



## **2nd Conference on Ethics in Business: 'Development and Self Interest'**

**EVERYONE IS GOING TO BENEFIT FROM A  
JUST ECONOMY**

Sacred Heart Seminary

Daniel Borg

Thursday 20, October 2022

Dear all thank you and welcome. In preparing the abstract for this conference, I reflected significantly on the Pope's intervention at the Grand Palace in Valletta which from an institutional perspective I believe is the most important intervention he made during his visit to Malta.

In it he provided us with a clear commitment on the protection of the environment, a commitment which has to be shared by three parties: the political class/the state, business, and society/the community. And while the first two have the greatest responsibility/onus as they shape the legal and social framework in which we live, we are also part of a community, and as a community we cannot remain indifferent.

In September of this year one of the major events that took place was the 'Economy of Francesco'. The key message that started this movement was a call by Pope Francis to youth that things can be done differently, and he invited them to come forward with solutions.

In this space for dialogue which we also want to create I want to cite one of the key parts of the 'Final Statement' of the Economy of Francesco:

We, as people, families, communities, and citizens of the world, believe that "we cannot make ourselves happy without making others happy as well" and that we can only achieve this by adopting new metrics for the common good and by encouraging civil institutions to provide the time and space necessary to build meaningful relations.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Economy of Francesco, *Final Statement EoF Assisi 2022* (online) : <https://francescoeconomy.org/final-statement-eof-assisi-2022/?fbclid=IwAR0GK78CE8k8K5xK8j0FB-NnY6j2KLODDzn1a2e21saOVIRgfFI1zq1QbDY> [accessed 17 October 2022]

This statement which summarized the outcomes of one of the thematic villages held during the event clearly provides us with the objectives of the conference today, where it states that “we cannot make ourselves happy without making others happy as well”, and that in a nutshell, **is the common good**. Everyone is going to benefit from a just economy, and not just only a few. However, there must be the time and space necessary to build meaningful relations and therefore address the structural inequalities of our economic system. This is the scope of the conference today.

When we embarked on this journey last year, we wanted to create a space where ‘ethics in business’ is discussed thoroughly and not as the usual whitewashing. As an association which represents businesses here in Gozo we ourselves wanted to start some soul searching when we brought up this topic during our 20 year anniversary celebration at the beginning of 2020. However, in doing this conference, we wanted to create a space for dialogue with other stakeholders, and I sincerely hope that this space will continue and strengthen itself along the years.

The environment is indeed a topic which has the topmost priority in the agenda of the Chamber. It is a theme which was brought forward by operators whose livelihood depends also on this sector. However, they also realised that we cannot continue like this.

On our side we cannot not recount the endless meetings and interventions with other stakeholders, and also policy makers on the subject. Sometimes we were met with blank faces, other times with backlash from our own colleagues. However, these were all based on the sense of urgency of what is happening around us in Gozo, and the fact that it is not true that nothing can be done. In the face of all this we cannot remain complacent. Quoting from the Pope’s address to the representatives of the Economy of Francesco, he said:

The situation is such that we cannot just wait until the next international summit, which might be too late. The earth burns today, and today we must change, at all levels.<sup>2</sup>

Also, in a joint message for the Protection of the Creation, the three leaders of the main Christian denominations had highlighted how:

. . . we have taken the opposite direction. We have maximised our own interest at the expense of future generations. By concentrating on our

---

<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis, Address during the Pope’s visit to Assisi for the event “Economy of Francesco” [24 September 2022] (online) : <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2022/september/documents/20220924-visita-assisi.pdf> [accessed 17 October 2022].

wealth, we find that long-term assets, including the bounty of nature, are depleted for short-term advantage.<sup>3</sup>

The environment is a key theme in Pope Francis's teachings and messages, one where he urges commitment from all the parts involved. It was therefore fit to put as the starting base of our discussion today his interventions.

On my part my message is: Let us take action. Let us reflect where we did wrong. Let us not be afflicted by the thinking that nothing can be changed.

Let me conclude by thanking all the speakers that today will be making their intervention: Architect Daniel Darmanin, Dr Gordon Cordina, Anthony Zammit, and Professor Simone Borg, and for bearing with me when tying up all the organisational aspects. It was not surely not easy for them to tackle such an important but delicate subject. I would also like to thank Francesco Pio Attard for accepting to chair this event, and for his help throughout the whole organisation. I would also like to thank the staff at the Chamber, and all of you of goodwill, whose presence here is surely a sign of commitment to this important subject.

---

---

<sup>3</sup> Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew – Pope Francis – Archbishop of Canterbury Justin, *A Joint Message for the Protection of the Creation* [1 September 2021] (online) : <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2021/documents/20210901-messaggio-protezionedelcreato.html> [accessed 17 October 2022].