

Post-event press release 16.1.2024

Conference on integral ecology for a social ecological transformation – Sophia University Institute 11th – 13th January 2024

The DIALOP conference on Integral Ecology for a social ecological transformation was held at the Sophia University Institute in Loppiano (Florence) from 11th to 13th January 2024.

The challenge that moved DIALOP to organize this conference, was Pope Francis' call to a conversion to an *integral ecology*, because when nature is viewed solely as a source of profit and gain, this has serious consequences for society. This vision of “might is right” has engendered immense inequality, injustice and acts of violence against the majority of humanity. (§82).

The 51 participants from 10 European Countries as well as representatives from Asia, Africa and South America, who gave their contributions on – among others – philosophical, technological, legislative, theological aspects of the environmental crisis, related in different extents to the Encyclical *Laudato Si*, regardless of their given affiliation – either as Christians or as Marxists.

The scholars, phd- and post-phd students as well as politicians and activists had responded to a call for papers on Integral Ecology, published by DIALOP in June 2023.

The conference was opened by the Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Catholic Education, Card. José Tolentino de Mendonca, who illustrated the concept of Integral ecology in Pope Francis, starting from the fundamental question posed in *Laudato Si* at §160: “What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?” (LS 160). The *anthropological error* which the encyclical points out as an anthropocentric and self-referential allure, bears the consequences of environmental and social degradation.

The interdisciplinary approach of this conference emphasized not only the need of greater technical efforts, but also the need for a real change from an imperial lifestyle – anchored in everyday routines, infrastructures, institutions and illusory solutions, characterized by the externalization of costs in space and time and the exploitation of nature and labour – to a responsible way of life, characterized by a spiritual dimension, by a humble and logical sense of self-limitation. This has been recognised as fundamental in the theological, philosophical and sociological works as the only way to make the real change towards a cultural revolution, which echoes the words of Pope Francis at COP 28: “Let us once more recognize our limits, with humility and courage, as the sole path to a life of authentic fulfilment”.

But the ethical message is not the only one, which the conference delivered. *Good practices* in multipolar pieces of social fabric were presented by the participants, pointing out that

healthy and just relationships among humans, who are able to acknowledge as well as to concretize the right of nature to be cared of and protected, prove that the personal commitment is never detached from the fight for structural change.

At the end of the conference the participants converged in expressing that the challenge of the papal encyclical *Laudato Si* bears enormous consequences of anthropological, systemic and structural importance for the crucial moment we are living on the planet. This is a crucial duty for building peace in today's world, since – as Pope Francis says – “ It is foreseeable that, once certain resources have been depleted, the scene will be set for new wars, albeit under the guise of noble claims. War always does grave harm to the environment and to the cultural riches of peoples, risks which are magnified when one considers nuclear arms and biological weapons. (§ 57)

The participants felt the compelling urgency of a collective engagement and convened to form a task force to formulate recommendations and proposals for the European Commission in the frame of the CERV's **DialogUE project** [DialogUE | New Humanity \(new-humanity.org\)](https://www.dialogue-project.eu/) the conference was embedded in. Further they want to launch an educational ecological curriculum, developed together with the Sophia University Institute and scholars from other universities and institutions.

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Follow the streaming of the conference:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQxDjaVvYI44PHPsF615UGauANdO_-eEw



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