

# Creating an Ecological Economy

by Maurice Lange

***“We work for the transformation of unjust systems,  
the integrity of creation and the flourishing of humanity and Earth.”***

(Our Way of Life C9)

As we attend to the signs of these times, Pope Francis is calling us to ecological conversion. Through his encyclical *“Laudato Si”* and the resulting Action Platform so many elements of the Church are now working to move towards sustainability!

There are 7 goals derived from *Laudato Si*. These include **response to the cry of the Earth, response to the cry of the poor, ecological economics, adoption of sustainable lifestyles, ecological education, ecological spirituality, community resilience and empowerment**. Please take a bit of time to learn more about each of these at <https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/laudato-si-goals/>

In this article I'd like to focus on the ***Laudato Si* goal of “ecological economics”**. While this may not be a term that grabs you, I'll bet the concept will be alluring! Can we imagine living on a planet where we *“take”* (which we have to do in order to live) but also where we *“give back”*? Where there is a reciprocal and mutually-enhancing relationship with the Earth and with each other? *(Certainly, this is not a foreign concept to people committed to either religious, married or single life in their efforts at “making community” with others.)*

Can we imagine an economic system that does not deplete, that does not overwhelm neither the environment nor the small businessperson? Pope Francis imagines such a system!

How can we contribute to that vision? We can begin with **what we eat** and **where we purchase our food**—after all, we eat 3 times a day, and thus cast 3 votes per day on what kind of system we want to support. Kentucky philosopher Wendell Berry has said that *“the way we eat, determines to a considerable extent how the world is used”*.

Sustainable gardening and farming *takes* the harvest from the soil but also *replenishes* the soil to ensure its viability. Our deciding to support local and

sustainable growers ensures their livelihood, and thus contributes to the well-being of the eco-system. This is a clear example of an economics with an ecological focus.

We can find such green-growers at a local farmers market [www.nfmd.org](http://www.nfmd.org) and also by searching for a nearby Community Supported Agriculture project. Wouldn't it be wonderful to actually be in relationship with the person(s) growing your food?! This way you would not only know who grows your nourishment, you would know where it was raised as well as how it was being grown (i.e.: without chemicals).

We can also become aware of the companies and corporations we support through our purchases. **As educators, the Presentation Sisters have been accustomed to giving grades:** what *justice grade* might companies receive due to the way they treat people and the planet? Here is a remarkable resource for you to save: it's called **Better World Shopper:** [www.betterworldshopper.org](http://www.betterworldshopper.org) This "*is a public research project dedicated to making social and environmental data available to consumers who wish to utilize their dollars as votes in order to help build a better world*". Companies and corporations are graded on 5 categories.

Look up the places where you shop---you may be inspired to make some changes towards building up justice and sustainability! And thus, bring to birth an ecological economics!