

Laudato si' and Fratelli tutti

Pope Francis' encyclical letters as foundational texts for transversal social ethics

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A background image for the webinar section showing several green leaves with prominent veins, set against a soft, out-of-focus light background.

Webinar: From Laudato si' to Fratelli tutti

Christians and Marxists in dialogue on common grounds

1. Praise, criticism, and a first hermeneutical key

- *Laudato si'* has stimulated the public and ecclesial debates like no other papal document since the highly controversial encyclical *Humanae vitae* in 1969.
- The first reactions to *Fratelli tutti* have been mixed, with criticism aiming especially in two directions:
 - *Insensitivity regarding gender equality*
 - *Utopian, unrealistic, politically and ethically simplistic, too much ethics of conviction, not enough ethics of responsibility*
 - *Pope Francis – a communist?*
- *Laudato si'* and *Fratelli tutti* as “twin documents”.
Both documents are based on the assumption, that “everything is connected” (LS 91), that “we are all in the same boat” (FT 30) and that we are not only part of God’s one creation, but – as God’s children, made in God’s image and likeness – also brothers and sisters.

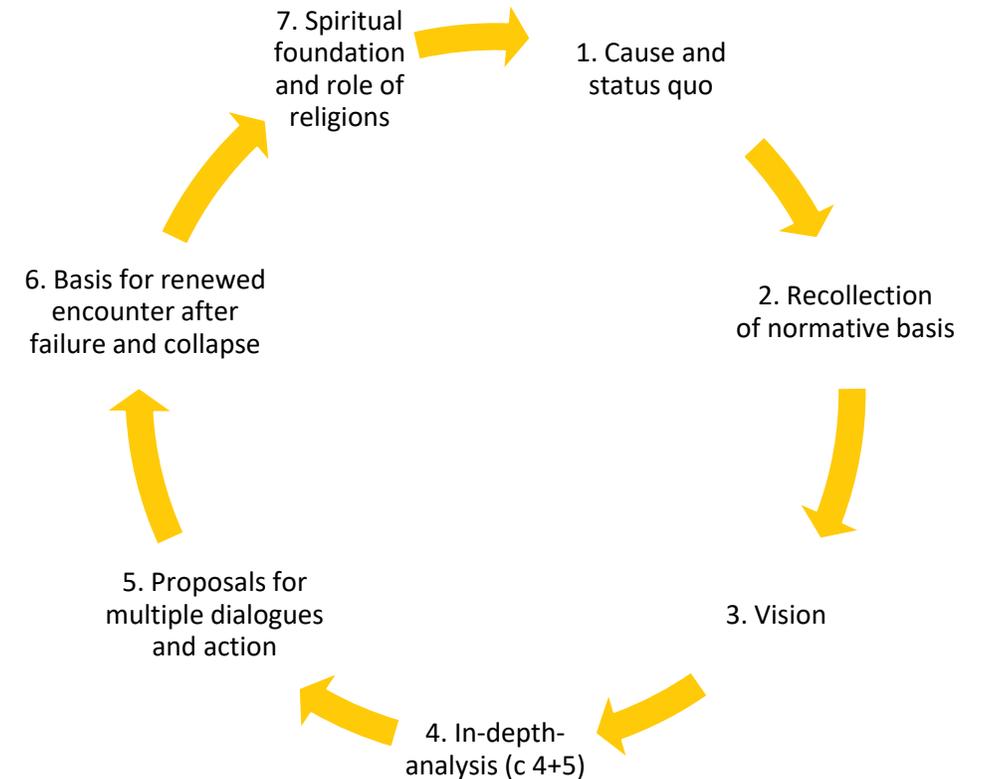
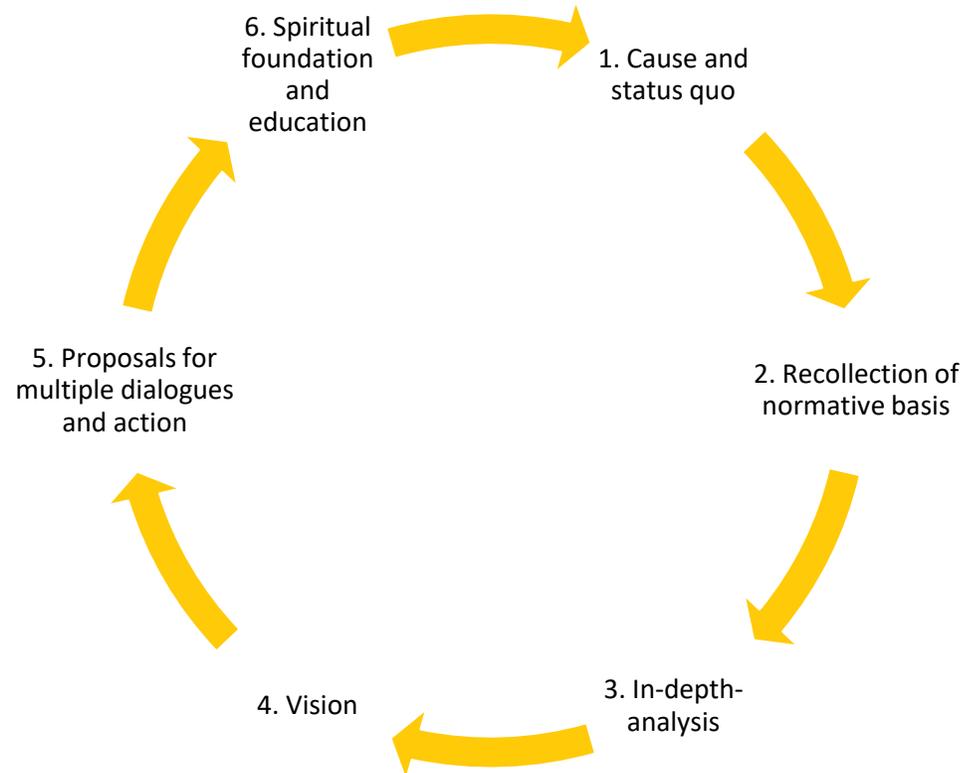
2. Continuation and innovation

- „disputability“
- ecumenical, interreligious, global, and transversal approach
- profoundly dialogical character

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)

I offer this social Encyclical as a modest contribution to continued reflection, in the hope that in the face of present-day attempts to eliminate or ignore others, we may prove capable of responding with a new vision of fraternity and social friendship that will not remain at the level of words. Although I have written it from the Christian convictions that inspire and sustain me, I have sought to make this reflection an invitation to dialogue among all people of good will. ... Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travelers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all. (FT 6; 8)

3. Composition of Laudato si' and Fratelli tutti

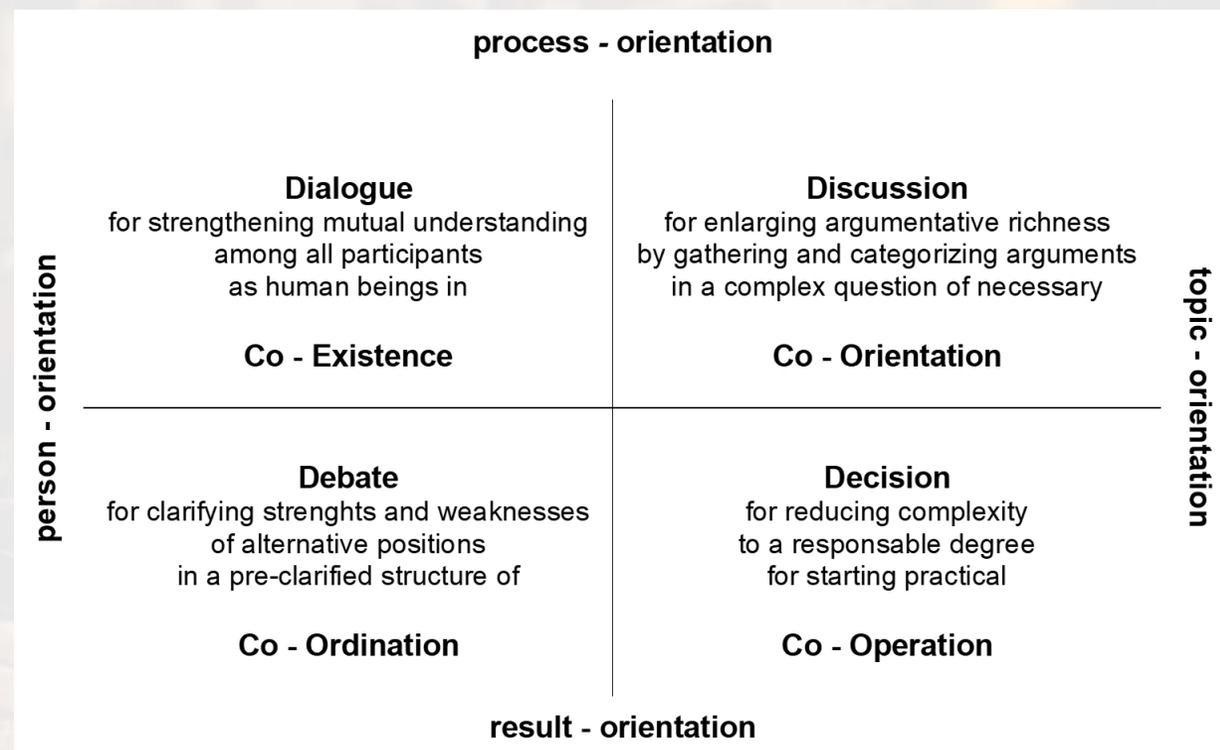


4. Core topics of the encyclical letters

- Ecological crisis (**LS** and **FT**)
- Common good and the universal destination of goods (**LS and FT**)
- Preferential option for the poor/vulnerable/marginalized (**LS and FT**)
- Technocratic paradigm – throw-away-culture – economy of exclusion (**LS and FT**)
- “Rapidification” and consumerism (**LS** and **FT**)
- Local and universal – the metaphor of the polyhedron (**LS** and **FT**)
- A better kind of politics – far-sighted, humble and based on fraternal love (**LS** and **FT**)
- Healing and forgiveness (**LS** and **FT**)

5. The increasing relevance of dialogue

- Both encyclicals can be read as one comprehensive invitation to dialogue
- Multi-level-dialogue as topic of LS chapter 5 and FT chapter 6
- Reflecting on and cultivating dialogue as an attitude as well as a method constitutes a core element of a transversal social ethical approach



6. Indispensability of spirituality



- Spiritual dimension ...
- ... gives LS and FT a confiding and resilient key tone in spite of the almost overwhelming challenges
- ... forms the framework (title at the beginning and prayer at the end) and hermeneutical key
- Only by repeatedly intermitting our inner and outer dialogues, discussions and debates in order to enter into contemplation - understood as a dialogue with the transcendent source of everything that exists (whom Christians call God) - can we authentically and kenotically relate to all of creation and our fellow human beings.



Thank you!