

What to do?

Catholic Social Teaching as „normative compass“

The three “Megacrises” of our time are: excesses of today’s Offshore-Capitalism/Financialization, speed and complexity of technical innovation as well as the overuse and destruction of natural resources. Consequences are climate change, financial crises, changes in human labour, mass migration, terrorism, transnational organized crime etc. The only adequate answer is a global transformation towards a fair and sustainable network-economy. At the same time, we note the inability to change course due to a threefold threat to governance: From above by lobbyism and the power of those profiting from the status quo, from below by growing populism, protectionism and nationalism as well as the disintegration of the multilateral order - all of that also consequences of the outlined megacrises, e.g. via growing social inequality or the misuse of social media.

The increasingly critical situation calls for positioning and participation of all, including Christians and Churches.

However: While the Catholic Church is well placed to address the challenges of Financialization and resource overuse since Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’*, a comparable thorough treatment of technical innovation, most importantly digitalization, is missing, let alone a synthesizing treatment of the three megacrises and their mutual feedback and repercussions. This weakens our challenging of “Christian” Parties and their attempts to ignore grown realities as well as constitutional-ethical norms due to the absence of a better vision, more deserving the label “Christian and social” and it hampers our own research, our identification of appropriate policies and cooperation in advocacy.

At the same time, Catholic Social Teaching provides tools for any active “Agenda Setting”:

- It reminds us of cultural-ethical foundations of today’s megacrises and knows to distinguish between “growth”, “welfare” and “well-being” or “Having” and “Being”, “progress” and “development”, the “rule” and “service” of capital etc.
- Social Teaching presents a reflective framework for today’s irreversible and consolidated “globalism”: The Common Good has to be thought globally.
- Social Teaching and its principles offer a middle way between markets and regulation, economy and democracy, competition and cooperation etc.

The previous and much more could be clarified by re-reading the Compendium of Social Christian Doctrine. That way, Catholic Social Teaching could offer a “normative compass”, assisting us to find our way through fake news, alternative facts and information overload. It also offers a framework for reflecting and evaluating competing theories, narratives, paradigms and frames, assisting us in identifying those ideas and policies more worth pursuing and strengthening than others. Finally, it would release energies to cooperate with all those in academia, science, research and politics seeking like us adequate measures to address the existing megacrises, its symptoms and the challenges of the called-for Grand Transformation. That way 1 billion Catholics could become “carriers and advocates of change”, and a good place to start would be a re-foundation of the European Union towards a Union based upon, and aiming for, the Common Good of all.

More (detailed) information, in German language, at <http://www.joergalt.de/forum.html>