Social Praxis in Light of Christogenesis:
Franciscan Wisdom for an Evolutionary
World
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Franciscans are social by nature. Franciscans live the Gospel in public, in the public sphere, not in isolation. The Incarnation was and is a social event. I repeat: a social event. It’s a big party! Let’s make it good! Our “evangelical life” orients us toward engaging society and its members. We care for everyone in society, and thus the common good holds a prominent role in the Franciscan tradition. There is universality to our social vision, and we should be able to contribute something to the globalization of human culture.

Franciscans are action-oriented. For us, learning, study, and philosophy are, at least in part, derivative of a human social experience, of action, of serving, of loving. This too is rooted in the Incarnation: Christ’s embodied action. We are social experimenters. We are not content with the world the way it is, and we are deeply committed to social praxis. Our history is full of women and men who shared discontent with social matters as they found them, and who experimented with different forms of responding to social needs. We practice a spirituality of social engagement, in dialogue with society, mindful of the needs of its members, especially the suffering and vulnerable. At our best, Franciscans are creative, manifesting the creativity of God through our social innovation. This may be
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pastoral, practical, prophetic, or some combination thereof.

Franciscan social praxis is rooted in our wisdom tradition.¹ The simplest definition of wisdom sets the tone: the use of knowledge for the good. A more sophisticated definition fleshes out the concept: a deep, penetrating and holistic understanding of reality (creation, people, society, everything) capable of guiding discernment and good action. Thus, the action of praxis and wisdom unfold in dynamic relationship with each other. We Franciscans are at our best when these two currents of our tradition feed each other.

The expression “Christogenesis” requires a bit of explanation. As Delio explains in her book The Emergent Christ: Exploring the Meaning of Catholic in an Evolutionary Universe, Christogenesis was coined by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin to indicate that the genesis and evolutionary character of creation is, when seen through the eyes of faith, Christogenesis.² In other words, the Incarnation of Christ depends upon the emergence of Christ through the evolution of the universe, all life, indeed, all reality. When viewed from the perspective of Franciscan wisdom, we can see that the evolution of life itself -- combined with the science of the evolutionary universe -- opens up new ways of understanding God, new means of communicating who God is, how God loves the world, and how we can respond. The Incarnation is not only a singular or discrete event. It is a theo-cosmological unfolding. It is a

party, praxis and a process. Evolution bears wisdom to us indeed!

Our Franciscan tradition has much to contribute here. Conceptual resources from our tradition can help us -- and others -- understand how to derive religious lessons from evolution (and its many implications). This points to the key thrust of my talk: in light of Christogenesis, we Franciscans propose practical, embodied wisdom. We draw from our rich tradition and our personal and communal experiences, a way of reflecting upon creation, human relationships, indeed life itself, in order to propose how we might live our way into the future. Just as important, our tradition provides a spirituality, which can guide us and others in the application of wisdom.

Franciscans must not be content with understanding alone. We want to express our understandings through love, through practical action. In this talk I want to underscore that we can generate positive proposals based on practical wisdom. I believe that one highly appropriate response to Christogenesis -- and the evolutionary character of the universe and society -- engages other people of good will through creative, collaborative partnerships of global social praxis.

This presentation has three parts: Franciscan wisdom to live Christogenesis, new paradigms of social praxis, and Franciscan partnerships for global social praxis. I want to articulate the implications for a future focused cosmology for global social praxis (ministries and social engagement). Franciscan wisdom can and should support and enhance these social praxes, as components and as a whole.

Franciscan Wisdom to Live Christogenesis
To live a Franciscan spirit in an evolutionary world, we can draw on three fundamental resources from Franciscan theology: the Primacy of Christ, the dynamic of catholicity, and creation as family. Presented clearly in contemporary terms, these can serve as the foundation for engaging others in dialogue about the Incarnation revealed through the evolutionary character of the universe. Potential dialogue partners include scientists, students, technologists and businesspeople — these partners are not likely interested in these theological ideas per se. They may not be interested in having a dialogue exclusively on our terms. However, they would be interested in understanding how these three fundamental religious resources relate to life, to love, and to protecting our home planet today. How can we as Franciscans bring these theological resources into dialogue with contemporary science and global society, and apply them to our present needs as one human family?

We can animate others drawing wisdom principles from evolution: novelty, creativity and future focus. These can guide us in contemporary social praxis. We Franciscans have an important role to play in living Christogenesis: we can bring wisdom and spirituality to the party! The Franciscan tradition is an evangelical wisdom tradition, meaning that it bears Good News to others. We Franciscan wisdom is oriented toward the public, toward social engagement, toward practice. Thus, ours is different in theme, focus and structure from other categories of wisdom. Our understanding of wisdom is that it is learned from or through action-praxis, and reflection, and study. Franciscan wisdom

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praxis engages in common action for the common good, rooted in the Incarnation. A spirituality based on the Incarnation manifests itself in practical love.

Unlike some other religious traditions, we Franciscans have an open system, specifically, an open knowledge system. Here an “open system” may be defined as a paradigm of dialogue with others. Religious traditions with a closed knowledge system -- people who assume they have all the truth they need -- are not really capable of entering into dialogue, with science, or the world, or reality. People who live out of an open system approach are able to draw from others, to draw in new ideas. Open systems can share ideas with others as well. Both of these are indicators of a process approach. An open system provides the pre-conditions needed for genuine dialogue. An open system suggests we can have a sense of confidence because we can participate in a dialogue with scientists and scientific ideas. In contrast, fundamentalist thought -- whether Catholic, Protestant, Islamic, Jewish -- is close-minded. If one thinks one has all the answers, there is nothing to learn from anyone else. This is religious narcissism.

Here I would suggest that Franciscan wisdom should be for the sake of guiding social praxis. It holds the possibility for animating a contemporary cosmology (or worldview), critical understanding of global social reality, and engagement with society. This requires a deep penetrating, probing consideration of reality as created by God--reading the book of Scripture and of nature. This can be applied to and through our whole lives, which is an expression of wisdom. Recall that it was these kinds of questions were what motivated the first Franciscan scholars at the beginning of our tradition!

To what would we apply this wisdom? Let’s set our sights on a serious global problem! I propose global
climate disruption. Yes, let’s take on this most urgent moral crisis facing humanity: the collective human choices that threaten the future of human life on our planet. Climate disruption is exactly the kind of multi-faceted problem that a Catholic wisdom tradition should be able to address.

Christogenesis can help us address the climate crisis. Christogenesis and Franciscan wisdom are open systems, dynamic, flexible, adaptable forms of knowledge. They challenge the naive sentimentalism of Francis as patron saint of birdbaths, and the rigid denialism on the part of powerful people rejecting scientific reality itself. There is, in fact, no “science controversy.” To think so is false and it is folly. Here the classic virtue of prudence is needed, because prudence would suggest that we consider a range of possible future outcomes and make wise choices in light of those possibilities. But there is something more going on with this denialism. Denial and despair: both are contemporary expressions of folly, of anti-wisdom. This folly is rooted in false dualisms, rigid binary thinking. Us versus them. Present versus future. Economic sufficiency versus ecological survival. These are all false dualisms. From a Christian perspective, these emerge from the denial of the Incarnation, in other words, from a material versus spiritual false dichotomy. From a religious perspective, this is the root folly, the fundamental obstacle to addressing climate disruption. Those who authentically believe in the Incarnate Christ, who believe in the Primacy of Christ, who believe in Christogenesis -- these are people who have access to the wisdom and spirituality to act on behalf of creation.

Creation’s integrity is threatened not by scientists or scientific activity but by technologies widely distributed and applied by people in capitalist economies. Global climate disruption is an
environmental problem, but it is more than that. It is also a poverty problem, a governance problem, a social justice and ethics problem. The multidimensional character has allowed many to hide behind excuses for inaction. We need to incorporate an understanding of global justice in addressing climate disruption. Climate disruption is ultimately a global justice issue, because the effects are unequal already, and this inequity will become pronounced. Climate disruption is a problem that cannot be solved with individualistic thinking. It can only be solved with holistic “we” thinking.

Many natural scientists would like to be able to report the implications of climate science, and their concerns, to “people who are manipulating the world.” The message of alarm that they carry can and should be shared with the technologists and businesspeople. The technologists and businesspeople who are driving economic globalization need to be brought into dialogue about climate disruption.

The implications of human-caused climate disruption are not complicated in terms of praxis-response. Climate science may be sophisticated and the problems are multidimensional, but the direction we must journey as a human family is clear. These are three practical expressions of wisdom for the common good:

1. Tax Carbon so that it costs more to use fossil fuel, and thus
2. Support innovative, sustainable energy sources and solutions, and simultaneously
3. Redress global economic disparities (as opposed to exacerbating them).

We humans have the economic, scientific, and technological knowledge to address the ecological crisis. The real question is: do we have the wisdom? In other words, “the use of knowledge for the good.” We need a
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new social praxis constituted by common action on behalf of the common good. To summarize this part, the Franciscan wisdom tradition offers an open knowledge system, and can provide us the tools to address the world’s most pressing needs. To live the Incarnation in our time should orient us toward the future, toward imagining just and sustainable solutions to global climate disruption. This is evolutionary consciousness!

New Paradigms of Social Praxis.

In a spirit of the dialogue, and informed by our Franciscan intellectual tradition of wisdom practice, I propose we Franciscans invite frugal technologists and social entrepreneurs to a series of conversations. By frugal technologists, I mean people who develop technology to help the poor escape from poverty.4 By social entrepreneurs, I mean people who create businesses with a social mission, generally, to help people escape poverty.5 These are people manipulating the world for the common good, to advance social justice and a more sustainable world. Their work to help people escape poverty and to protect the planet inspires us, which is good, but more importantly, it is challenging the trajectory of economic and technological development. They are creating a novel, future-focused paradigm that merits our participation.

Please allow me to introduce them by way of stories. Many of you have heard of microfinance institutions. Many of you will no doubt have heard of Muhammed Yunus and Grameen Bank (grameen means “village” in Bengali). This is the best known example of microfinance. Yunus launched this in the 1970s in the aftermath of Bangladesh’s independence, at a time when the country suffered from extreme poverty. Yunus had a doctorate in economics from Vanderbilt University, but found that the expert knowledge he had acquired was of little use to the Bangladeshis he met. He won the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize for his discovery of the power of small groups of women working together to enhance economic participation.\(^6\)

He learned from them. The women worked together and repaid loans at a higher rate than conventional loans. These women’s circles of participation and trust made this work. But of course, conventional banks didn’t want to bother with them. He -- as the “expert” -- learned from poor women what he did not -- and never would -- learn from a prestigious university. It is important not to romanticize this, because it was much hard work, with slow progress: figuring out what they were doing, and how to make it successful and sustainable. The parallels between his own story and Francis’ Testament are striking. Mutual influence, a mutual evangelization. Francis himself underwent conversion. So too did Yunus. The Grameen Bank is an example of open system thinking shaping

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social praxis: open to new ideas, to learning from “the other.”

Yunus and Grameen have created and validated a sustainable economic development model that works. Yet, Yunus and Grameen were not satisfied with making small loans. These provided some household income, which helped, but did not, by themselves, make accessible the income, good and services to fully lift people out of poverty. So he asked: Can we use the same strategies in Grameen Bank to create businesses that provide goods and services for the poor? This is the origin of the idea of social entrepreneurship: creating new forms of business organization that address a social need, such as the escape from poverty, often using frugal technologies. Yunus and Grameen created an initiative to allow women to sell cell phones to their neighbors, and make a bit of money. This is the origin of the Grameen Phone. This project trained women in villages to become micro-entrepreneurs.

People in the developing world use cell phones in ways that are fundamentally different from in the U.S. They are using them as a tool for economic participation. There are now more cellphones than toilets on the planet, a ratio of about 5:1. Cell phones in the developing world function like computers here in the

US, and are providing services to the poor in the developing world for the first time that the US has had for generations. Health promoters in Africa gather community public health data and share this in real time with government ministries. Small farmers access market data to avoid being cheated by middlemen. For many countries in Africa, mobile phones are the primary form of banking for the vast majority of the population. For example, in Kenya, M-PESA has developed a cloud-based banking system that integrates and simplifies microfinance, credit payments, and savings accounts.\textsuperscript{10} This has provided basic financial services for millions of people who formerly only worked with cash. This has become the foundation for economic activity in some African countries.

To increase employment, Yunus and Grameen developed computer training programs for youth and women. Computer training has taken off in many parts of the developing world and is opening up economic opportunities for women and for youth. This is called Market Aligned Skills Training (MAST), akin to the “vocational technology” schools we formerly had here in America. The crisis in unemployment among these groups can be addressed in part with technology.

Many North Americans use cellphones and computers to fulfill their consumer desires. In the developing world, computers and cell phones are unleashing a wave of economic empowerment and social inclusion. This is an innovative form of economic inclusion. Many of you have heard of \textit{Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide}, the story of the exploitation, trafficking and

\textsuperscript{10} Mas, Ignacio, and Olga Morawczynski. "Designing mobile money services lessons from M-PESA." \textit{Innovations} 2, 4 (2009): 77-91.
oppression of women and girls.\textsuperscript{11} Parts of this book are gruesome -- painful to read -- but the book is ultimately a story of hope. I would suggest these kinds of economic inclusion initiatives provide a story of hope. MAST for women and girls is preventing human trafficking and other forms of oppression.

Yunus and Grameen recognized that even with loans and with jobs, people needed basic services, such as water and food. Multinationals, on their own, don’t serve these communities. But Yunus invited them to Bangladesh. He wanted to show how they could work in partnership with Grameen Bank! Thus, Yunus launched the notion of “social businesses” -- businesses that may make a profit, but whose mission is to address a social need. These are measured not by their economic profit, but by indicators of helping people escape poverty.

Yunus has elaborated a whole vision of social enterprise/social business.\textsuperscript{12} He argues passionately that conventional, global capitalism is not working for half the planet, but when elements of capitalism are realigned, reconfigured, refocused, people can be lifted out of poverty and people can live more sustainably. These social businesses, social enterprises may be owned by the poor -- like an economic cooperative -- or they may be owned by others with a clearly defined mission to serve the unmet needs of the poor. To further this vision, Yunus took the risk of partnering with some open-minded multi-national corporations. With Veola, a French company, he created an enterprise that provides


clean water at the village level: Grameen Water. With Danone, he created Grameen Danone, a jointly owned enterprise to cultivate and sell yogurt at the village level. The limited diet typical of South Asians is made more wholesome by adding yoghurt. This approach links local production, local distribution, local employment, and local nutrition. These illustrate the value of economic inclusion and participation. Social entrepreneurship takes direction action to create social value. It creates initiatives to help people escape poverty without waiting for governments to help. Social entrepreneurs transform the problems of government corruption and market failure into opportunities for direct service to the poor. This is a different paradigm for sustainable development.

Note that this is different from the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives that many Franciscans have led. Those call to accountability a profit-driven business. The social business concept represents an evolutionary shift in thought beyond the for-profit/nonprofit dichotomy. This is a fundamentally different paradigm. As a strategy, CSR attempts to make profit-seeking corporations less bad. By contrast, social entrepreneurship is a new paradigm for refocusing the power of capitalism away from planetary destruction and toward serving the basic needs of the human family. This provides capitalism a social and ethical purpose: to foster common good economics.

This framework of novelty, creativity and future focus is evident in new approaches to technology development. Here, the key concept is disruptive

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Technology has the potential to upend the status quo. Some technologies are only for luxury, for wealth. But these same approaches to innovation, when focused on the needs of the poor, “disrupt” conditions of suffering and poverty.

Here are two examples of disruptive innovation in health care. Aravind Eye Care System is the most successful social enterprise in health technology. Its mission is to rid the world of needless blindness. It has provided tens of thousands of cataract surgeries for the poor, making this available using a sliding fee scale. The founder, Dr. V., said, that if McDonalds can sell hamburgers by the billion, why not address needless blindness? Create a highly efficient, low cost high quality health system. Go out and recruit customers in villages, even though more than 60% pay nothing. This is taking the power of capitalism and focusing it -- like lasik! -- on healing. This is a terrific example of “gift economy.”

In Brazil, Solar Ear has developed a solar-charged hearing aid that it sells for $250. Solar energy recharges a battery in a station during the day while the hearing aid is worn, but then the hearing aid is then placed in the station and recharged overnight. How much do your friends pay for hearing aids? Solar Ear prices are less than 10% of the US cost. These hearing aids are manufactured by deaf people themselves in sheltered workshops. Solar Ear has partner operations around the world. For example, Solar Ear works closely with a sister

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organization in Botswana to serve Africa. This is a South-South development model, an example of mutuality in economics.

How might one apply disruptive innovation to the problem of global climate disruption? Over the past decade, people working among the poor have developed a new approach to development: energy poverty.16 About 1.5 billion people have no access to modern energy services, namely, the electric grid. Another 1.5 billion have erratic grid service. About half are in Africa and half in South Asia. These are in the tropics, where night is 12 hours all year round. What is the primary technology to light these homes? Kerosene. This is a scourge for the poor. It is the leading cause of indoor air pollution for the poor. An hour in a room with a kerosene lamp is like smoking a pack of cigarettes. This is the light by which children study. Kerosene is a clear, odorless liquid, often stored in used soda bottles. Every year thousands of children accidentally drink this and have to be hospitalized. Yet developing world governments and utilities strain to support the deficient grid they do have. Energy poverty is the situation of the poor where the lack of most basic energy services, and this prevents them from living a life of dignity. There is a revolution in distributed renewable energy products across Asia and Africa. Portable solar lamps and solar home systems are being sold by social enterprises, benefitting the customers and the micro-entrepreneur. Grameen Shakti is a social enterprise that assembles,

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sells, finances and services distributed solar systems across Bangladesh, providing energy to millions.\textsuperscript{17}

Solar Sister is a social enterprise based in Uganda. It does not create solar lighting technology; it merely buys it. Its business model is simple: it offers an Avon-style marketing and distribution, but instead of selling cosmetics, women sell solar powered lamps. Solar Sister applies existing technologies with proven business models -- to address energy poverty in rural Africa and to provide economic opportunity for women, thereby enhancing the health of children. Thus, the innovation is in the application of existing ideas to address the needs of the poor. The improved light extends the number of work and study hours in a day for customers and their families. The micro-entrepreneurs increase their income, and their family’s well being.

Thus, frugal innovation and social entrepreneurship exemplify creative, innovative, future-focused change-making. Social entrepreneurs create novel organizational strategies to address social needs by transforming social problems into economic opportunities. Frugal innovators design technologies for the poor, providing innovation to disrupt social and environmental injustices. These stories illustrate several recent trends in sustainable development:

Economic empowerment for women results in sustainable development. If one provides development aid to men, on what do they spend this money? All too frequently: tobacco, alcohol, and gambling. When there is increased income available to women, they generally spend it on food, education, and health care for

children. Social entrepreneurship is a more direct and sustainable form of economic empowerment for women and girls as opposed to charity and aid. The poor may be adopting sustainable energy technologies faster than the advanced industrial nations.

These approaches to sustainable development illustrate the open systems model of social praxis: novelty, creativity, future focus. These “people manipulating the world” are developing new paradigms of social change, reflecting many of the principles that Ilia has presented to us. We Franciscans can learn from them, bring them into this dialogue, and partner with them. I propose that Franciscan wisdom can provide us material for engaging, supporting, and further inspiring social entrepreneurs and frugal innovators, as well as scientists.

Franciscan Partnerships for Social Praxis

Now I want to point out that for all this discussion of innovation, there is a “classic” dimension to this, especially for Franciscan women. By classic, I mean social praxis that has been proven through the test of time. Many of your congregations have devoted their energies to providing healthcare and education, often with a focus on women and children. These classic forms of healthcare and education ministry continue to meet needs, but the social praxis may take new forms.

A century ago, our congregations were focused on Europe and North America. There were missionaries elsewhere, but most of the effort was poured into countries connected by the North Atlantic. The demographic center of gravity is currently shifting. It is shifting for our congregations, the Church, and the human family. This demographic transition has been underway for some time now, and to ignore this social reality is to ignore the signs of the times. This is a highly
significant trend at the level of the human family, and the Spirit is present, perhaps in some surprising ways. Note that the countries predicted to suffer the most from climate disruption are the same where Franciscan congregations are growing, across the tropics.

Here is a short menu of three opportunities for our congregations. I want to emphasize “our,” and “communities.” I am proposing them for community social praxis, in partnership with these social-minded innovators and entrepreneurs. For each of them, I propose a Gospel icon of mutuality. We as communities can share, invest, and learn from. Let us examine each in turn and recognize how each will help us deepen our social praxis.

Share a vision of the dynamic relationship between Franciscan wisdom and this type of social praxis with our members in the Global South. Share the Franciscan tradition as a dynamic, evolutionary, open stance toward life on Earth, full of hope. The formation needs among the Franciscan Family in the Global South are significant, and we can continue to share our resources with them. There is need and opportunity here. We can share the kind of evolutionary worldview, Franciscan wisdom, and social praxes with our Franciscan brothers and sisters in the developing world. We can share our charism with the developing world -- as a charism open to innovation. This could be a very inspiring expression of and for formation! For “share,” I recommend as a Gospel icon the visitation of Mary to Elizabeth.

Invest in social enterprises using frugal innovation to help the poor. Within the past five years, new forms of support for social entrepreneurship for development have emerged, namely social impact
investment. Our congregations began socially responsible investing a generation ago. This screened out the bad actors: no tobacco, no abortion, and no arms trade. This is being “less bad” with our investments. Social impact investment reframes the paradigm: invest in enterprises with a social justice mission, wait (perhaps a bit longer) to receive investment funds back with some interest, but measure the value of an investment on how it helps people escape from poverty. Social impact investing emerged from criticism of very large foundations that would donate their 5% of interest every year to good purposes. People inspired by Mohammed Yunus said, right, but what are you doing with the body of the investment? With the corpus? Why not shift investment from Wall Street corporations to businesses actually serving the poor? This would be an investment in women, children and sustainable development. This kind of investment has to be done carefully, prudently, but social impact investors do receive their money back. Some religious congregations cannot do this, but others could. This is an evolution from “less bad” to investing in good social praxis. Consider linking this kind of investment with the sharing of Franciscan wisdom and praxis. Consider how powerful that could be! For “invest,” I recommend as a Gospel icon the Presentation of the Christ child to Anna in the temple.

Learn from the poor and how they are living frugally, and more sustainably than we in the US. Lessons in frugal innovation as disruptive innovation are emerging in the Global South, and we can import them to the Global North. This is a mutuality that is a

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holy exchange. For example, Grameen Bank recently launched its first bank here in the US. This is learning from the poor indeed! Franciscans should embrace banking for the poor. After all, we were the first to do so. The observant reform in the late 1400s preached solidarity and created the first microfinance institutions. This is part of our tradition that could be retrieved.¹⁹

Let us return to that gnarly problem of climate disruption in light of the above. Sustainable solutions require us to address energy poverty and energy profligacy. Sustainability is not only a technical issue. It is an environmental and social justice issue. We have to see these as both. It is immoral for the Global North to use climate disruption, brought about by our energy profligacy, to preach at the Global South. However, investing in greater fossil fuel dependency, or giving foreign aid to governments are not ethically viable solutions. Investing in enterprises like Solar Sister is, however. This is an example of a positive social praxis. If we can practice authentic solidarity with the hundreds of thousands of people in the developing world using distributed solar and renewable energy. this would be good news indeed! Then we can, with confidence and authority preach to our Catholic brothers and sister here in the US: another energy path is possible. We don't have to be energy profligate. We can be wiser in our energy use here; if the poor can do this, why not us? For “learn from the poor,” I recommend as a Gospel icon the encounter of the Syrophoenician woman with Jesus.

Next year marks the thirty-fifth anniversary of Francis being named the patron saint of ecology. Some Franciscan justice, peace and integrity of creation

animators are planning to use this as an occasion for animating Franciscan care for creation. I would like to suggest we engage and transform the energy poverty/profligacy dualism, and challenge everyone to make a shift to energy wisdom. This would be an appropriate way to celebrate this anniversary. I detest the saccharine St. Francis. We have to push aside the notion of Francis as placid garden-statue bird bath. What the world needs today is a patron saint of ecological wisdom. I propose we present Francis with a portable solar lamp, like those sold by Solar Sister micro-entrepreneurs, to guide our response to our energy/climate crisis.

Into the Future

In her essay, Ilia Delio described a whole host of thought leaders in the field of science and religion, with a focus on evolutionary universe; she has challenged us to formulate a creative and appropriate religious response. The universe-in-evolution is an unfinished process. Scotus described all reality as contingent. Ilia proposes that engaging in evolutionary reality should inspire us with:

1. novelty,
2. creativity,
3. future-focus.

I hope that the new paradigms of social praxis I have presented, and our potential for partnering with these social entrepreneurs and frugal technologists, have demonstrated that the framework Delio presented can be both inspiring and practical. We can draw on these properties of an emergent evolutionary worldview to interpret classic principles of our tradition.

The Primacy of Christ -- the entire evolutionary universe sings of God, from the most microscopic to the macrocosmic. Creation teaches us, as a book, as a
poem, as light, about the Incarnation. We Franciscans sing the song of creation because this is a Christic hymn reflecting Christogenesis. There is no dualistic thinking here, but rather whole-making. I hope that the specific suggestions for social praxis in my talk have fleshed out what whole-making might look like.

The dynamic of catholicity -- from our perspective as Franciscans, the Catholic tradition is not “fixed” but rather dynamic. God evolves to become more loving and self-generous. The universe evolves as well. No matter how many in our church want the universe to be fixed, unchanging, even Aristotelian, creation is not. Nor can our faith be. As Galileo muttered, "Eppur si muove" - “and yet it moves.” We are called to be present progressive people. We can help many Catholics by modeling a dynamic, future focused praxis, grounded in faith.

Creation as family -- this is not just a good idea. Creation as family is metaphysical reality. We all live on one ball of dirt hanging in space. We can behave as though we were not on this one sphere together; this would be folly. Or, we choose a more sustainable future. This would be the path of wisdom. Of all the traditions in the world, we Franciscans are identified with this familial frame of thinking about creation. Let’s live up to these expectations! Let’s move into the thirty-fifth anniversary of Francis being named saint of ecological spirituality, but link this not to birdbaths, but to ecological wisdom and sustainable social praxis.

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