



Discovering the Encyclical “Laudato Si” - on care for our common home through the conceptual framework of Bernard Lonergan SJ

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Abstract

One of the most important philosophers of the 20th century, the Canadian Jesuit theologian Bernard Lonergan developed his cognitive theory where we come to ‘knowledge’ and ‘being’ which provided us with valuable insights into understanding reality and how this can provide us with a method to developing thoughts and ways to deal with challenges in this world. Lonergan developed his cognitive theory, called the Generalized Empirical Method (GEM) which brings cohesion to knowledge across disciplines. Lonergan’s method offers an approach to the study of theology and the issues and challenges that arise in aspects of theology such as pastoral theology. His method is articulated in eight steps (called “functional specialities”) that one can address and apply to a given problem provided one with deeper insights in reading Pope Francis Encyclical Laudato Si and how it proposes a pastoral response not only to Catholics but to all of humanity for the ecological problems besetting our planet in the 21st century. The Encyclical Laudato Si was published in May 2015 and received quite a lot of international media attention. Using Lonergan’s functional specialities seem to be a fresh way to bring out new insights from the encyclical. A decade later, we can see the power of the encyclical in providing a pastoral response to the major anguishes that humanity is currently living through.



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