

## Editorial

### “Sustainability as an innovative key element, another perspective to rethink the problem of hunger and poverty in the world”



I am very pleased to present this monographic volume entitled “Sustainability as an innovative key element, another perspective to rethink the problem of hunger and poverty in the world”, where we bring together a series of relevant papers, from various scientific fields, within the Line of Research on hunger and poverty in the world that is being carried out by the Catholic University of Valencia (UCV). This line of permanent research and of multidisciplinary character falls within the framework of the Chair of Charity Theology *Santo Tomás de Villanueva*, which comprises a team of 50 thinkers and experts contributing from different specialties, universities and research centers to try to open new channels to consider and provide solutions to problems that challenge us and undoubtedly question us as human beings. We, as thinkers and science men of our time, with a deep humanistic vocation and a deeply rooted ethical sensitivity at the same time, do not want, or can we, remain indifferent to the sufferings of so many men and women who suffer poverty and hunger in their diverse forms at the dawn of the 21st century.

First of all, I would like to thank all the authors who collaborated in this volume; thank you for providing so many and diverse insights and innovative perspectives that improve our research. We are convinced that if we do not reflect deeply on the problems from an interdisciplinary, rigorous and open perspective, trying to cover all current and possible dimensions, we will skew our vision of the phenomena and we will become impaired, because science does not exist in sealed compartments, but lies in the interaction of disciplines and perspectives, in that broad dialogue of sciences that Benedict XVI called for in Regensburg. Innovation is also enriched by this interdisciplinary community, and solutions are often raised or arise in this scientific and humanistic exchange, thus enriching and refining, even in the heat of debate, the various proposals and solutions.

The striking thing about St. Thomas of Villanueva, who gives his name to the chair of the Theology of Charity, where this line of research on poverty and hunger in the world is being conducted, is not only to be found in the practice of charity carried out by this great bishop of Valencia, i.e. the numerous charitable works he made throughout his life, but in the meaning he attached to this virtue. The perception of charity by St. Thomas was not limited to the performance of charitable works on the various occasions that were presented to him, often marked by the urgency of the moment, but was illuminated by what we might call the intelligence of charity, a search for structural solutions that remedy problems in a more or less lasting way, in what today we would call

*mutatis mutandi* innovative and sustainable solutions. It has been said that charity requires intelligence and creativity, well, this was precisely the innovative meaning that Thomas attached to it and that is how he tried to put charity into practice. It is not only having the sensitivity and the determination to put this Christian virtue into practice, and to exercise it, which undoubtedly was done by the Bishop of the Poor and friend of those who suffer, but doing it in a conscious, intelligent and responsible way.

We are convinced that man is never doomed to a fatal fate, however complex the situations he faces, and limited means available. Man can always open up new perspectives and modify the conditions of his existence and the environment in which he lives because he has a creative intelligence. This is a distinctive feature, specifically human. The problem of man often lies in becoming aware of the problems and in getting on track to solve them and apply his or her intelligence in a constant and creative way, and in order to do this, to get going, we need motivation first. For that reason, in our modest contribution in this volume, entitled Sustainability, Ethics and Climate Change: An innovative proposal, we present the need to raise an ethic of the sustainability of actions as a key element that can lead us to a new approach to the challenges we face and that affect man and the environment, the environment in which we live, in a new global context.

We thus assume the new frame for consideration of the problems of man of an integral ecology, as Pope Francis stated in his encyclical letter *Laudato Si'*, which has been considered as the reference document by scientists and experts, such as Jeffrey Sachs, who stated in the II International Congress Hunger, Poverty and Sustainability of the Catholic University of Valencia (UCV) that Pope Francis “is the main moral leader of the world and his *Laudato Si'* a document of reference”. Given the fact that some environmentalisms exclude the human being from their consideration of the ecosystem, and if anything, they make room for man in their approach always as a harmful variable that distorts and deteriorates the environment, we believe that a fundamental rethinking of the issue from the perspective of an integral environmentalism is needed. In our article we consider the environmental problem in the broader framework of an integral ecology in which man occupies a central place, understood this as a free person and a moral subject, responsible for his or her actions and a key element in any consideration and renewal of the process of environmental deterioration.

In this context, the concept of sustainability arises as a key that must guide human action and from which it is possible to appeal



to the ethical and ecological responsibility of the human being. Man is called to do good in all orders. When he does not address this ethical orientation, implicit in his own conscience, he becomes denaturalized and suffers the consequences in himself and in the environment where he lives. We believe that it is a priority to seek the foundation of the existence of God, by analyzing the theistic current, —the foundation of sustainability—, for the good of human beings themselves and the planet. Without God we are not sustainable.

The readers who share sensitivity to these issues will find a number of aspects that will arouse their interest, make them reflect, and motivate them to contribute to find solutions; the experts provide here some data and perspectives that may be relevant to the investigation of possible solutions. The important thing is that each one of them contributes to the good of all from the position where they are and the means they have, although a deep and creative reflection always arouses and reinforces motivation, and illuminates and awakens innovation.

We thank Dr. Richard John Roberts, Nobel Laureate in Medicine, for his valuable contribution with his article, *The Nobel Campaign supporting GMOs*, which emphasizes the needs of meeting the needs of those who are hungry in the developing countries, and is committed to urging governments and organizations to support the GMO technology in order to save millions of lives that desperately need better crops and food with greater nutritional value.

We are also very grateful to Dr. Richard John Roberts for his connection and permanent commitment to this project, also endorsed by his presence in the various gatherings and events that took place, such as the two international conferences on poverty and hunger that were held in Valencia in 2016 and 2017, and to those who have never failed despite their abundant international obligations and forums that require their presence, given their status and high scientific reputation.

Professor Marc Van Montagu in his contribution entitled *Science, ideology and daily life*, reminds us that being well fed is not only a matter of ingesting the amounts of food necessary for our subsistence, the quantitative aspect of our diet, but ingesting all the nutrients and micro-nutrients that we need to lead a meaningful life, the qualitative aspect of diet. Science has relevant solutions to contribute to society and scientists have to consider, in their research, the needs that society has at every moment.

Dr. Roberto Sanz Ponce, in *The capabilities approach and the values of sustainability: towards an inclusive Pedagogy*, analyzes how different development models impact sustainability in a different way, opposing the economic growth development model, only

measured by the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is dominant in current economic analyses, with the model of human development or capabilities. He believes it necessary to consider the development of capabilities as a theoretical-practical perspective to guide education towards sustainability, a purpose that is assigned and recognized by UNESCO.

We also thank Doctors Mr. José Tena Medialdea, Mr. Jesús A. Prieto Ruiz, Mrs. Carmen Fagoaga García, Mr. Antonio Calvo Capilla, Mr. Jerónimo Chirivella Martorell and Mr. Joel Bueso Rodenas for their contribution to the paper *Potentiality of Science* where they address the problem of hunger: ecology, biotechnology, livestock and the great food store of the sea, where they raise the need to know the real possibilities offered by current science to win this battle against hunger. In this paper, it is assumed that the solution to the problems of hunger requires the multidisciplinary action of sciences and knowledge, where disciplines such as ecology, biotechnology, veterinary medicine and marine cultures are considered. They insist on the need for ecological studies where the role of human beings as part of ecosystems is considered. In addition, advances in molecular biology and precision agriculture are analyzed by evaluating their advantages and associated problems and possible improvements in livestock.

The Doctors Mr. Juan Sapena Bolufer (coord.), Mr. Vicent Almenary, Ms. Andrea Apetreiz, Ms. Maria Escrivá and Ms. Maria Gil, in their interesting contribution *Some reflections on poverty eradication, true development and sustainability within CST*, analyze the problem of poverty. The eradication of poverty has been repeatedly identified as the greatest challenge faced by international society in its search for a peaceful, prosperous and just world. In their article, these experts reflect on the ideas that have been established by the academic field on the relationships between the concepts of poverty, development and sustainability. Based on the Catholic Social Doctrine documents, they consider other aspects, beyond the mere poverty of income, as institutional aspects, education and values that hamper and severely limit the possibilities of avoiding the so-called “poverty trap”.

We hope that this volume is of interest to all readers, enthusiasts and experts, and that together we are able to configure options to forge a new humanity in which hunger and poverty have no place.

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