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A DIFFERENT STORY OF MODERN ECONOMIC SCIENCE

Fraternity is needed to regenerate and transform the economy of inequality (cf. Bruni, 2013, p. 15) and to re-discover the solution of the epistemological fracture between the contemporary economy and the Franciscan, humanistic and civil economy. In this context, in the presentation of the Economy of Communion, Chiara Lubich states: “for this reason, it is requested of everyone to put into practice decisively that element which is called love and which is Christian love or, for those of other faiths, benevolence, which means wanting the good of others, an attitude found in all the sacred books and also present in so-called secular men, who have, like everyone else, in their nature, the instinct to relate to others. Every person, despite his weaknesses, has an innate culture of giving rather than having, because he is drawn to love his fellow-men” (Lubich, 1999). Igino Giordani, connecting the mystery of love to the prophetic sign of fraternity, reminds us that “love is a flow of fire that liquefies gates and bars, burns down barriers, destroys grudges: it opens the doors of life” (Giordani, 2010, p. 96) and thus generates the economy of love/*caritas*.

1. KOINONIA: SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF THE FRATERNITY

“The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every man. That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with mankind and its history by the deepest of bonds” (Paolo VI, 1965, n. 1).

While we are struggling with a present that we did not expect, we must already look to the future, but with some more consciousness: the coronavirus emphasizes on what we are all called to do. The pandemic can reveal the potential of our society that we thought was silent or absent. If we look back, the generations full of purpose are those who fought for a better world.

For this reason, we may have learned that the future is in our hands, but this is not a granted thing, because it depends on our individual and community actions. Our future is connected to that of others. Let's not say that, once the emergency is over, everything will immediately fall into place, because it will never be the same again. After all, we will have to take on new political and socio-economic initiatives that will commit everyone to action. Now it seems a little less true that the world goes as it goes and nobody can do anything about it. And it seems a little less true that individuals alone can do and exist, without others. The future is unfolding, and it is up to us, this now sounds truer. Human history, *magistra vitae*, is not so much or only a social and cultural history, but rather a process of choices based on which communities decide the course of human life in the Globe and the Globe. “So, it was with Saint Francis of Assisi and the leper, or with Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta and her poor. They understood the mystery at work in them. In drawing near to the suffering, they were certainly not able to eliminate all their pain or to explain every evil. Faith is not a light that scatters all our darkness, but a lamp that guides our steps in the night and suffices for the journey. To those who suffer, God does not provide arguments that explain everything; rather, his response is that of an accompanying presence, a history of goodness that touches every story of suffering and opens up a ray of light. In Christ, God himself wishes to share this path with us and to offer us his gaze so that we might see the light within it” (Francesco, 2013b, n. 57). In Franciscans, in particular, Christiformity becomes society, the age of the Spirit, that is, history in the Trinity as formulated by Gioacchino da Fiore (Joachim of Fiore) (cf. Bazzichi,

Reali, 2020, pp. 1-59). Therefore, Christ the *Pantocrator* and human history intersect and condense (cf. *ibidem*, pp. 150-151; Moltmann, 2008).

In front of the disasters of the neo-liberal system, neo-utilitarianism, theocracy, globalization, and the financialization of the economy without a soul, which, with the complicity of politics as well, has produced the dictatorship of money and the financial economy over the real economy, the social doctrine of the Church (from now on SDC) alone does not have the human and political authority to impose the moral and civic virtues - such as the dignity of the human person, otherness, fraternity, gratuitousness, solidarity, subsidiarity, reciprocity, - indispensable to distance oneself from individualism and selfishness for the achievement of the common good, in the creation of which all institutions, social organizations, families, and persons must participate, and each person must be guaranteed an equal opportunity to develop his or her talents in society, without exemption from responsibility and without welfarism. For this reason, as in the past, we need an alliance between the community, the institutions, the territory, the Church, and the Bishop. Certain issues such as employment, youth work, economics, and justice, are interconnected with the very actors of social life: entrepreneurs, workers, doctors, lawyers, merchants, teachers, families, that the Church gathers not only in liturgical and sacramental activities but also in events, conventions and where people live and work. The Christian and the human, a formidable «*common covenant*» (Baggio, 2019) for a world that is fairer, more inclusive, and more beautiful and that can generate a different paradigm and give a soul to today's economy. "A process of global change. One in which not only believers but all men and women of goodwill, beyond differences of creed and nationality, can participate, inspired by an ideal of fraternity attentive above all to the poor and excluded" (Francesco, 2020b).

In addition, Luigino Bruni states that "...the new world social covenant should be a *covenant of fraternity* after equality and liberty: the two have been the great conquests of modernity, creating democracy and rights [...], but they are proving to be on their own incapable of managing the common goods on which much, perhaps almost everything, of the present and the future will depend. *Liberte* and *egalite* mean individual; fraternity, on the other hand, means ties between people, and without ties, without recognizing that we are tied together because we insist on the same common resources, we cannot escape the tragedy of the *commons*" (Bruni, 2010, p. 56).

Indeed, Benedict XVI writes in the social encyclical *Caritas in veritate* (2009): I would like to remind everyone, especially governments engaged in boosting the world's economic and social assets, that the *primary capital to be*

safeguarded and valued is man, the human person in his or her integrity: «Man is the source, the focus and the aim of all economic and social life» (Benedetto XVI, 2009, n. 25). The **change of an epoch** imposes “a fundamental renewal of hearts and minds so that the human person may always be placed at the center of social, cultural and economic life” (Francesco, 2019).

For this very reason, *charity in the truth in Christ* (cf. Benedetto XVI, 2009, n. 1) is the natural constitutive and constructive force of a fraternal community that, on a universal level, goes beyond all diversity and expansion. Not only. It is also the *driving force behind a new economy, where the various economic activities, such as finance, the free market, private and public institutions, and entrepreneurship, are called to structure themselves, both internally and in their external relations, in more equitable relational terms, inspired by the logic of gratuitousness and fraternal reciprocity*. In other words, in parallel with the market economy, the so-called third sector or social private sector, or civil economy is gradually emerging, as well as an intermediate economic area between for-profit and non-profit. These include traditional companies, which implement assistance and solidarity pacts; foundations, expressions of private companies; entrepreneurial groups with socially useful purposes; and the varied world of the so-called civil and sharing economy (cf. *ibidem* n. 46). The key to overcoming the crisis lies in this new model of economic and social development, which depends on the cultural renaissance of mankind. Therefore, before addressing the question of reforming the financial system and the appropriate instruments for achieving the objectives of growth and development, it is necessary to resolve the complex issues concerning the anthropological issue. The anthropological vision underlying economic theory has become fundamental: “the social question has become radically and anthropological question” (*ibidem*, n. 75).

In this perspective of innovation, openness to life also understood as the production of new human capital must re-enter the center of politics, economics and true development: the ethics of life cannot be divorced from political, economic, and social ethics. This is a cultural challenge for a new humanism. The Franciscan theologians Pietro di Giovanni Olivi (Peter of John Olivi), Giovanni Duns Scoto (John Duns Scotus), Alessandro Bonini di Alessandria (Alexander Bonini of Alexandria), Guglielmo d’Ockham (William of Ockham), Astesano di Asti (Astesano of Asti), Gerardo of Odone, Alvaro Pelagio, Bartalo of Sassoferrato, Francesco of Empoli and Guglielmo Centauri of the XIII and XIV centuries, through a theoretical elaboration and a practical action, inspired by daily life among the people and their material and spiritual needs, they begin to lay the foundations of the socio-economic and ethical-political system from which the modern market economy emerged; in this sense, we can speak of a true «School of

Franciscan thought» also in the ethical-economic field, in whose analysis we find the connection between the productivity of capital and the productivity of work. This economic theological principle constitutes an important orientation, since it anticipated the modern idea that the main producer of wealth is not capital, understood in the Marxist perspective, but «human capital», in the meaning of human ability, knowledge, competence, initiative, creativity, innovation (cf. Bazzichi, Reali, 2020, pp. 77-78).

In this context, the words of Benedict XVI are illuminating: *Openness to life is at the center of true development*. When a society moves towards the denial or suppression of life, it ends up no longer finding the necessary motivation and energy to strive for man's true good" (Benedetto, 2009, n. 28).

The family, the first vital component of society, is, in fact, the place where life is generated and received in a context that is not only loving, gratuitousness, and mutual solidarity, but also a chain of transmission of values, experiences, and traditions, where the person is shaped, matures and develops bonds of mutual belonging, educating himself to civil, economic and social living, strengthening social cohesion and the sense of common good.

The famous sociologist and economist Giuseppe Toniolo (1845-1918), beatified on April 29, 2012, just as he had repeatedly reminded the laity of the need for a reawakening of social Catholicism, today he explicitly invites Catholics, at a time of disorientation and crisis, to a «reawakening», offering, through the study of the SDC and its realization and actualization in history, from which derive the permanent principles and the understanding of situations and reality and the «signs of the times», a generous social-political commitment, at the service of the country and the common good¹.

We cannot ignore the vision of contemporary economist Jeffrey Sachs², director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, who makes explicit reference to the canons of Christian social doctrine to identify the new paradigms of economic behavior: "the alternative to the perversion of capitalism is the social doctrine of the Church [...] which offers a crucial path towards a global ethic of sustainable development" (Morsolin, 2017) [...] "it is time to restore a deeper philosophical basis for economics, based on human dignity and the social teaching of the Church" (Pentin, 2020).

1 On the figure of Giuseppe Toniolo and its importance in the history of the SDC and in the organization of the Catholic laity under the pontificates of Pius IX (1846-1878), Leo XIII (1878-1903), Pius X (1903-1914) and Pius XI (1914-1922), cf. BAZZICHI, 2012.

2 The Boston Globe called him the "greatest economic engineer since Keynes" and the New York Times named him "probably the world's most important economist".

The Franciscans, who had made poverty their trademark, fully understood, as early as the 13th and 14th centuries, how necessary it was to educate people in the proper use of money, a figure that represents all the potentialities of subjugation, power, and domination. Even if they lived mostly on work and on begging, they did not propose begging, because this helps to survive, not to live and create development. What they asked of the well-to-do was a credit on sustainable terms for the economically weak, but socially active and creative. A great misunderstanding that has accompanied the history of economic thought is, therefore, that of having reduced the homo of Francis to the homo of *paupertas*, or, simplistically, of beneficence. In the light of this work, such consideration is completely unfounded, especially on a scientific level, as well as ontological, although piety has a relevant, if not exclusive, role in defining the «virtuous» and creative activity of man, capable of making that transformative contribution to experience. Beneficence is not only a subsidiary ornament of action, but it is the motive of action, it is the incentive that induces man to recognize the other as equal, similar, to himself; beneficence, as a sort of spoliation in action, as a presupposition of cooperation, communion, pro-active assistance, and, therefore, of fides/trust to obtain the recognition of the other. The beneficence of the early Franciscan convents was not considered as almsgiving, but as an invitation to industriousness and, therefore, to the promotion of man, according to the possibilities of each. Economic literature has made the serious mistake of considering almsgiving as mere beneficence, whereas it is not.

The Franciscans, following St. Francis, speak of the «grace of work», “those brothers to whom the Lord has granted the grace to work, let them work with fidelity and devotion” (Regula bullata of 1223, cap. V, 1) as the sum of talents for the common good of the community, thus creating and generating the concept of the division of labor, as the basis of a «first» industrial revolution with the creation of a virtuous order, new and circular where all are brothers, without the poor and joyless.

From the *Canticle of the Creatures*, production - work - consumption - wealth - happiness - perfect gladness or JOY are elements that create harmony among all things, among human beings, and between them and Creation. In the *Testament* of St. Francis, we read: “*And I used to work with my hands, and I still desire to work; and I firmly wish that all my brothers give themselves to honest work. Let those who do not know how to work learn, not from desire of receiving wages for their work but as an example and in order to avoid idleness*” (FF, 119).

The same urban development was designed to make visible the spaces of the basic structures of the new *civitas et negotia* (city and business):

- the cathedral, the place of wisdom and doctrine;
- the government palace, the center of civil authority and city administration;
- the palace of merchants and guilds, as a representation of productive and professional activities;
- the market, considered as a place of negotiation, exchange, social relations, and mutual trust;
- the Monte Pio or Pietà Palace (Pawn banks), an expression of micro-credit at low cost for entrepreneurial investments and support or social amortization for indigent families and individuals;
- the convents of the religious, where the polyform exercise of charity and conviviality is practiced outside;
- the offices of the Confraternities and voluntary associations, which host pilgrims and care for the poor;
- the health care center. The health hospital and the hospice for the sick and elderly, as a place of care and hospitality, which will later take on the task of educating abandoned children, always preserving that of caring for the sick, and this is the activity that overtime is imposed replacing the other functions.

It was within this framework of the city-community, which was far from virtual and qualitatively different from that of the agricultural villages and those attached to the castles of feudal lords or monasteries, that the «virtues» of civil society were cultivated (mutual trust, respect for the ideas of others, solidarity, fraternity, cooperative-type competition), rooted in the three pillars of the principle of subsidiarity - already intuited and studied by St. Bonaventure: State, market and civil society - capable of achieving cohesion, concord, sharing (of values, objectives, resources) and participation of all in the formation and implementation of decisions that affect the community (cf. Bonaventura, 1891, pp. 161-162; idem, 1898, pp. 320-324). Subsidiarity is an expression of political, economic, and social autonomy and creates the common good, because one of its primary objectives is to put every citizen in a position to exercise independently, to the best of his or her ability, the principal rights, and duties with which he or she is invested. In particular, the anthropological assumption on which it is founded is as follows: each actor must act by paying the utmost attention to the needs of others and doing everything possible to support them so that they can achieve the degree of autonomy that allows them to perform their duties effectively in the community.

For Franciscans, the most important thing for *communitas* is to the promotion and human dignity of the person «with» (*con*) the work, and the enhancement of doing «with» (*con*) that originates from the word convent, which comes from the Latin «*con venire*», a place of *fraternitas*, and «with» (*con*) the grace of poverty, could be easier *usus facti* and “to circulate the wealth” (Todeschini, 2004, p. 74). For Franciscans, the source of dignity and fraternity is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in that principle, as Chiara Lubich revealed to the world, of «non-being», that is, the despoiling of that ego (corrupted by materiality) that facilitates and favors God’s action on the world and humanity. The beneficence of the Franciscans was just that, that is, the exercise of daily non-being so that the other might be. The deprivation of the ego (almsgiving) is seen as the yeast of sociality, relationship, and community living.

“What Franciscans have always denied is welfarism. Dignity is not realized in eating, but in producing. So, the mission was to give everyone the possibility - states Zamagni - to produce, which means to work. The division of labor, which is a strong idea of the Franciscans, served to give everyone, even the weakest (the disabled, the poor) the possibility to produce and therefore to work, which is something connatural to the dignity of man” (Anfossi, Zamagni, 2017). The Franciscans have always opposed misery as unproductive privatization, as «dead misery». They founded the first «school» of economic thought, from which emerged the modern spirit of the economy of a free, sustainable and inclusive market, based on the ethics of *bonum (good)*, on the anthropology *homo homini fraters (every man is a brother)*, and on the dignity of human work, on the «grace» of work as a gift from God.

But the question that all philosophers, economists, sociologists, and theologians ask themselves is this: is it possible to found a common value platform among all men? Benedict XVI in *Caritas in veritate*, referring to *Populorum Progressio* (1967) of Paul VI, states that what is needed is the ability “to generate a new vision and muster new energy in the service of a truly integral humanism”. Why “the greatest service to development, then, is a Christian humanism that enkindles charity and takes its lead from truth, accepting both as a lasting gift from God”. Only a humanism “open to the Absolute” - unlike the one which “excludes God” and for this it is, an “inhuman humanism” - “can guide us in the promotion and building of forms of social and civic life – structures, institutions, culture, and *ethos* – without exposing us to the risk of becoming ensnared by the fashions of the moment” (Benedetto XVI, 2009, n. 78). “And if the market becomes inhuman”, writes the economist Luigino Bruni, “it cannot remain a market either (which, as Smith has taught us, is only a human activity)” (Bruni, Smerilli, 2020, p. 112).

Contemporary humanity needs spirituality and ethics that support the transformations of a new time. The development “needs Christians with their arms raised towards God in prayer [...] love and forgiveness, self-denial, acceptance of others, justice and peace” (Benedetto XVI, 2009, n. 79). The contemporary humanity needs Christians capable of “transforming «hearts of stone» into «hearts of flesh» (Ezek 36:26), rendering life on earth «divine» and thus more worthy of humanity” (Benedetto XVI, 2009, n. 79). Therefore, development and growth, “if it is to be authentically human - Benedict XVI’s encyclical goes on to say - needs to make room for the principle of «gratuitousness» as an expression of «fraternity»” (ibidem, n. 34).

“The Author of Nature, writes Adam Smith, in his infinite wisdom, has, in this way, taught man to respect the feelings and judgments of his brethren; [...] he has made man, if I may be allowed the expression, the immediate judge of mankind, and, in this way as well as many other aspects, has created him in his own image, appointing him his vicar on earth, to superintend the conduct of his brethren” (Smith, 2013, p. 188).

Gratuitousness is an extremely difficult concept to define in its economic and social declinations. It is this difficulty that explains why in social literature, especially economic literature, we do not find a systematic reflection on gratuitousness. We come across confining words such as gift, altruism, reciprocity, philanthropy, charity, but gratuitousness remains undefined even in the SDC. It comes close to the ancient concept of *agape* but is not identified with it. Gratuitousness, whose etymology comes from the Greek *karis* (grace or «that which gives joy» or the Franciscan «perfect Joy») also has much to do with the word charism. Gratuitousness brings joy to those who perform it and to those who receive it (cf. Bazzichi, Reali, 2020, pp. 169-172). And, as Benedict XVI affirms in *Caritas in veritate*, gratuitousness should not be understood as goodness; on the contrary, there is a need for economically efficient works that are inspired by gratuitousness, to demonstrate that it can also motivate economic behavior (Benedetto XVI, 2009, n. 36). In indeed, at several points in the encyclical, the concept that gratuitousness must not only be at the basis of human and social relationships but must lie at the heart of the economy is reiterated.

Benedict XVI in the encyclical *Deus caritas est* (2005) went even further into the substance, directing us on the path to follow: “Let not the contract do what the *agape* can do” (Bruni, 2007). And *agape* acts in the economic and civil spheres with gratuitousness: it allows the contract to become an instrument of freedom and equality, and social friendship to flourish in a universal fraternity. The market is not in constant conflict with a gift, but both can become allies. “The

more the two, in their different aspects, - *Deus caritas est* states - find a proper unity in the one reality of love, the more the true nature of love, in general, is realized" (Benedetto XVI, 2005, n. 7). This is why ecological justice - according to Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato si* - is a «sign of the times»: looking at the Earth as a gift and common home without claiming possession of it, discovering, like Saint Francis, in everything the reflection of the Creator and in every person his living image.

The other key word (cf. Zamagni, 2007, pp. 5-14; idem, 2012, pp. 17-26; idem, 2020a, p. 11; Becchetti, Bruni, Zamagni, 2019, p. 78) that today expresses better than any other the need for the common good - according to the latest encyclical *Fratelli tutti*, signed on October 3, 2020, at the tomb of St. Francis in the Lower Church of Assisi - is that of fraternity (cf. Bazzichi, 2020)³: a word present, alive and inculcated in the Franciscan vision of the world, but still absent from the socio-economic lexicon and the enunciation of the fundamental principles of the SDC (dignity of the human person, common good, solidarity, and subsidiarity).

The suggestion that Francis of Assisi presents is the love that springs from Christ, in whom our being brothers and sisters finds meaning. The Franciscan fraternity, therefore, finds its origin in the Lord alone: "after the Lord gave me brothers" (The Testament of St. Francis, FF 116); and, therefore, is not due to human efforts, but is, first of all, a gift of God. He is the origin and the foundation of the fraternity which, through the conformation of Francis to Christ (*alter Christus*).

Fraternity is a different thing from solidarity. In particular, solidarity, a keyword in the magisterium of John Paul II, is the principle of social organization that allows the unequal to approach or reach the equal in society; fraternity, on the other hand, is that principle of social organization that allows equals to be diverse, that is, it allows people who are equal in dignity to express their life plan or charism differently (cf. Bazzichi, 2013, pp. 103-104; Zamagni, 2007, p. 6; Bazzichi, Reali, 2020, pp. 75-76). A society in which the desire for fraternity is weakened - as Pope Francis (cf. Toso, 2014, pp. 105-130) insists on several occasions - is a society incapable of progress: a society in which there is only «give for the sake of having» or «giving for the sake of duty» is society without a future. There is only one clear direction to go: more fraternity in civil and economic life, "which will help transform the absolute dichotomy between the economic and social spheres into a healthy coexistence" (Francesco, 2013a).

Adam Smith, father of modern economics wrote: "it is thus that man, who can subsist only in society, was fitted by nature to that situation for which he was

3 St. Francis recommends to all the most important social and civil good: fraternity.

made. All the members of human society need each other's assistance and are likewise exposed to mutual injuries. Where the necessary assistance is reciprocally afforded from love, gratitude, friendship, and esteem, the society flourishes and is happy. All the different members of it are bound together by the agreeable bands of love and affection, and are, as it were, drawn to one common center of mutual good offices" (Smith, 2013, p. 143).

This is why the notion of *fraternitas* does not allow us to isolate ourselves in our private or *self-interest* and enables us to avoid any form of self-referentiality (Francesco, 2021), in our group, in our city, in our nation. The perspective indicated by Pope Francis in the encyclical *Fratelli tutti*, in which the "fraternity is rooted in Trinitarian Love; therefore, it is an expression of Christian specificity; and at the same time, it is an expression of the human" (Baggio, 2019). It indicates the way of Christian and universal fraternity "to realize human fraternity" (Francesco, 2020a, n. 69) and divine fraternity.

The Christian and universal fraternity is the common experience of the fatherhood of God and our being together "sons in the Son and brothers in Jesus" (cf. Rm 8:15.23; 9:4; Gal 4:5).

"One is your Teacher and you are all brothers" (Mt 23:8). "These words of the Lord define the reciprocal relationship of Christians as a relationship between brothers and sisters, and thus they counterpose a new brotherhood of the spirit to the natural brotherhood that arises from bonds of blood. The *éthos* of Christians among themselves is or should be, therefore, an *éthos* of brotherhood" (Ratzinger, 2005, p. 9).

"Contrary to the purely intramundane brotherhood of Marxism, Christian brotherhood is first and foremost a brotherhood based on the common fatherhood of God. Unlike the impersonal concept of God, the father of History and the vague and insecure concept of the father of the Enlightenment, the fatherhood of God is a fatherhood mediated in the Son, which includes fraternal unity in him" (ibidem, p. 59).

Antonio M. Baggio writes: "one may not believe in God: but one must take into account that, in human history, it is with Jesus that the category of fraternity is introduced, which explains how men, before belonging to a race, to a culture, to a people, are brothers: the human community is the first community, the one that makes all the others possible, and fraternity is the bond that defines it" (Baggio, 2010).

The Easter of the Risen One has given the fraternity a further foundation: "others drink from other sources. For us the wellspring of human dignity and fraternity is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. From it, there arises, «for Christian thought and the action of the Church, the primacy given to relationship, to the

encounter with the sacred mystery of the other, to universal communion with the entire human family, as a vocation of all» (Francesco, 2020a, n. 277).

The fraternity generates in the lives of all believers and people of good will (cf. *ibidem*, n. 6) that relationship which is the Communion of the altar, the “table of the altar, the banquet, is superior to the tabernacle because Christ appeals to us to be his tabernacles in this world, to have the courage of his Spirit, the Spirit of truth, of righteousness, justice and goodness” (Ratzinger, 2016) and the Communion of love-*agápē*, of love-*caritas* and “the con-Christian the practice of *philadelphia* (brotherly love)” (*idem*, 2005, p. 49) to transform the heart of man and make this heart a leaven, the salt that re-creates humanity and Creation in Christ.

“In the Eucharist, the nourishment, that is, Christ is stronger and is more than us. So that the meaning of this nourishment is exactly the opposite: it wants to transform us, to assimilate us to Christ, so that we can go out of ourselves, reach beyond ourselves, and become like Christ. But this consequently means that all communicants, through Communion, are brought out of themselves and assimilated into the one food, that is, into the spiritual reality of Christ. This in turn means that they are also fused together. They are all drawn out of themselves and led into a single center. The Fathers say: they become (or should become) «the body of Christ». And this is the authentic meaning of Holy Communion: that the communicants become one with each other through becoming one with the one Christ. The primary meaning of Communion is not the encounter of the individual with his God - for this, there would also be other ways - but precisely the fusion of individuals with one another through Christ. By its very nature, Communion is the sacrament of Christian fraternity [...] the seal of fraternity between God and men and therefore, starting from God, of men among themselves [...] the call of each individual to be a living tabernacle of God in the world [...] a living reality” (*idem*, 2016).

“By receiving Him in Communion, we receive his life within us and we become children of the Heavenly Father and brothers among ourselves. By receiving communion, we meet Jesus truly living and risen! Taking part in the Eucharist means entering into the logic of Jesus, the logic of giving freely, of sharing. And as poor, as we are, we all have something to give.

«To receive Communion» means to draw from Christ the grace which enables us to share with others all we are and all we have” (Francesco, 2015).

“Christ becomes «the firstborn among many brothers» (Rom. 8:29). The disciples become brothers in a new and very profound sense - note the Capuchin religious and Cardinal Cantalamessa - they share not only the teaching of Jesus but also his Spirit, his new life as the risen Lord. It is significant that only after

his resurrection, for the first time, does Jesus call his disciples «brothers»: «Go to my brothers, he says to Mary Magdalene, and say to them: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, my God and your God» (Gv 20:17). «He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified, we read in the Letter to the Hebrews, «all come from the same root; therefore, he is not ashamed to call them brothers» (Ebr 2:11).

Then, only after Easter, this is the most common use of the term brother; it indicates the brother of faith, a member of the Christian community. Brothers «of blood» also in this case, but of the blood of Christ! This makes the fraternity in Christ something unique and transcendent, compared to any other kind of fraternity, and is since Christ is also God. It does not replace the other types of fraternity based on family, nation or race, but crowns them. All human beings are brothers and sisters as creatures of the same God and Father. To this, the Christian faith adds a second decisive reason. We are brothers not only by way of creation, but also by way of redemption; not only because we all have the same Father, but because we all have the same brother, Christ, «the firstborn among many brothers» (Cantalamesa, 2021).

This is why the «**universal fraternity**» of *Fratelli Tutti* is a strong invitation to build a world where we take care of one another. This basic awareness, which has been lost for a long time, would allow for the development of new proposals to emerge from the crisis and to reconstruct the relationship between economy, politics, and society on a new basis. The process of the essential and open path begins with purification, transformation, and an ecological conversion requested and reiterated by Pope Francis in *Laudato si* and indicated some ways (“The Church «has a public role over and above her charitable and educational activities». She works for «the advancement of humanity and of universal fraternity» [Francesco, 2020a, n. 276]) in the *Fratelli Tutti* to build the feast and the ideal of universal brotherhood in which “necessarily call for an acknowledgment of the worth of every human person, always and everywhere (ibidem, n. 106) [...] words like freedom, democracy or fraternity prove meaningless, for the fact is that «only when our economic and social system no longer produces even a single victim, a single person cast aside, will we be able to celebrate the feast of universal fraternity» (ibidem, n. 110) [...] universal fraternity and social friendship are thus two inseparable and equally vital poles in every society. To separate them would be to disfigure each and to create a dangerous polarization” (ibidem, n. 142) [...].

The Christians “are united (or must be united) by a spirit of brotherly love that surpasses even the spirit of universal agape” (Ratzinger, 2005, p. 49). “The religion of the God who became man has met the religion (for such it is) of man who makes himself God. And what happened? Was there a clash, a battle, a condem-

nation? There could have been, but there was none. The old story of the Samaritan has been the model of the spirituality of the council. A feeling of boundless sympathy has permeated the whole of it. The attention of our council has been absorbed by the discovery of human needs (and these needs grow in proportion to the greatness which the son of the earth claims for himself). But we call upon those who term themselves modern humanists, and who have renounced the transcendent value of the highest realities, to give the council credit at least for one quality and to recognize our new type of humanism: we, too, in fact, we more than any others, honor mankind [...] all this rich teaching is channeled in one direction, the service of mankind, of every condition, in every weakness and need. The Church has, so to say, declared herself the servant of humanity” (Paolo VI, 1966, 55-56.57) [...].

For this reason, the emblematic figure that makes the identity of this virtue in the encyclical *Fratelli tutti*, in addition to that of Francis of Assisi, is that of the Samaritan, who places us before a compelling choice: in front of the wounded man (and today there are more and more wounded persons and peoples) we have before us only three possibilities: either we are selfish and iniquitous, and as such we consider our neighbor a target to be exploited to our advantage, or we are those of indifference who pass by immersed in their affairs and religions, or we recognize the wounded man and we shoulder his pain: and we must do so not only with our private love, but with our political love because we must also ensure that there are an inn to which we can entrust the victim, and institutions that reach out where money does not buy and the market does not reach. For it is on the love that our behavior will be measured. The political dimension of love evokes the principles that the French Revolution⁴ laid at the foundation of democracy: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. Unlike the political declination that has been made of these principles throughout history that has sometimes played liberty against equality or equality against liberty, Pope Francis’ encyclical highlights that it is an only fraternity that allows liberty and equality to develop. What happens in societies without fraternity, which enriches reciprocity and otherness

4 Cf. Baggio a. M., 2007, pp. 5-23. “The French Revolution had found a theoretical tool to address this problem, but the following history has misplaced it. In fact, of the three words inaugurated by the revolution: liberty, equality, fraternity, the first two were successful because, being compatible with the quantitative nature of democracy, they generated liberal democracy and social democracy, respectively. But what about fraternity? And what does it mean? No dictionary explains this, not even the great Dictionary of Politics edited by Utet and edited by Bobbio, Matteucci, and Pasquino. The reason is simple. We are brothers for reasons of blood because we have the same mother, the same matrix, the same intimate, profound, tribal psyche. Blood, mother, matrix, psyche, tribe are not rational concepts and, as testimonies of radical qualitative differences, they do not fit in well with the style of western rationality that only knows the dimension of quantity” in Galimberti, 2001.

with values? What happens is that liberty shrinks and equality become abstract (Francesco, 2020a, n. 103).

“Fraternity is, therefore, the condition for liberty and equality: the triptych of the French Revolution, *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, transfers this human existential condition from the sphere of the family to that of society; the revolutionary triptych, historically, dares the unthinkable, wanting to transform a condition of privilege reserved for a few into a universal condition of citizenship. This is why the three principles, liberty, equality, fraternity, can be considered, together, as the «categories of the political», as a synthesis of the unrealized political project of modernity. Fraternity assumes the role of «generator» of the other two principles that we see throughout the history of our time [Communism and Capitalism]: when liberty and equality have failed, peoples have always started from fraternity” (Baggio, 2012).

It is the dimension of fraternity immersed in history that brings out the political dimension of love and allows us to identify those spiritual, cultural, and anthropological drifts that undermine the life of political communities organized into nations. The affirmation that as human beings we are all brothers and sisters if it is not just an abstraction, but takes on flesh and becomes concrete, poses a series of challenges that oblige us to change and to assume new perspectives and develop new responses (Francesco, 2020a, n. 128).

Everyone should join the experience of *Koinonìa, the home and the school of communion*, “sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of the human race” (Giovanni Paolo II, 2001, n. 42). This is how John Paul II defines the features of such a «new» and yet ancient spirituality: *A spirituality of communion* indicates above all the heart’s contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity dwelling in us, and whose light we must also be able to see shining on the face of the brothers and sisters around us. A spirituality of communion also means an ability to think of our brothers and sisters in faith within the profound unity of the Mystical Body, and therefore as «those who are a part of me». This makes us able to share their joys and sufferings, to sense their desires and attend to their needs, to offer them deep and genuine friendship. A spirituality of communion implies also the ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it and prize it as a gift from God: not only as a gift for the brother or sister who has received it directly but also as a «gift for me». A spirituality of communion means, finally, to know how to «make room» for our brothers and sisters, bearing «each other’s burdens» (Gal 6:2) and resisting the selfish temptations which constantly beset us and provoke competition, careerism, distrust, and jealousy. Let us have no illusions: unless we follow this spiritual path, external structures of com-

munion will serve very little purpose. They would become mechanisms without a soul, «masks» of communion rather than its means of expression and growth” (Giovanni Paolo II, 2001, n. 43).

To make visible that communitarian socio-economic development systems are achievable, capable of realizing social friendship and fraternity, placed at the service of the common good, starting from a territory, a population - but also a nation -, the *Economy of Communion in Liberty* project (henceforth EoC) comes to our aid as follows.

2. THE PROJECT ECONOMY OF COMMUNION IN LIBERTY

A practical project, the EoC, born on May 29, 1991, among the misery of Brazil, a prophetic symbol and fruit of the Holy Spirit. That day passed into history as «the bomb», “from a circumstance, a paradox, through which God also called us to do something” to solve the social problem, as Chiara Lubich said, founder of the Focolare Movement, during a visit in Brazil, “we saw São Paulo in that paradox, which strongly impressed and scandalized us: a forest of skyscrapers, kingdom of the rich, with, around it, a “crown of thorns”, an infinity of favelas, kingdom of the poor” (Lubich, 2003). Christians should help the poor, giving them what is leftover [...] but no, Chiara said something different, “*we must engage entrepreneurs to create more and more profits, then improve themselves as entrepreneurs, to earn more and distribute the overcoming profits [...] she explained that everyone in the company should contribute, realize this social commitment: even within the company, there should be **communion**. There should be no sharp divisions between managers, employees, and workers: each person should contribute according to his or her abilities: what a worker can do is not necessarily what an entrepreneur can do, and vice versa. Chiara valued all those involved in the company, each person, and each task in mutual love, in order to contribute altogether to the company’s best performance. This performance had to be not only for the good of the company, but also for the good of society, especially for the poor, for those who are unable to get by, often not because of their own demerit, but because of the general situation. There she spoke about the division of the profits into three thirds: Chiara was very concrete; she was immediately on the practical side*” (Ferrucci, 2011).

The profits will be distributed with equal importance in three directions: one part to help the poor immediately, one part to consolidate the company and create jobs, and one part to make new people mature: because without new people a new economy cannot be consolidated, one in which no one is excluded: not

only the poor but not even suppliers, customers, competitors, the society around us, institutions, the environment. A different economy that is no longer a struggle, a savage competition to prevail over the competitor, the other, but a commitment to grow and walk and to hold together (*cum petere*), rich and poor alike, “to create a different culture, in which we resolve our conflicts and care for one another” (Francesco, 2020a, n. 57).

Chiara Lubich continues to say that “*the communion of goods we have been practicing since we were born is no longer adequate, something must be done: we are poor, but we are many, let’s put our wealth together, let’s entrust them to the most competent entrepreneurs among us so that they can create companies near our small towns that create jobs and function properly in order to make profits: we will use these as many as we can, freely, if we wanted to keep them for ourselves they would burn in our hands: ours is an economy of communion in liberty*” (Ferrucci, 2011). Instead of this consumerist communion, Chiara suggests a productive communion capable of sharing the wealth to create new resources.

“*And then poor said – and Chiara was very impressed by this – “there is no need for you to help us now because we have become self-sufficient. They did not feel poor anymore, they also wanted to start “giving”* (ibidem). “The best and most practical way to avoid making an idol of money- writes Pope Francis - is to share it, share it with others, above all with the poor, or to enable young people to study and work, overcoming the idolatrous temptation with communion. When you share and donate your profits, you are performing an act of lofty spirituality, saying to money through deeds: you are not God, you are not lord, you are not master! And do not forget that other philosophy and that other theology that led our grandmothers to say: «The devil enters through the pockets». Do not forget this!” (Francesco, 2017).

The idea, inspired by the EoC, was born from some premises, outlined by Chiara Lubich herself (Lubich, 1991b):

- 1) The ideal of Saint Benedict’s «*ora et labora*»;
- 2) To seek a new way that was neither capitalism nor communism, but something animated by Christianity;
- 3) John Paul II’s Social Encyclical “*Centesimus Annus*” (1991) with the collapse of Communism and the reaffirmation of Christian Social Doctrine;
- 4) “Our charism has a social aspect and background in that it emphasizes the communion of goods in liberty”, born from the observation of the first Christian community and enriched by all the principles of Christian Social Doctrine (cf. Bazzichi, Reali 2020, pp. 135-144).

“In the DNA of the EoC, there is both Benedictine monasticism and Franciscan charism [Madonna Poverty]” (Bruni, 2006, p. 16). Chiara Lubich is the daughter of Saint Francis and Saint Clare of Assisi. The deep Franciscan root of her vocation and charism appears in the project of the EoC, with its wonderful Christocentrism, with the disruptive novelty of categories such as freedom, fraternity, poverty. “It immediately came to my attention [...], that the Lord had prepared for me and others a new, modern spirituality, suitable for our times, which would not simply be alongside the others, but would also help them to be actualized [...]” (Lubich, 1991a).

3. AT THE ROOTS OF THE EOC: THE CHARISM OF UNITY

The charism of Unity is the foundation of the Focolare Movement, of which the EoC is an expression of inundation and the engine of social-economic transformation. One word could change the world. Chiara said: “The Gospel is not understood, because if it were, nothing else would be needed for the social revolution [...] the Gospel has both the spiritual and the human dimension [...] Jesus is a man and God [...] there is the Father of God, but there is also our bread [...] who has dared to plant a revolution on the words of God [...] no one because they have not understood them” (eadem, 1975). In the Gospel lies the highest and most overwhelming revolution. In the Gospel lies the highest and most overwhelming revolution for the realization of *Ut omnes unum sint*, willed by Jesus and explicated by Pope Francis in *Fratelli Tutti*, “a unity enriched by differences reconciled by the working of the Spirit” (Francesco, 2020a, n. 280).

Chiara Lubich explains: “In our hearts, one thing is clear: unity is what God wants from us. We live to be «one», as God is one among us and with everyone. This splendid vocation connects us to Heaven and introduces us into universal brotherhood. Nothing could be greater. For us, no ideal exceeds this” (Lubich, 1984, p. 28). “In addition, since the Economy of Communion is a fruit of our Ideal - continues the founder of the Focolare -, its purpose can only be a partial expression of the very purpose of our Movement, namely: to work for the unity and fraternity of all men required by the words-prayer of Jesus to the Father: «*May they all be one*», thus becoming one heart and one soul for mutual charity. The unity that can be achieved with our typical «spirituality of unity»” (eadem, 2001, p. 39). “The charism of unity is a providential stimulus and a powerful support for experiencing this evangelical mystic of ‘we’, - writes Pope Francis - that is, walking together in the history of the men and women of our time as «of one heart and soul» (cf. Acts 4:32), discovering and loving concretely

those «members of one another» (cf. Rm 12:5) [...] It is the spirituality of «the we» [...] the contrary of all individualism, both of «I» and of «you», is «we» [...] Jesus redeemed not only the person but also social relations” (Francesco, 2018).

“We have separated in man - God, God from man, we have nullified the incarnation. Today it is about reincarnating Christianity in everyday life, in our lives, and in the lives of others. But today is about going out into the world instead. Today it is a matter of taking the sacred from the monasteries and taking it into the streets, taking it into factories, putting it into circulation for everyday life, putting it into automobiles, putting it into airplanes, putting it into circulation in everyday life. To consecrate the world, we need to be in the world as consecrated persons, to be in the world without being of the world” (Giordani, 1961, pp. 4-5).

Even in terms of age, Chiara Lubich and Igino Giordani (also known as Foco) were very different. At the time of their first encounter, Chiara was 28 years old, Foco 54. Chiara was not married, Foco had a beautiful family, which had been formed with Mya Salvati. It was September 17, 1948, when a young woman from Trentino and then a Franciscan tertiary, Chiara Lubich, went to Montecitorio to see the Honorable Igino Giordani (Foco), accompanied by three religious from different Franciscan orders. *“One day I was urged to listen to an apostle - as they said - of unity. It was in September 1948. I showed the courtesy of the deputy to possible voters when some religious, representing the various Franciscan families, and a young lady, and a young layman came to Montecitorio. To see a conventual, a minor, a Capuchin and a tertiary of St. Francis united and in agreement already seemed to be a miracle of unity: And I said it”* (cf. Giordani, 1976).

To the entrepreneur, Chiara Lubich recognizes the role of instrument and servant of the unity, the agent of humanity. It is his mission, “only to a pact: that you do not act, you do not dedicate yourselves, but that you let Jesus work in you. Only He is capable of doing a work that can be said to be «of God» (Lubich, 2003). The icon, model of this love, is Jesus, who lived his Word in person: “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (Jn 15:13). This way of unity in Christ “will transform their businesses and make them “homes of God with men”, true precursors of Heaven (Lubich, 2004). Chiara’s prophecy finds its incarnation in the UmbraGroup company established in Foligno, founded by Valter Baldaccini (Turrioni, 2019) (1945-2014), a great example of man and enlightened entrepreneur, where at the entrance of the company we find the image of Mary and the phrase «the Holy Family bears witness to the presence of Christian values in our Company, welcoming you

with care and humanity». Valter Baldaccini, a new man, was a businessman full of faith, a significant cornerstone of the company, but first of all, a man of high Christian values, who believed that a person's most considerable wealth lies in his interpersonal relationships.

4. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE ECONOMY OF COMMUNION: THE FRANCISCAN ECONOMIC SCHOOL

The Economy of Communion is “a concrete realization, not utopian, supported also by an initiated theoretical reflection (Luigino Bruni), the authentic basis of a new economic theory” (Fagioli, 2003).

“Certainly, the economy is more beautiful, but communion is also more beautiful because the spiritual communion of hearts is even fuller when it becomes the communion of goods, of talents, of profits” (Francesco, 2017).

“On one side the consecrated and on the other the deconsecrated, on one side the state of perfection and on the other the state of imperfection, we went on and on and did not meet [...] the coexistence of two values [...] sacred and profane, Chiara was the sacred and I was the profane, religion and politics, I was politics, Church and State, she was the Church and I represented the State; Heaven and Earth [...] now they are both sacred values, one divine and the other humanly consecrated. Evil is generated when they separate, instead of distinguishing themselves they separate, religion and politics are two distinct things, autonomous, but not separate, if I separate politics from religion, politics becomes an assassination, a dictatorship, an arbitrariness, an imposture etc. [...] look for a point of conjunction of these values to introduce the sacred into humanity. She [Chiara Lubich] saw humanity in me, and it was a matter of consecrating this humanity [...] to introduce the spirit of God into souls [...] not separation from the world but unity with the world” (Giordani, 1976).

“The fraternity, as understood by Chiara⁵, has led to a result that is simply unimaginable even to the eyes of the experts. I'm referring to that new model of economic organization that is the Economy of Communion. Is it an unexpected realization, which can be seen as the last link in a long chain that began with Civil

5 “The peculiarity of Chiara Lubich's contribution is that she has been capable of implementing the fraternity in two areas: the political area, where conflict takes on the forms of identity conflict, and the economic area where conflict today is increasingly taking on the characteristics of positional competition. In Chiara's interpretation, the principle of fraternity makes it possible to deal with these types of conflict, transforming them in a constructive sense” in zamagni, 2004, p. 6.

Humanism⁶ during the first half of the fifteenth century? It is good to remember these roots, so that the idea that the project of the Economy of Communion would be something eccentric, linked to a particular form of spirituality and therefore not generalizable, does not pass. It is true, instead, that the EoC is the last stage of a long journey that sees at its beginning the model of the a civil economy, as it will be called by the Neapolitan and Milanese Enlightenment around the middle of the eighteenth century” (Zamagni, 2004, p. 6).

Chiara Lubich’s fraternity is the same as that invoked by St. Francis; both recognize it as the paradigm of a new economy where the poor are an integral part of the enterprise, where the interior and spiritual dimension of the entrepreneur moves economic action and guides social transformation and development. Business and money are both essential for man because they put him to the proof of God, they question him. Both are instruments of good, as long as they are oriented to the good of man and the environment. Chiara Lubich, in fact, called entrepreneurs to communion, not others, questioning their conscience, their being.

5. AT THE ROOTS OF THE MARKET ECONOMY: THE FRANCISCAN SCHOOL

The entire thinking of Stefano Zamagni and Luigino Bruni on the civil economy (Bruni, Zamagni, 2003; 2004; 2013 2015; Becchetti, Bruni, Zamagni, 2019) deserves to be integrated with the value and contribution of Franciscan socio-economic thought⁷, brought to light and scientific and academic reflection

6 “The two souls of humanism (the civil-Aristotelian one and the individualist-Platonic contemplative, solitary and magical one of Pico della Mirandola or Ficino) will give birth to different traditions in modern social sciences: the individualist one, which will lead to hedonism and sensism in the eighteenth century (later taken up by neoclassical economic science at the end of the nineteenth century); that of civil economy which, also in the eighteenth century, will have in Hutcheson, Paolo Mattia Doria, Genovesi, Beccaria, Verri and Adam Smith its main representatives, and which today, like a karst river, is again re-emerging” in Zamagni, 2003, p. 13.

7 Bonaventura da Bagnoregio (Bonaventure of Bagnoregio), Pèire de Joan-Oliu (Peter of John Olivi), Giovanni Duns Scoto (John Duns Scotus), Alessandro Bonini di Alessandria (Alexander Bonini of Alexandria), Astesiano di Asti (Astesano of Asti), Bernardino da Feltre (Bernardine of Feltre), Alberto da Sarteano (Albert of Sarteano).

only in 1956 with the monumental *Opera omnia* of St. Bernardino da Siena⁸ (Bernardine of Siena), masterfully edited by the Franciscan Fathers of the Collegio S. Bonaventura (Florence). Bonaventure College in Quaracchi (Florence)⁹ who, making themselves the spokesman of a «speech» on the good use of wealth, analyzed the themes of «being well in the world», such as property, capital, possession, commerce, the fruitfulness of money, usury, interest, economic value, fair price, currency, exchange, etc... The social model proposed by Saint Bernardino, by giving substance to the idea of the economic value of fraternity, dialogue, and social relations - in addition to the traditional values of use and exchange - culminates, in the perspective of the common good, in a form of «civil economy» and «economy of communion».

This *Opera omnia* demonstrates that the *Summa moralis* of Sant'Antonino da Firenze (Sant'Antonino of Florence) depends entirely on the text of St. Bernardine, who, in turn, had drawn from John Duns Scotus (1263/66-1308) and Pèire de Joan-Oliu (1248-1298)¹⁰. "And the mother proof consists in the fact that the passages of the Antonine *Summa* are transcribed according to the modifications made by Bernardino on the texts of Scotus and Olivi" (Bazzichi, 2017, p. 99).

8 P. Dionisio Pacetti (1894-1976) in the preparatory work for the *Opera omnia of San Bernardino of Siena* by recomposing the private library of the Sienese preacher, was able to identify in a code of that documentary collection the text of the *Tractatus de emptione et venditione, de contractibus usurariis et de restitutionibus* of Peire de Joan-Oliu, like down to us under false attribution to avoid destruction because of the known canonical penalties resulting from the conviction of heresy. Cf. PACETTI D., *Un trattato sulle usure e le restituzioni di Pietro di Giovanni Olivi falsamente attribuito a fra Gerardo da Siena*, in «Archivium Franciscanum Historicum» 46 (1953), pp. 448-457. Raymond de Roover (1904-1972) signalled the dependence of the economic thought of San Bernardino of Siena and the Dominican Sant'Antonino of Florence from Peire de Joan-Oliu in his essay *San Bernardino of Siena and Sant'Antonino of Florence. The Two Great Economic Thinkers of the Middle Age*, Mass, Boston 1967. Cf. in addition Spicciani, 1976, pp. 289-325, Todeschini, 1980.

9 In volume IV of the *Opera omnia* of Saint Bernardino masterfully edited by the Franciscan Fathers of the College of St. Bonaventure of Quaracchi (Florence), the *Sermones* from XXXII to XLV contain Olivi's *Tractatus de contractibus et usuris* (1956). This is certainly one of the most interesting works for those who wish to study the evolution of economic thought. But the importance of the *Sermones* is even greater because, in the codices he used, the textual references to the works of Olivi and of the other confreres of a century and a half earlier have been scrupulously and honestly noted. This is a circumstance which the critical edition of Quaracchi has always taken into account with exemplary scientific and philological rigor. In particular, Olivi's ideas regarding the concept of «mercantile capital» and the reasoning that leads to the conception of the quality of interest concerning the rigid moral prohibition of usury pass equally through Bernardini's *Sermones* and the famous *Summa theologica* of sant'Antonino in Bazzichi, Reali, 2020, p. 78, Bazzichi, 2013, p. 33.

10 The Provence friar is also known in the speculative field (so much so that he deserves the nickname «*Doctor speculativus*» for his thesis on the plurality of forms of the human soul; a doctrine condemned by the dogmatic constitution *Fidei Catholicae* of the Council of Vienna (1311-1312): Consequently, all his theological and canonical writings were strictly forbidden under penalty of ex-communication and destined to be burned by Friar Giovanni da Murro who was General of the Franciscan Order from 1295 to 1303. This circumstance reasonably explains why Saint Bernardino of Siena, while drawing heavily from Peire de Joan-Oliu, never mentions his brother. On the life and work of the Franciscan friar, cf. Gieben, 1968, pp. 167-195.

Without a doubt, the book by Oreste Bazzichi, *Alle origini dello spirito del capitalismo* (1991), deserves merit for having made it known that “through the study of a neglected strand of theological-economic thought, which starts from the Franciscan School of the late Middle Ages and, passing through sant’Antonino da Firenze and San Bernardino (who appear to be very modern economic thinkers) arrives up to the last theologians and moralists of the XVIII century, the thesis according to which the spirit of capitalism is intrinsic to the theological-moral reflection of Catholicism and manifested itself long before the Protestant Reformation appears to be proved” (Lombardi, 1991, p. 6).

This essay intends to show a scenario where it is evident that the medieval society, beginning with the monasticism of St. Benedict (famous motto of «*ora et labora*») and continuing with the analysis of the Franciscan School, contains in itself the heart of the relationship between *ethics, market, and economy* that was “the matrix from which originated the first economic and commercial lexicon that will spread throughout Europe in the late Middle Ages” (Zamagni, 2009; 2020b, pp. 7-8; cf. Bruni, Smerilli, 2008, p. 72; cf. Zamagni, 2008), even though the great German sociologist Max Weber attributes the origin of the «spirit» of capitalism to the influence of Calvinist ethics.

Stefano Zamagni argues further on the genesis of the market economy: “these pages are written...to throw some light on the decisive contribution that the Franciscan thought of the beginnings, as well as the first great Franciscan friars, offered to the birth of that model of social order that, later on, will be called the market economy” (Becchetti, Bruni, Zamagni, 2019, pp. 91-110).

When a charism emerges in history, no matter how big or small, it initiates a process of transformation that affects all fields of human endeavor: a gift for all, because they see far ahead, generating innovation. The history of social and economic humanity is also the fruit of charisms, without which there would be no civil and human progress. Benedict’s «*ora et labora*» was once. A revolution. Today we would call it the birth of the first agricultural and industrial districts. Fifteen centuries later, St. Francis chose voluntary poverty, the analysis of which gave rise to the lexicon of the market economy. The poverty that Francis professed for himself and his friars in the same poverty as Christ, who “for our sake became poor in this world”, emptying himself of his divinity (*kenosis* = emptying), shining with the same *paupertas* of God the Father. Therefore, other than romantic, dreamer, bucolic, troublemaker and whatever else; since he converted, to his bishop of Assisi what he had to say he said it *apertis verbis*, like a sharp blade, to affirm in the Letter to all the faithful (Fonti Francescane, cap. II, p. 152): “Woe to those who do not do penance [...] cursed are those who stray from your commandments”.

“The Franciscan movement also has its role in the birth of the market economy. Some many historians and economists point to the Poor Man of Assisi as the precursor of the market economy, even of capitalism. Franciscan was, in fact, the first school of medieval economic thought, and in the second half of the 15th century, the Franciscan friars founded the Monti di Pietà, non-profit financial institutions (*sine merito*), at the origin of the tradition of popular and social finance in Italy and Europe. A spiritual movement born from the choice of «madonna poverty» that gave birth to banks and treaties on currencies, has always generated surprise, along with many misunderstandings. In fact, as in the case of monasticism, the relationship between Franciscans and economics is much more complex than it is told - and much more interesting” (Bruni, 2021, p. 33).

Many academics such as Giuseppe Toniolo, Oscar Nuccio, Amintore Fanfani, Giuseppe Mura, Romano Molesti, Fernand Braudel, Jean Baechler, David Landes, Lujo Brentano, Luciano Pellicani, Hugh Trevor-Roper, Rodney Stark, Werner Sombart, Giacomo Todeschini, Amleto Spicciani, Ovidio Capitani, Gino Barbieri, Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, Alejandro A. Chauven, Stefano Zamagni, Oreste Bazzichi, Flavio Felice, and Paolo Evangelisti denounce the error of the German sociologist Max Weber and the Weberists who attribute, based on a partial reconstruction of European history, to the influence of Calvin¹¹ (Jehan Cauvin, 1509-1564) (Bazzichi, 1990, pp. 41-54) and Puritanism, the origin of the «spirit», of «ethics» and the seed of the development of modern capitalism (cf. Weber, 2009; Bruni, 2019, pp. 37-54; Bazzichi, 2003, pp. 3-14)¹². “Henri Pirenne (1862-1935) was right”, writes the Paris sociologist Baechler, “to say that to find the secret of Western society we must look at the centuries that constitute the transitional period between the ancient world and the medieval age” (Baechler, 2015, p. 99; Pirenne, 1973).

The research of Oscar Nuccio, a professor at the Sapienza University of Rome who died in 2004, who, burying the Weberian equation, argues that Protestantism did not produce any historical turning point, as the innovative ideas are already found before in the medieval lay thinkers: from Albertano da Brescia to Coluccio Salutati, to Leonardo Bruni, to Leon Battista Alberti, to Lorenzo Valla, to Tommaso Campanella.

11 “The historical exponents of ascetic Protestantism (in the sense of the expression used here) are mainly of four species: 1) Calvinism, in the form it took in the main territories of Western Europe where it dominated, especially during the seventeenth century; 2) Pietism; 3) Methodism; 4) the sects born of the Baptist movement” in WEBER, 2009, p. 157.

12 For an extensive historiography by Italian and foreign scholars see Bazzichi, 2013, pp. 95-106.

Therefore, from the works of the thinkers of the Franciscan School comes the assumption that the theory and practice of the market economy germinated well before Calvin and the founder of economic science, Adam Smith. We find the same thought in the essay *L'arte della gratuità* (The Art of Gratuity) by Luigino Bruni where he states: “if we look at Medieval Europe, from which capitalism originated” (Bruni, 2021, p. 7), [...] many categories of economics are not the same. many of the categories on which modern economic science was gradually founded - such as price, exchange, value, debit, credit, merit, order, gift, tribute, prize, and oikonomia itself, as Giorgio Agamben (2009), among others, has shown us - were inherited from religion and medieval Judeo-Christian humanism. If we then dig deeper, we realize that those same theological-religious categories had themselves been formed in a constant exchange with the economic life of the communities” (Bruni, 2021, p. 14) [...]

“This book (*Verso un'economia integrale. La via italiana alla ripresa*) is the result of studies and research but, above all, of a long work done alongside entrepreneurs and managers who, often unconsciously, have inherited some features of the way of doing business that took shape in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. And, through their stories, each one different and original, it wants to testify how this long «red thread» binds and distinguishes today the activities of many Italian companies, highlighting how these ways of living work, business, and the relationship with society are linked to the values that first Christianity, then Italian Humanism and Civil Economy, have been able to develop in the hearts of people even before the mind and hands” (Folador, Buffon, 2020, p. 32).

The future is not a detached continuation of the past without consequences for the present. Franciscan humanism offers the anthropological, social, and cultural presuppositions for a paradigm shift based on fraternity. The Economy of Communion in liberty is “a light in the midst of darkness, however small it may be, it can be seen from afar” (Lubich, 2013).

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A DIFFERENT STORY OF MODERN ECONOMIC SCIENCE

SUMMARY

This paper wants to demonstrate a scenario where it is evident that the medieval society, starting from the monasticism of St. Benedict (famous motto of «*ora et labora*») and continuing with the Franciscan School, conserves many elements and ideas of intellectual interest that have a reverberation still valid for today, especially concerning the relationship of man with the economy.

The age of the Late Middle Ages in Europe laid the foundations of modern economic science, giving impulse to quite singular reflections gathered from the interpretation of reality, in a typically «Franciscan» key, grasping in the fraternity (franciscan *fraternitas*) the anthropological and ontological element for the good living in the *communitas* and for the integral sustainability, therefore, valid also for the economy. It resulted, in fact, the first economic and commercial lexicon that will spread throughout Europe, by the work of important disciples of St. Francis, who grasped a new «*spirit*» of making economy, completely original, countercurrent, contradicting the prevailing thesis of Max Weber.

But Franciscan humanism still offers, even today, the anthropological, social, and cultural presuppositions for a shift of paradigm within the economic discourse, based on the person with all his inclinations and necessities, presuppositions that are already visible in the experience of the *Economy of Communion in Freedom*, born on May 29, 1991, among the misery of Brazil, to solve the social and economic problem of this time.

This revolution of the late Middle Ages, social and market, which was also intellectual and aimed at facing the poverty and injustice of that time, is still repeated today with new faces, experiences, and theories