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## INSPIRATIONS OF POPE FRANCIS' CONCEPT OF INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The scholarly atmosphere nowadays is conducive to undertaking interdisciplinary and integral research which allows us to grasp the complex character of the manifold interrelated civilizational processes and phenomena occurring in the natural world. This type of research has brought us to the realization of the fact that it is impossible to achieve a desired state of social life or homeostasis of the earth's ecosystems without taking into account the mutual links between nature and culture as well as their multiple conditionings. The concept of integral ecology proposed by Pope Francis constitutes an attempt at taking such a holistic view on human presence in the world and at demonstrating all possible dimensions of this presence. This study aims at tracing a wide range of possible inspirations for the Pope's concept of integral ecology to indicate its deep rooting in the Euro-Atlantic culture.

An analysis of *Laudato Si'* reveals both historical and contemporary inspirations of Pope Francis' integral ecology. The concept presented in the encyclical seems to have been substantially influenced by Saint Francis of Assisi, whose ideas, despite the passage of centuries, still remain valid for the Western culture. It is apparent that Pope Francis draws also from the earlier social teaching of the Church, and especially from the numerous statements made by John Paul II and Benedict XVI. Presumably, the philosophical thought of Jacques Maritain, which left its mark on the contemporary culture of our civilizational circle, also exerted its impact on Francis' concept. Maritain's idea of integral humanism had a significant influence on the social philosophy of the twentieth century as well as the social teaching of the Church. Even a cursory look at Pope Francis' concept of integral ecology in the perspective of Maritain's integral humanism reveals many points of convergence between the two concepts, although it is difficult to demonstrate

a clear and direct impact of Maritain's approach to environmental challenges faced by the contemporary humanity on the Pope's thoughts.

There are also many indications that the concept of integral ecology presented in the encyclical *Laudato Si'* was, at least indirectly, influenced by those twentieth-century conceptions of the reality which highlighted both the complexity and integrity of the world. Trends and scientific concepts representative of this approach include, among others, holism which was formulated in the 20-ties of the twentieth century by Jan Ch. Smuts, the General Systems Theory initiated in the 30-ties by Ludwig von Bertalanffy and the integral theory introduced by Ken Wilber in the 70-ties of the previous century<sup>1</sup>. It seems that among the twentieth-century concepts of holistic and integral approach to the reality, the greatest influence on the thought of the Pope had the earlier versions of integral ecology which many scholars connected with Wilber's integral theory. Scientific literature usually refers to three versions of integral ecology, namely, the concept proposed by Ken Wilber which was developed by the followers of his thought, Sean Esbjörn-Hargens and Michael Zimmerman, the concept proposed by a liberation theologian Leonardo Boff and the concept of Thomas Berry, a cultural historian.

## 2. THE INFLUENCE OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI ON THE CONCEPT OF POPE FRANCIS' INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

The impact of St. Francis' thought on the approach to the challenges of the contemporary world proposed in the encyclical *Laudate Si'*, is revealed in the very concept of the reality presented there. Pope Francis conceives of the reality in an integral way as the whole world created by God. Although, Francis accentuates human unique character among the creation, he still emphasizes that man constitutes only a part of nature. This view shows a clear influence of St. Francis who is recurrently referred to in the discussed encyclical. The Pope makes it clear that his papal name appeals to Francis of Assisi, who is, for him "the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically. He is the patron saint of all who study and work in the area of ecology, and he is also much loved by non-Christians. He was particularly concerned for God's creation and for the poor and outcast. He loved, and was deeply loved for his joy, his generous self-giving, his openheartedness. He was a mystic and a pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself. He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace"<sup>2</sup>. This short passage indicates that the Pope understands integrity as a comprehensive ap-

<sup>1</sup> See S. Y. Auyang, *Foundations of Complex-system Theories: in Economics, Evolutionary Biology, and Statistical Physics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge - New York 1998; L. von Bertalanffy, *General System Theory. Foundations, Development, Applications*, Braziller, New York 1969; K. Wilber, *The Spectrum of Consciousness*, Quest Books, Wheaton 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Francis (pope), Encyclical *Laudato Si'* (Rome, 24.05.2015), No. 10.

proach to the inseparably interrelated issues such as concern for the environment, justice with regard to the poor, social commitment and inner peace.

In addition, referring to St. Francis of Assisi, the Pope does not limit his understanding of integrity only to the realm of science, since he presents man in a truly integral way taking into account all his richness, i.e. the rational, emotional and spiritual aspects. At the same time, he points out that St. Francis, referring to nature was guided by “much more than intellectual appreciation or economic calculus, for to him each and every creature was a sister united to him by bonds of affection. That is why he felt called to care for all that exists. His disciple Saint Bonaventure tells us that, «from a reflection on the primary source of all things, filled with even more abundant piety, he would call creatures, no matter how small, by the name of ‘brother’ or ‘sister’»<sup>3</sup>. The Pope stresses also that St. Francis’ emotional attitude towards nature cannot be ignored as emotions have an impact on people’s choices. An approach towards nature, in which there is no room for wonder and admiration of the creation induces man to adopt an attitude of a ruler and consumer unable to make sacrifices that are necessary for the current or future benefit of others. In turn, the relationship to nature, in which a person has a deep sense of unity with all that exists, results in adopting a spontaneous attitude of moderation and concern for others<sup>4</sup>.

Inspirations derived from the ideas of St. Francis of Assisi can be clearly seen in the papal concern for the creation and for the poorest and most vulnerable, as well as in his emphasis on the ties between man and the rest of the created world. This is well illustrated by the Song of the sun quoted in the opening passage of the encyclical, in which Francis of Assisi highlights the relationship between man and nature both animate and inanimate, addressing the whole of creation as one big family<sup>5</sup>. In his commentary to this hymn praising the beauty of creation, the Pope states 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 coloured flowers and herbs»<sup>6</sup>. There are many indications that the Pope adopted St. Francis’ deep conviction of the interrelatedness of such issues as harmonious coexistence of man and nature, peaceful relations with other people and sensitivity to social issues<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., No. 11.

<sup>4</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> See *ibid.*, No. 1, 221.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* No. 1.

<sup>7</sup> See *ibid.*, No. 66, 91.

### 3. THE INFLUENCE OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF JACQUES MARITAIN ON POPE FRANCIS' CONCEPT OF INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

The philosophical thought of Jacques Maritain constitutes another source of inspiration for Francis' concept of integral ecology. Although in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, the Pope makes no explicit references to Maritain's work, it seems that the Christian vision of integral humanism developed by the French philosopher had at least an indirect impact on the approach to the contemporary issues presented in the encyclical *Laudato Si'*<sup>8</sup>.

Maritain formulated his seminal concept of integral humanism in response to the currents of secular humanism emerging in the twentieth century, which he accused of reductionism on the grounds that they denied man his spiritual dimension. Integral humanism emphasizes the supreme human value in relation to the social and economic determinants of human existence. According to this conception, the human person is understood as a unified whole, which does not ignore nor diminish the value of any of its dimensions<sup>9</sup>. Maritain perceives man integrally in his natural and spiritual dimension<sup>10</sup>. He also emphasizes the social dimension of the human person and his or her right to participate in the common good.

In addition, as Maritain argued, the concept of integral humanism provided Christianity with a chance for to become actively involved in the social discourse and shape the policy towards the challenges faced by the modern pluralistic world. In his view, integral humanism laid the groundwork for working out ways of cooperation between people coming from different cultural and religious traditions in order to realize the common good. The integrity of Maritain's thought is also expressed in its concern for two dimensions of human existence. "The vertical movement toward eternal life (present and actually begun here below) and the horizontal movement whereby the substance and creative forces of man are progressively revealed in history. These two movements should be pursued at the same time"<sup>11</sup>. Maritain stresses, however, that the vertical and horizontal aspects of human activity cannot be treated separately because they are intrinsically linked. The mutual relationship of both types of human activity should rather be understood integrally since the horizontal dimension of human life is inscribed in the vertical one. According to Maritain man shaped by integral humanism "does not look for a merely industrial civilization, but for a civilization integrally human (industrial as it may be as to its material conditions) and of evangelical inspiration"<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> See J. J. Conley, *An Elusive Integral Ecology*, America. The National Catholic Review 213(2015)3, p. 27.

<sup>9</sup> See J. Maritain, *Scholasticism and Politics*, Liberty Fund, Indianapolis 2011, p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> See E. J. Echeverria, *Nature and Grace: The Theological Foundations of Jacques Maritain's Public Philosophy*, Journal of Markets & Morality 4(2001)2, p. 240.

<sup>11</sup> J. Maritain, *Scholasticism and Politics*, p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> J. Maritain, *Christian Humanism*, in: *The Social and Political Philosophy of Jacques Maritain: Selected Readings*, edited by J. W. Evans and L. R. Ward, Image Books, Garden City 1965, p. 168.

Maritain confirmed his integral concern for the spiritual and material dimension of human existence by expressing a conviction that as to the primacy of the first of them when he claimed that, "In the eyes of the Christian, culture and civilization, being ordered to a terrestrial end, must be referred and subordinated to the eternal life which is the end of religion, and must procure the terrestrial good and the development of the diverse natural activities of man according to an efficacious attention to the eternal interests of the person and in such a manner as to facilitate the access of the latter to his supernatural ultimate end: all of which thus super-elevates civilization in its own proper order"<sup>13</sup>.

Such an approach to the style of human presence in the world, is fully consistent with the thought of Pope Francis expressed in *Laudato Si'*. The Pope clearly points to God, as the ultimate goal of man but, at the same time, emphasizes that the achievement of this goal is realized in this world, i.e. in the earthly reality. However, as the Pope further accentuates, it is imperative that those "here" and "now" aspects of our lives must not obscure the primary purpose of man and his activity must not be limited only to the economic dimension. At the end of his life, says the Pope, man will meet his Creator face to face and will be able to read in awe the mysteries of the universe. "Eternal life will be a shared experience of awe, in which each creature, resplendently transfigured, will take its rightful place and have something to give those poor men and women who will have been liberated once and for all"<sup>14</sup>.

Many indications point to the fact that Jacques Maritain's concept of integral humanism exerted its influence on Pope Francis' concept of integral ecology. Most probably, however, this was an indirect impact exerted through the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, which, as it is sometimes argued, was to a large extent inspired by the thought of Jacques Maritain, especially, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* and the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem*<sup>15</sup>. According to these scholars, the council confirmed and developed Maritain's position on the temporal mission of Christians in the world and followed Maritain in his highlighting the integral character and the inseparability of the spiritual and material spheres of human life. It is well illustrated by the conciliar Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*. "One of the gravest errors of our time is the dichotomy between the faith that many profess and the practice of their daily lives"<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> J. Maritain, *Integral Humanism: Temporal and Spiritual Problems of a New Christendom*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame 1973, p. 97.

<sup>14</sup> Francis (pope), Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, No. 243-245, 231.

<sup>15</sup> See E. J. Echeverria, *Nature and Grace...*, p. 264-265.

<sup>16</sup> II Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* (Rome, 7.12.1965), No. 43.

#### 4. THE INFLUENCE OF THE SOCIAL TEACHING OF THE CHURCH ON POPE FRANCIS' CONCEPT OF INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

The conviction expressed by Pope Francis with regard to the need for working out a common solution to the growing global problems and adopting a comprehensive approach to man and the different spheres of his activity has long been present in the social teaching of the Church. An analysis of the modern world's development resulted in elaborating the Catholic position with respect to the model of this development. According to Christian intellectuals, this development should have an integral character, i.e. it should include all spheres of social and individual life. The need for such a model of development became particularly evident during an analysis of the phenomena taking place after World War II in postcolonial states. One of the first Church documents postulating the need for combined treatment of social, political and economic problems was a declaration published in 1958 by Catholic Bishops from the French-speaking countries of Africa. The bishops pointed to the risks associated both with the delusive Communist conception of the state, and with predatory liberalism, which recognized economic advantage as the superior value. The above declaration defined also the third danger which, in the bishops' opinion, poses the main threat to genuine growth, namely, boundless confidence in the development of science and technology. The bishops expressed their position on this issue in the following way: "We will not stop reiterating that economy, just like technology, is for man, and not otherwise. Indeed, economy and technology, notwithstanding the fact that they are necessary, represent only a part of human effort, aimed at integral development of man in his temporal and eternal dimension"<sup>17</sup>.

The archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Maurice Feltin during the International Congress of *Pax Christi* in Geneva in 1960 also drew attention to the necessity of adopting an integral approach to the growing problems of the world. He said that misconceived idea of development is a source of social conflicts and wars, and stressed the close relationship between given models of development and the world peace<sup>18</sup>. The belief prevailing among Christian intellectuals about the need for an integral model of development was popularized by Pope Paul VI in his encyclical *Populorum progressio*: "The development We speak of here cannot be restricted to economic growth alone. To be authentic, it must be well rounded; it must foster the development of each man and of the whole man. [...] We cannot allow economics to be separated from human realities, nor development from the civilization in which it takes place. What counts for us is man - each individual man, each human group, and humanity as a whole"<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> *La Documentation Catholique*, No. 1278, 25.05.1958, kol. 725-727, quoted after M. Stępiak, *Rozwój człowieka – rozwój świata – refleksja w rocznicę wielkich papieskich encyklik społecznych, Annales. Etyka w życiu gospodarczym* 11(2008)1, p. 150.

<sup>18</sup> See M. Stępiak, *Rozwój człowieka – rozwój świata...*, p. 150.

<sup>19</sup> Paul VI, Encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (Rome, 26.03.1967), No. 14.

Some people believe even that the model of integral development proposed by Paul VI influenced the idea of sustainable development worked out by the UN<sup>20</sup>. Already in 1967, the Pope pointed out that development cannot be limited exclusively to economic progress and rejected separate treatment of economic and social issues, pointing to the dangers resulting from such a distinction. Propagation of integral development and comprehensive solution of social and economic problems was not limited to Catholic circles. Representatives of the Protestant communities clearly indicated their support in this regard. Norman Faramelli, an American Episcopal clergyman, was among the first who postulated that the only guarantee for solving the growing ecological crisis is a combined treatment of the problem of poverty and environmental destruction, while, considering those two problems separately, can make it difficult both to recognize the complexity of the ecological crisis and to find adequate strategies for counteracting it<sup>21</sup>.

The ecological thought of Pope Francis was greatly influenced by the teaching of John Paul II, to whom Francis refers in his encyclical almost forty times. The concept of "human ecology" formulated by John Paul II certainly influenced the proposed concept of "integral ecology". Pope John Paul II derived his concept from anthropology which, based on the data of natural science, philosophy and theology, emphasizes that the human person must be seen in personalistic terms, while acknowledging his or her relationship with nature. This concept explores and describes the natural environment of the human person, which allows his or her integral development and which comprises nature, society and man as an integral part of nature<sup>22</sup>.

Stanisław Jaromi presenting human ecology of John Paul II points to its broad and narrow interpretations. In a wider understanding, human ecology expands the scope of man's concern for social and family environment as well as for human nature to include the sphere of human responsibility for the whole nature, the ecological balance, and even the order in the cosmic perspective. This treatment has, admittedly, an anthropocentric character, but clearly highlights human obligations towards the created world and restrictions on the use of natural resources. The ecological approach proposed by John Paul II expands the scope of issues related to the relationship of man to nature and presents a harmonious fusion of natural and social theories with issues from the area of widely understood humanities, culture and Christian doctrine on the creation of the world<sup>23</sup>. The thought expressed in the encyclical *Laudato Si'* is clearly harmonized with the approach to the care for the world that we find in the teaching of John Paul II.

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<sup>20</sup> See A. Papuziński, *Koncepcja zrównoważonego rozwoju a nauka społeczna Kościoła*, Przegląd Religioznawczy 224(2007)2, p. 41-43.

<sup>21</sup> See N. Faramelli, *Ecological Responsibility and Economic Justice*, Andover Newton Quarterly 11(1970)2, p. 81-93.

<sup>22</sup> See M. Wyrrostkiewicz, *Ekologia ludzka. Osoba i jej środowisko z perspektywy teologicznomoralnej*, Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2007, p. 54-55.

<sup>23</sup> See S. Jaromi, *Ecologia humana – chrześcijańska odpowiedź na kryzys ekologiczny*, Bratni Zew, Kraków 2004, p. 35-37.

When formulating his concept of integral ecology, Pope Francis was also inspired by the thought of Pope Benedict XVI, to whom he referred in his encyclical more than thirty times. In his teaching, Benedict XVI repeatedly discussed the issue of the ecological crisis especially highlighting such problems as: intergenerational responsibility and common solution of today's global problems (poverty, war, natural disasters). In the encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* Benedict XVI touches upon these issues: "Human beings interpret and shape the natural environment through culture, which in turn is given direction by the responsible use of freedom, in accordance with the dictates of the moral law. Consequently, projects for integral human development cannot ignore coming generations, but need to be marked by solidarity and inter-generational justice, while taking into account a variety of contexts: ecological, juridical, economic, political and cultural"<sup>24</sup>.

The thought was expressed even more forcefully in his Message for the World Day of Peace in 2010, which accentuates the issue of intergenerational solidarity and underlines the obligation of the present generations towards those who will live on this planet in future. "A greater sense of intergenerational solidarity is urgently needed. Future generations cannot be saddled with the cost of our use of common environmental resources. «We have inherited from past generations, and we have benefited from the work of our contemporaries; for this reason we have obligations towards all, and we cannot refuse to interest ourselves in those who will come after us, to enlarge the human family. Universal solidarity represents a benefit as well as a duty. This is a responsibility that present generations have towards those of the future, a responsibility that also concerns individual States and the international community» [...] The ecological crisis shows the urgency of a solidarity which embraces time and space"<sup>25</sup>.

The above outline of the rich teaching of Benedict XVI on the style of human presence in the world and problems related with that presence, clearly illustrates a wide confluence of Benedict XVI's and Pope Francis' ideas. The issues of social justice, intergenerational solidarity, concern for the poorest and common solution of the contemporary problems of the world, in fact, come to the fore of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

##### 5. THE IMPACT OF EARLIER CONCEPTS OF INTEGRAL ECOLOGY ON POPE FRANCIS' CONCEPT OF INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

It can be assumed that the modern intellectual atmosphere that leads to recognition of the reality in a holistic, systemic and integral way has at least an indirect impact on the teaching of Pope Francis on the environmental issues. Ken Wilber's integral theory is particularly noteworthy in this regard, because of its being widely used in many branches of knowledge. This concept provided grounds for the emergence of such ideas as integral leadership, integral politics, integral psychology, integral City and integral ecology<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (29.06.2009), No. 48.

<sup>25</sup> Benedict XVI, *Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace* (1.01.2010), No. 8.

<sup>26</sup> See K. Wilber, *A Theory of Everything. An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science,*

From the point of view of the present paper, the last concept seems of particular interest as it coincides terminologically with the expression used by Pope Francis in his encyclical. The term was probably used for the first time in 1958 by Hillary B. More<sup>27</sup>. However, in scientific literature, the term “integral ecology” was clarified and popularized in the 90-ties of the twentieth century by three scientists who simultaneously conducted their independent research: Ken Wilber, Leonardo Boff and Thomas Berry<sup>28</sup>.

Wilber presented his approach to integral ecology in a book entitled *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality. The Spirit of Evolution* (1995). Although, Wilber did not use the term “integral ecology” in his book, he developed a framework for an integral approach to ecology in the form of the AQAL model (all-quadrant, all-level). Wilber's concept was transferred to the explicitly ecological ground by Sean Esbjörn-Hargens and Michael Zimmerman, who published a book, entitled *Integral Ecology: Uniting Multiple Perspectives on the Natural World* (2009)<sup>29</sup>. The two scientists defined integral ecology as a “comprehensive framework for characterizing ecological dynamics and resolving environmental problems. It is comprehensive in that it both draws upon and provides a theoretical scheme for showing the relations among a variety of different methods, including those at work in the natural and social sciences, as well as in the arts and humanities. Integral ecology unites, coordinates, and mutually enriches knowledge generated from different major disciplines and approaches. Integral ecology can be: a) applied within a discipline (e.g., by integrating various schools of ecology); b) applied as a multidisciplinary approach (e.g., by investigating ecological problems from several disciplines); c) applied as an interdisciplinary approach (e.g., by using social science methods to shed light on economic or political aspects of environmental values); and d) applied as a transdisciplinary approach (e.g., by helping numerous approaches and their methodologies interface through a well grounded meta-framework)”<sup>30</sup>.

It seems, however, that the concept of integral ecology as proposed by S. Esbjörn-Hargens and M. E. Zimmerman differs significantly from the one formulated by Pope Francis and it is difficult to find in it direct inspirations for the Pope's idea. Without presenting a detailed analysis, it is evident that Francis' practical approach to the ecological question contrasts with the theoretical approach adopted by Esbjörn-Hargens and Zimmerman. In his presentation of integral ecology, the Pope aims at inspiring the world opinion to responsible care for creation. In addition,

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*and Spirituality*, Shambhala, Boston 2000; I. Sen, *Integral Psychology. The Psychological System of Aurobindo Ghose*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 1986; M. Hamilton, *Integral City. Evolutionary Intelligences for the Human Hive*, New Society Publishers, Gabriola Island 2008; S. Esbjörn-Hargens, M. E. Zimmerman, *Integral Ecology. Uniting Multiple Perspectives on the Natural World*, Integral Books, Boston 2009.

<sup>27</sup> See H. B. Moore, *Marine ecology*, J. Wiley, New York 1958.

<sup>28</sup> See S. Mickey, A. Robbert, L. Reddick, *The Quest for Integral Ecology*, Integral Review 9(2013)3, p. 16.

<sup>29</sup> See *ibid.* p. 17.

<sup>30</sup> S. Esbjörn-Hargens, M. E. Zimmerman, *An Overview of Integral Ecology. A Comprehensive Approach to Today's Complex Planetary Issues*, Integral Institute Resource Paper (2009)2, p. 2.

Francis differs from Esbjörn-Hargens and Zimmerman in his understanding of integrity as he does not limit himself only to the material dimension, but extends the term to social, cultural and spiritual dimension and comprises also a concern for the poorest, for the environment and for prevention of violence<sup>31</sup>.

An analysis of the encyclical *Laudato Si'* allows us to advance a thesis that Pope Francis' writing about integral ecology was directly inspired by the thought of Leonardo Boff. This might be implied by South American roots of both Boff and Pope Francis as well as by their constant preoccupation with the issues of poverty and concern for the environment. The writings of Leonardo Boff, a controversial liberation theologian living in Brazil, a country neighboring on Argentina, must have been known to the Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio. The fact that Boff provided a direct inspiration for Pope Francis can be evidenced by the use of an expression *cry of the earth and cry of the poor* in paragraph 49 of the encyclical, which is a characteristic element of the titles of several publications by Boff<sup>32</sup>.

The Brazilian liberation theologian, being aware of the fact that the manifold aspects of ecological theoretical concepts and practical environmental activities are treated separately, calls for adopting integral ecology, which in his opinion "can articulate all these aspects with a view to founding a new alliance between societies and nature, which will result in the conservation of the patrimony of the earth, socio-cosmic wellbeing, and the maintenance of conditions that will allow evolution to continue on the course it has now been following for some fifteen thousand million years"<sup>33</sup>. The above idea seems to converge with the Pope's concept in the sense that it agrees with the overall purport of the encyclical which, basing on the findings of exact sciences and scientific theoretical concepts, combines them with practical changes which Francis calls for in this document<sup>34</sup>.

In his latest works, Boff defines integral ecology as "an evolutionary vision that brings together three other approaches to ecology. First, there is an «environmental vision», which explores the exteriors of the members and the whole of the Earth community. «Social ecology» is next, raising socioeconomic and political issues about ecology, including implications of justice, democracy, violence, consumerism, etc. «Deep ecology», thirdly, investigates various kinds of interiority and mentality, including ethical and religious issues of responsibility and reverence for the natural world"<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> See Francis (pope), Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, No. 10.

<sup>32</sup> See L. Boff, V. P. Elizondo, *Ecology and Poverty: Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll 1995; L. Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll 1997; L. Boff, V. P. Elizondo, *Ecology and Poverty: Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, Concilium: International Journal of Theology (1995)5, p. ix-xii.

<sup>33</sup> L. Boff, V. P. Elizondo, *Ecology and Poverty: Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, Concilium: International Journal of Theology (1995)5, p. ix.

<sup>34</sup> See Francis (pope), Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, No. 4, 23, 60, 197, 206, 208, 209, 215, 219.

<sup>35</sup> M. Hathaway, L. Boff, *The Tao of liberation: Exploring the ecology of transformation*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll 2009, s. 300-301.

In addition, Boff points to the need of developing a new perspective on the world which cannot be reduced to a treasure trove of raw materials and physical or chemical reservoir of minerals<sup>36</sup>. In his opinion, the experience of the contemporary ecological crisis leads to greater sensitivity towards our planet as a whole. This results in a wider acceptance of new values, new dreams and new patterns of behavior. Today, those changes inspire in mankind the hope of “returning to the vast planetary and cosmic community. We are fascinated by the green forest, we pause before the majesty of the mountains, we are awed by the star-filled sky, and we admire the vitality of the animals. We are filled with admiration at the diversity of cultures, human habits, and ways of signifying the world. In some places a new compassion for all beings is coming into being, especially for those suffering most in nature and society”<sup>37</sup>. The thought expressed here by Boff is clearly consistent with the words of Pope Francis on the importance of human emotions in relation to nature which exert their impact on the way man treats nature. Boff’s position is also congruent with the Pope’s concern for the most suffering and an incentive to be more sensitive both to “the cry of the earth, and the cry of the poor”<sup>38</sup>.

Yet another approach to integral ecology has been proposed by an American Catholic priest, Thomas Berry. It is difficult to assess the impact of his ideas on the thought of Pope Francis, since the encyclical *Laudato Si’* contains no explicit references to Berry’s concept. Likewise, it is difficult to find in the encyclical any characteristic phrases as was the case with Leonardo Boff. It can, however, be assumed that the thought of the scientist provided an indirect inspiration for the Pope through Boff’s publications with which, as it seems, the Pope is familiar. While working on his concept of integral ecology, Boff largely appealed to Thomas Berry’s publications<sup>39</sup>. The Pope’s repeated references to the concept of the universe and cosmos, which frequently appears in Berry’s publications, can point to the fact that the Pope drew his inspiration from the works of the American ecotheologian. This is well illustrated by the fact that Francis’ description of the community of creation surpasses the earth, i.e. our common home, as it is defined in the title of the encyclical. Francis takes a wider perspective of this community and assumes that it comprises not only man with the animate and inanimate nature present on our planet, but also the rest of the universe. The Pope referred to thus defined nature as splendid universal communion<sup>40</sup>.

Thomas Berry’s attempt at adopting a cosmic perspective on man’s attitude to the creation is the result of his cooperation with a cosmologist, Brian Swimme, with whom he developed a cosmogenetic principle which provides the basis for his integral ecology. Under this principle, all evolutionary processes can be char-

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<sup>36</sup> See L. Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, p. 12.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11-12.

<sup>38</sup> Francis (pope), Encyclical *Laudato Si’*, No. 49, 11.

<sup>39</sup> See S. Mickey, A. Robbert, L. Reddick, *The Quest for Integral Ecology*, p. 16; L. Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, p. 74, 106.

<sup>40</sup> See Francis (pope), Encyclical *Laudato Si’*, No. 220.

acterized by differentiation, subjectivity and communion<sup>41</sup>. Similarly to Leonardo Boff, Thomas Berry in his integral ecology emphasizes the importance of human admiration for the world and the impact of man's emotions on his attitude to the creation. "What do you see when you look up at the sky at night at the blazing stars against the midnight heavens? What do you see when the dawn breaks over the eastern horizon? What are your thoughts in the fading days of summer as the birds depart on their southward journey, or in the autumn when the leaves turn brown and are blown away? What are your thoughts when you look out over the ocean in the evening? What do you see?"<sup>42</sup>. A similar admiration for the work of creation can be perceived in Pope Francis, who has repeatedly encouraged us to contemplate the beauty of the created world<sup>43</sup>.

According to Thomas Berry, one of the most important tasks that will enable introduction of integral ecology consists in developing a new story of the creation, so that humanity will be able to enter an era of self-reflection defined by Berry as the ecozoic era. This new stage in the history of humanity complements and overcomes the technological era, which brought about a radical disruption of the harmony between man and the world. According to Berry, the ecozoic era constitutes a return to the understanding of the world which has been lost by the modern man. An important role in this respect must be played by science which will allow man to rediscover the principles guiding the evolution of the universe starting from the beginning, through the formation of Earth, the origin of life, to the emergence of consciousness<sup>44</sup>.

An analysis of Pope Francis' and Thomas Berry's concepts of integral ecology reveals their similarly optimistic vision of the future marked by profound hope for overcoming the ecological crisis. Concluding his essay entitled *The New Story*, Berry states: "If the dynamics of the universe from the beginning shaped the course of the heavens, lighted the sun, and formed the earth, if this same dynamism brought forth the continents and seas and atmosphere, if it awakened life in the primordial cell and then brought into being the unnumbered variety of living beings, and finally brought us into being and guided us safely through the turbulent centuries, there is reason to believe that this same guiding process is precisely what has awakened in us our present understanding of ourselves and our relation to this stupendous process. Sensitized to such guidance from the very structure and functioning of the universe, we can have confidence in the future that awaits the

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<sup>41</sup> See B. Swimme, T. Berry, *The Universe Story. From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era – A Celebration of the Unfolding of the Cosmos*, HarperCollins, San Francisco 1992, p. 66-78; T. Berry, *Evening Thoughts. Reflecting on Earth as Sacred Community*, Sierra Club Books, San Francisco 2006, p. 168-169.

<sup>42</sup> T. Berry, *The Sacred Universe. Earth, Spirituality, and Religion in the Twenty-First Century*, Columbia University Press, New York 2009, p. 170.

<sup>43</sup> See Francis (pope), Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, No. 11, 12, 42, 78, 86, 97, 100, 214, 215, 233, 234, 240.

<sup>44</sup> See T. Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, Sierra Club Books, San Francisco 1988, p. 44-45.

human venture”<sup>45</sup>. In turn, the Pope buoys up the people discouraged by the state of the planet, saying “Hope would have us recognize that there is always a way out, that we can always redirect our steps, that we can always do something to solve our problems”<sup>46</sup>. While, he concludes the encyclical with a postulate: “May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope”<sup>47</sup>.

## 6. CONCLUSION

It seems that the thought of Saint Francis of Assisi and the teaching of John Paul II, Benedict XVI and other documents of the Church's social doctrine can be considered as unquestionable sources of inspiration for Pope Francis at his work on the concept of integral ecology. Moreover, it seems reasonable to claim that Jacques Maritain's integral humanism could, at least indirectly, exert its impact on the papal vision for diagnosing and solving the problems of the contemporary world. It is even more difficult to assess “whether” and if so, then “how” Pope Francis' concept of integral ecology was influenced by the concept of integrated ecology proposed by Ken Wilber, Leonardo Boff and Thomas Berry.

In addition, there are many indications that such a broad and integrated view of the Pope on the contemporary challenges of civilization must have equally broad sources of inspiration. Although, it is difficult to define explicitly the links between Pope Francis' concept of integral ecology and other versions of integral ecology or holistic or systemic approaches to the reality, the Pope's cooperation with representatives of many disciplines makes those links quite probable.

In fact, the entire first chapter of the encyclical results from Pope's cooperation with representatives of the exact sciences, so that the Pope could outline the current state of knowledge about the condition of our planet. In his work on the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis consulted the opinion of prominent representatives of mathematical and natural sciences who are members of the *Pontifical Academy of Sciences*. Those consultations were also attended by world-class experts in law, economics, social and political philosophy, political science, sociology, history, demography, psychology and international development, who are members of the *Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences*. Therefore, it seems that the scientific richness and diversity of perspectives of papal advisers have, at least indirectly transfer the modern integral vision of the world to Pope Francis' concept of integral ecology.

It can, therefore, be concluded that the papal position on the causes of the contemporary ecological crisis and ways to overcome them has been developed on the basis of the latest results of the natural sciences, current socio-political concepts, the social doctrine of the Church, rich ecophilosophical reflection and the cultural

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>46</sup> Francis (pope), Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, No. 61.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., No. 244.

heritage of the West. Taking into account all these perspectives is an asset to the message of Pope Francis, which is thus not limited to Catholics or Christians as it refers to the argument, which to a large extent is also valid for the followers of other religions and people who do not identify with any religion. The encyclical *Laudato Si'* is a document that speaks both to scientists and all sorts of experts dealing daily with the environmental crisis, and to lay people who are sensitive to the contemporary challenges of humanity related to environmental degradation.

#### INSPIRATIONS OF POPE FRANCIS' CONCEPT OF INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

##### Summary

This article presents the cultural ideas as well as philosophical, social and scientific theories that shaped the concept of integral ecology presented by Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*. There are many indications that the direct impact on the thought of the Pope was St. Francis' of Assisi vision of the world and the social teaching of the Church, especially the teachings of John Paul II and Benedict XVI. It also seems that at least an indirect impact on the ecology of the Pope's vision expressed in the ecological encyclical was exerted by Jacques Maritain's integral humanism. Because of the similarity of ideas, we can also assume that the earlier versions of integral ecology proposed by Ken Wilber, Leonardo Boff and Thomas Berry also to some extent might have provided inspiration for Pope Francis.

**Keywords:** integral ecology, ecophilosophy, Francis (pope), encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, religion and ecology

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#### INSPIRACJE KONCEPCJI EKOLOGII INTEGRALNEJ PAPIEŻA FRANCISZKA

##### Abstrakt

Artykuł ten prezentuje idee kulturowe oraz koncepcje filozoficzne, społeczne i naukowe, które wpłynęły na kształt koncepcji ekologii integralnej zaprezentowanej przez papieża Franciszka w encyklice *Laudato Si'*. Wiele wskazuje na to, że bezpośredni wpływ na myśl papieską miała wizja święta św. Franciszka z Asyżu oraz społeczne nauczanie Kościoła, a szczególnie nauczanie Jana Pawła II i Benedykta XVI. Wydaje się też, że przynajmniej pośredni wpływ na papieską wizję ekologii wyrażoną w encyklice ekologicznej miał humanizm integralny Jacques'a Maritain'a. Ze względu na zbieżność można też przypuszczać, że wcześniejsze koncepcje ekologii integralnej w wersjach zaproponowanych przez Ken'a Wilber'a, Leonardo Boff'a oraz Thomasa Berry'ego także mogły w jakimś stopniu zainspirować papieża Franciszka.

**Słowa kluczowe:** ekologia integralna, ekofilozofia, Franciszek (papież), encyklika, *Laudato Si'*