



No to an economy that kills!

As archbishop of Buenos Aires, Cardinal Bergoglio witnessed the devastating social effects of the financial crisis in Argentina at the turn of the century. The same destructive dynamics he now sees at work “in the sacralized mechanisms of the prevailing economic system”. With prophetic passion he calls on all to say “No!” to an “idolatry of money” which controls rather than serves; “No!” to an economic system which excludes people from a life in dignity and treats them as outcasts; “No!” to the growing social inequality which results in rising violence.

- ✿ Today we have to say “thou shalt not kill” to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills.... We have created a **“throw away” culture** which is now spreading. It is no longer simply about exploitation and oppression, but something new. Exclusion ultimately has to do with what it means to be a part of the society in which we live; those excluded are no longer society’s underside or its fringes or its disenfranchised – they are no longer even a part of it. The excluded are not the “exploited” but the outcast, the “leftovers”. (Evangelii Gaudium 53)
- ✿ The worship of the ancient golden calf (cf. Ex 32:1-35) has returned in a new and ruthless guise in the **idolatry of money** and the dictatorship of an impersonal economy lacking a truly human purpose... (55) **The thirst for power and possessions knows no limits.** In this system, which tends to devour everything which stands in the way of increased profits, whatever is fragile, like the environment, is defenseless before the interests of **a deified market**, which become the only rule.... A new tyranny is thus born, invisible and often virtual, which unilaterally and relentlessly imposes its own laws and rules. (56)
- ✿ **Solidarity** is a spontaneous reaction by those who recognize that the **social function of property and the universal destination of goods** are realities which come before private property. The private ownership of goods is justified by the need to protect and increase them, so that they can better serve the common good; for this reason, solidarity must be lived as the decision to restore to the poor what belongs to them. These convictions and habits of solidarity, when they are put into practice, open the way to other structural transformations and make them possible. Changing structures without generating new convictions and attitudes will only ensure that those same structures will become, sooner or later, corrupt, oppressive and ineffectual. (189)
- ✿ Ethics... would make it possible to bring about balance and a more humane social order. With this in mind, I encourage financial experts and political leaders to ponder the words of one of the sages of antiquity: **“Not to share one’s wealth with the poor is to steal from them** and to take away their livelihood. It is not our own goods which we hold, but theirs.” (John Chrysostom) (57)



- How far has my personal lifestyle been influenced by today’s “throw away culture”?
- In what way can my consumer choices support the creation of a more humane and sustainable form of economy?