

Dialogue Sessions

[I13] Laudato Si' - a papal encyclical as driver for transformation towards sustainability?

Ulrich Bartosch [Germany]¹, Hartmut Graßl [Germany]², Christian Meier [Germany]¹, Oliver Putz [Germany]³, Thomas Sporer [Germany]¹, [Till Weyers](#) [Germany]⁴

Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt¹, Max-Planck-Institute for Meteorology (MPI-M) and Vereinigung Deutscher Wissenschaftler e.V.², Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies³, Vereinigung Deutscher Wissenschaftler e.V. and Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt⁴

Proposal for a dialogue session

2 years after the publication of the papal encyclical “Laudato Si’ – On Care For Our Common Home” by Pope Francis in June 2015, there are many initiatives and projects around the world using the text as source and inspiration for their activities. The encyclical, which he calls for a more sustainable lifestyle and economy and more social justice, has gained worldwide attention and was welcomed by many. With this in mind, there are great hopes and expectations, especially in the academic world, that religious actors can play an important role in sustainability transformation processes. In the encyclical Laudato Si’ one can see an openness to scientific insights and an invitation to a dialogue with science and other religions.

The session aims at presenting different perspectives on the role of the encyclical and related projects as possible drivers for transformation. We want to explore the following questions: How can ethical considerations help to support and even accelerate transformations? We discuss why religion could constitute a special driver, adding a normative, ethical-moral dimension to the technical knowledge of transformations. The questions of the need of a change of consciousness and awareness are raised.

We situate the session in the theme of “new frontiers” as it explores, inter alia the role of religion for sustainability transformations. In that, it analyses the extent to which such catalysts can be utilised to promote and facilitate societal transformations. We want to show the potential of the ethical-moral perspective and open up new frontiers for knowledge of and action on developing just and sustainable transitions within society overall.

The format: After an opening statement and three short input presentations about the role and potential of Laudato Si’ and related projects for sustainability transformations (10-15 minutes), we proceed with three parallel thematic discussion rounds to deepen the questions brought forward in the inputs (20-25 min). These parallel discussions then feed into the final discussion about the overarching question of the dialogue session in a fish bowl format (20-25 min).

Convenors

Prof. Dr. Ulrich Bartosch, Professor for Pedagogy, Katholische Universität (KU) Eichstätt-Ingolstadt

Christian Meier, research assistant and PhD student, KU Eichstätt-Ingolstadt

Till Weyers, project consultant, Vereinigung Deutscher Wissenschaftler e.V.; PhD student, KU Eichstätt-Ingolstadt

Opening statement

The encyclical Laudato Si' and science - a reflection

Hartmut Graßl, former director at the Max-Planck-Institute for Meteorology (MPI-M), President of the Vereinigung Deutscher Wissenschaftler e. V.

Input Presentations

1. Religion as a catalyst for societal change

Oliver Putz, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), Potsdam

2. The Third Mission of the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt

Thomas Sporer, Third Mission and Civic Engagement, Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt

In recent years, the so-called Third Mission of universities has gained a growing importance in the international debate about the role of science and higher education in society. The umbrella term comes along with quite different flavours which range from an Engaged University which primarily stresses the linkage with civic society to an Entrepreneurial University which stresses the linkage with business. However, a common denominator of those different conceptions is the transformative impact which universities play in n-tuple innovation systems.

In 1990, the supreme Pontifex John Paul II issued an Apostolic constitution which elaborates on the role of Catholic Universities. Beyond research and teaching a Catholic University should serve humanity and strive to preserve the creation. As this spirit is deeply ingrained into the DNA of every Catholic University, this presentation relates the Third Mission of the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt to the idea of a „Great Transformation“. It gives an overview of the KU's current activities in the fields of sustainability and takes a closer look at the interplay between research and teaching with societal change and impact.

3. The KU/VDW project Laudato Si´ as driver for transformation – presentation, main activities, first insights

Ulrich Bartosch (KU, VDW), Christian Meier (KU), Till Weyers (VDW)

We want to present the 2-year joint project „Laudato Si´ – The papal encyclical in discourse for a Great Transformation" by the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt and the Federation of German Scientists as a driver for transformation towards sustainability, in the field of transformative education, knowledge communication and values change. We want to present the extent to which our project group, using Laudato Si´ as the catalyst, seeks to promote sustainability transitions, both in academic fields and society as a whole.

The fundamental aim of the project is to promote sustainability transitions by putting into discourse, contextualising and developing the main issues of a publication on environment and society by a religious leader. Moreover, it wants to determine, through participation of relevant stakeholders from all parts of society, the global challenges of our time and to develop solutions for a "Great Transformation" (WBGU, 2011) towards more sustainability.

To achieve these aims, we develop and carry out an academic lecture series and other formats over the course of two years. Main issues of the encyclical are analysed and critically discussed in light of current academic research with experts from the areas of science, economics, politics, churches and civil society organisations. Furthermore, through expert interviews and a series of publications the project multiplies and strengthens the powerful socio-ecological calls to action as contained within the encyclical.

In this presentation, the exact project activities and preliminary insights and reflections will be described to visualise how the project can serve to strengthen sustainability transitions. It will be shown that in our case this works in the way that the project group seeks to serve as a catalyst that carries statements and messages from

inside the church into other sectors of society, beyond the strictly religious. Thus, utilising Laudato Si', the project opens up new frontiers for knowledge of and action on developing just and sustainable transitions within society overall.

Convenors

Prof. Dr. Ulrich Bartosch (chair)

Ulrich Bartosch, 56, is the project leader of the joint project "Laudato Si' – The papal encyclical in discourse for a Great Transformation" organised by the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt and the Federation of German Scientists (VDW). Further project-partners include the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies Potsdam (IASS) and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK). The project has a duration of two years and is commissioned by the executive committee of the Catholic University. The project is active in the field of organising scientific events on the core topics of the encyclical (sustainability, climate change, social justice, etc.) and in the field of transformative research and education.

Ulrich Bartosch is Professor for Pedagogy at the Faculty of Social Work at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt. Furthermore, he is a representative for "intercultural/international social work" and was active as senator and dean from 2001 to 2007. He studied Political Science and Pedagogy at the University of Regensburg. He obtained his PhD about the Peace Theory of Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker (supervisors: Prof. Dr. Iring Fetscher, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main) and Prof. Dr. Herfried Münkler, Humboldt-Universität Berlin). From 2009 to 2015 he was president of the Federation of German Scientists (VDW). He is an active member of Pugwash Germany.

Till Weyers

Till Weyers, 25, from Berlin (Germany), is a post-graduate who received his Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Public Administration from Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF) in Barcelona in 2013. In 2014, he obtained his Master in European Studies from the FU/HU/TU Berlin. He wrote his Master thesis on European leadership in international climate change negotiations in the run-up to the COP21 2015 in Paris. Since February 2015 he works as a project manager at the Federation of German Scientists (Vereinigung Deutscher Wissenschaftler e.V., VDW) in Berlin and since April 2016 in the KU/VDW-Project: "Laudato Si' – The papal encyclical in discourse for a Great Transformation". At the same time he is pursuing his PhD in the field of political science at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt. The research focuses on the (re)contextualisation of the encyclical Laudato Si' in light of academic discourse regarding climate change, global justice and sustainability. Furthermore, he is a member of Young Pugwash – an organisation dealing with nuclear disarmament – Polis180 – a grassroots think-tank for foreign and European policy and the divestment campaign Fossil Free Berlin. His interests include energy and climate policy, European politics, security studies, nuclear disarmament, conflict resolution, migration, social justice and cyber security.

Christian Meier

Christian Meier, 35, from Eichstätt (Germany) studied at the University of Passau (Germany), including one year of studies and work at Rome (Italy). In 2008 he obtained an study degree as "Diplom-Kulturwirt", that is in "Language, Economics and Cultural Studies" at the University of Passau. From 2010 - 2014 he worked in the field of academic management: He was responsible coordinator of a business management course of studies at Campus M21 at Munich (private university which offers public degrees of studies). Since May 2016 C. Meier works as research assistant at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt ("KU", Germany) / Faculty of Social Works / for Professor Dr. Ulrich Bartosch (Professor of Pedagogy). As research assistant he is mainly responsible for the organization of the KU/VDW-Project:

“Laudato Si’ – The papal encyclical in discourse for a Great Transformation”. In Nov. 2016 C. Meier’s registration of a PhD-research-project was accepted by the Faculty of Economics of the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt. The research covers the role of change agents in organizational change management processes. The empirical focus will be on transformative universities.

Project website

www.laudato-si-transformation.de (<http://www.laudato-si-transformation.de>)

Website KU Eichstätt-Ingolstadt

www.ku.de (<http://www.ku.de>)

Website Federation of German Scientists

www.vdw-ev.de (<http://www.vdw-ev.de>)

External stakeholders/presenters

Dr. Dr. Oliver Putz, Senior Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), Potsdam

Thomas Sporer, Third Mission and Civic Engagement, Katholische Universität (KU) Eichstätt-Ingolstadt

Hartmut Graßl, former director at the Max-Planck-Institute for Meteorology (MPI-M), President of the Vereinigung Deutscher Wissenschaftler e.V.
