. For symbiosis motivates us to make the usage of goods mutual. What is today called the “functionality economy” (Perret, 2015) accurately translates this relation to goods, which favours their usage and therefore their function, rather than the fact of their appropriation. A typical example of this type of economy is public bicycles which nowadays exist in many cities, allowing one bike to be used by many different persons in the same territory. This symbiosis at the level of goods then also supposes a symbiosis at the level of relations between humans: recycling and mutualising assumes that one faces the other in a relation of complementarity rather than in a relation of rivalry or concurrence.

This symbiotic lifestyle also leads to particular choices in macro-economic terms. In this sense, economists talk nowadays of a circular economy: one industry’s waste becomes another’s raw material. But this type of economy also supposes that one thinks about production differently: by conceiving products which optimise their usage, by increasing their life expectancy, by easing maintenance and repair, by allowing spare parts to be reused, by using recycled materials. This is called “eco-conception” (Perret, 2015).

This technical symbiosis can produce a human and social symbiosis by motivating corporations situated in the same territory to collaborate
rather than to compete. The rule also invites different social agents to develop new forms of partnerships. Material symbiosis can thus become a source of “social friendship”.

3.4. Fourth Rule: Time Is Superior to Space

Finally, this last rule, whose formulation can seem a little enigmatic, links time and space. The signification given in Evangelii Gaudium allows us to bring the rule closer to the third and final pillar identified in Laudato Si’: everything is fragile.

This principle enables us to work slowly but surely, without being obsessed with immediate results. It helps us patiently to endure difficult and adverse situations, or inevitable changes in our plans. It invites us to accept the tension between fullness and limitation, and to give a priority to time. One of the faults which we occasionally observe in socio-political activity is that spaces and power are preferred to time and processes. Giving priority to space means madly attempting to keep everything together in the present, trying to possess all the spaces of power and of self-assertion; it is to crystallize processes and presume to hold them back. Giving priority to time means being concerned about initiating processes rather than possessing spaces. Time governs spaces, illuminates them and makes them links in a constantly expanding chain, with no possibility of return. What we need, then, is to give priority to actions which generate new processes in society and engage other persons and groups who can develop them to the point where they bear fruit in significant historical events. Without anxiety, but with clear convictions and tenacity (EG, 223).
Saying that time is superior to space thus becomes an invitation to “initiating processes rather than possessing spaces”. This invitation translates then to a series of shifts to be lived. First it is about shifting the priority given to short term perspectives and immediate results, towards a long term perspectives and sustainable results. The rule is also about shifting the search for a perfect and absolute forecast of the future, towards welcoming the unexpected. Finally, the rule is about shifting the yearning to possess in order to better masters and controllers, towards setting in motion and opening up the processes which will be taken up by other people or groups.

In this sense, the superiority of time over space can be related to the positive approach to fragility brought up in Laudato Si’. Privileging time over space assumes, indeed, a certain fragility: the fragility of losing total control over what is produced, of “un-appropriating” the realised action’s result, of accepting a result that differs from the expected one. Nevertheless, this fragility alone can create a space for something radically new to emerge. As long as one stays in the logic of absolute mastery and control, one stays in the repetition of the already known. Having no place in plenitude and perfection, creation only takes form when a space is left empty.

This time which cannot be possessed, conversely with space, is the one that allows us to hear the clamour of the Earth and of the poor as groans of travail. This clamour announces a new possibility and this is why the ecological conversion is also an appeal to “creativity”: creating is not “making”, but allowing the emergence of something radically new (Arendt, 1958). “Making” is a way of possessing space while “creating” is a way of initiating a process.

This priority given to time over space can be translated in terms of lifestyle, most notably by way of practices of mutualisation. Sharing
goods and services is a way of using them until their usefulness runs out and so of reducing waste. We already touched upon this issue when dealing with the functionality of the economy. However, some diverse modalities of sharing or mutualising are developing nowadays. For instance, the renting of DIY tools allows for one tool to be used by different persons. *Carpooling* allows for one car to be used by different persons. *Co-working* allows for one space to be used by different entrepreneurs. *Crowdfunding* allows for financial resources to be shared around common projects. These practices multiply more and more: they allow a more rational use of goods but they also invent new modalities of sharing.

Owing to this fact, mutualisation appears not only as a way of consuming at a lesser cost but also as a new experience in terms of a relationship to goods, to others and to the collective. A freer relationship to goods happens because one uses goods which are not one’s own. A relationship to others which is characterised by sharing and co-responsibility in virtue of the shared usage of the same goods. A relationship to the collective which is characterised by a common project rather than by the sum of individual competences or personal knowledge. Mutualisation is, in a way, the experience the Pope evoked in relation to sobriety: “less is more”.

Choosing a common usage of goods rather than an individual one, assumes indeed to let go, to a certain extent, of the good. One loses exclusive control but one opens, in virtue of this fact, to new relationships as well as to the discovering of new forms of management. Sharing goods or their usage is akin to initiating a process whose outcome one does not know for it pertains to the collective rather than to each participating individual’s mastery. Time is thus privileged over space.

In macro-economic terms, the individual choice for mutualisation requires, in order for it to be possible, that one organise the collective. Be-
yond the initiatives of the private sector, there needs be a political project in harmony with this type of consumption. The practice of shared bicycles we touched on earlier as an illustration of functionality economy is a good example of that. In order to make it possible, an important effort in country planning was required, an effort which would have been useless without a clear political consensus to support the choice.

Mutualisation will both require new collective organisations and political projects in order to become general as well as having a corresponding positive effect on collective action. Mutualisation stimulates collective intelligence, develops co-responsibility, encourages us to pay attention to, and care for, the other. Mutualisation creates the conditions for the management of the “common home” to be really common.

The four rules presented in Evangelii Gaudium allowed us to give avenues of realisation at the macro- and micro-economic levels for the new model of progress, based on the common good, which Laudato Si’ proposes.

As a Conclusion

Laudato Si’ proposes a new vision of Creation based on the notion of “integral ecology.” This vision calls for a new conception of the economy and, as a consequence, of progress. However, the new definition of progress also supposes a major change in our individual lifestyles and of the ways we organise our societies. Pope Francis’ two texts analysed here propose beacons to enact this change. As a conclusion, we underline four landmarks for action, drawn out of the four rules we talked about earlier.

If reality is superior to ideas, a principled stance stands out as necessary: the watchman’s stance rather than the controller’s. Faced with dys-
function, the task is less about controlling to preserve the established order, and, instead, watching out for the germs of novelty which anticipate a new beginning.

If the whole is superior to the parts, then a criterion to orientate actions stands out: privileging relationship over access to goods. Faced with the ecological crisis, this criterion is less about reducing consumption to last longer, and is instead about creating new relations which produces a well-being that cannot be measured in terms of accumulated goods.

If unity is superior to conflict, then the condition to make unity possible is required: gratuitousness over property. Faced with global violence, this condition is about letting a mutual disarmament take place in order to build something new rather than about shutting oneself away.

If time is superior to space, belief becomes indispensable: the kind of belief which makes one see the future as a promise rather than as a threat. Faced with catastrophe, this belief is about welcoming the unexpected rather than protecting what we have acquired.

The encyclical Laudato Si’ fits well into this dynamic. The document brings breadth and depth of scope rather than judgement; invites all to shift rather than to recentre; and calls for invention rather than for protection. The new conception of progress that the encyclical proposes is not a model but a movement: a movement in favour of life.
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The encyclical *Laudato Si’* published by the Pope Francis addresses the ecological question within an “integral” approach. The encyclical not only revolves around our relation to nature but also questions, in a more global and fundamental way, the meaning of our individual and collective life. The notion of an *integral ecology*, which the Pope places at the centre of his analysis, requires therefore, another way of defining progress. However, progress is naturally associated with economic growth. So, to redefine progress one has to find a new meaning for the economy and for the role it fulfills in our individual choices and in our society projects. Starting from the global perspective suggested by *Laudato Si’* and founded on the notion of *integral ecology*, this article identifies elements which enable us to redefine progress. With the aid of the exhortation *Evangelli Gaudium* and of contemporary theories and practices in economics, these elements are translated into food for thought at the micro- and macro-economic levels.

Key Words: Ecology, Economics (Social and Solidarity Economy, Functionality Economy, Circular Economy), Progress, Development, Link, Gift, Fragility.
「찬미받으소서」(Laudato Si’)
— 발전의 새로운 개념 —

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프란치스코 교황께서 발표하신 회칙 「찬미받으소서」는 생태 문제를 "통합적"으로 접근한다. 곧 이 회칙에서는 우리와 자연의 관계뿐만 아니라, 우리 개인의 삶과 공동체 삶의 의미를 매우 총체적으로 근원적인 방식으로 질문한다. 프란치스코 교황은 ‘통합 생태론’ 개념 을 이 분석의 중심에 둬으므로써, 발전을 다르게 정의할 것을 추구한다. 그런데 보통 발전은 경제 성장과 연결된다. 따라서 발전을 다시 정의한다는 것은 경제에 대한 새로운 의미를 찾고, 또 경제가 우리 개인의 선택과 우리 사회의 계획들에서 차지하는 자리에 대한 새로운 운 의미를 찾는다는 것을 전제한다.

본고에서는 회칙 「찬미받으소서」가 ‘통합 생태론’ 개념에 근거해 제안하는 포괄적 전망에서부터 시작하여, 발전을 재정의하고 경제에 새로운 의미를 부여하는 여러 요인들을 살펴볼 것이다. 현대 세계의 복음 선교에 관한 교황 권고 「복음의 기쁨」(Evangelii Gaudium)과 현대 경제학 이론들과 실천들을 참조하면서, 이 요인들은 미시 경제와 거시 경제의 차원에서 활동의 단초들로 거듭날 것이다.

주제어: 생태론, 경제[사회연대적 경제(Social and Solidarity Economy), 기능적 경제(Functionality Economy), 순환 경제(Circular Economy)], 발전, 개발, 관계, 선물, 취약함.