

Lack of Sustainability Leadership Education in the Catholic Clerical and Religious Formation Systems: A Missed Opportunity for “the Care for Our Common Home”

Since the publication of the encyclical *Laudato Si'* by Pope Francis in 2015, the Catholic Church has especially foregrounded “the care for our common home” (Francis 2015). *Laudato Si'* and the latest Apostolic Constitution on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties — *Veritatis Gaudium* — identifies the lack of “leadership capable of striking out on new paths and meeting the needs of the present with concern for all and without prejudice towards coming generations” (Francis 2015, 53; Francis 2017, 3). It can be noted, however, that the Catholic Church’s formation of priests and religious (i.e., consecrated people) has not yet followed suit. Acknowledgement of limits to growth is seen even in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (1992, 6), but this realisation is not reflected in the later part of that document when it discusses the identity and formation of priests. Priestly and religious identity is traditionally tied to their relationship with the Trinitarian God, the Church, and people, making explicit a missing reference to the non-human world and environment. Even while referring to services to be done to society, the exhortations seem to emerge from the concept of pastoral charity (John Paul II 1992, 71, Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life 1990, 17) and not from a systemic understanding where one duly acknowledges the interplay between social, economic and environmental dimensions of life. Official church documents that link clerical and religious formation to the issue of sustainability are almost non-existent. Additionally, there has been barely any scholarly attention to this deficiency in the clerical and religious formation system. Thus, there is clearly a hiatus in the priestly and religious formation in the Catholic Church and its study. This is also the case in the particular context of India, where Catholic schools, social service centres, and health care services play a significant role in the society. The current paper primarily aims to bring to light the missing sustainability focus in the priestly and religious formation of the Catholic Church by referring to major magisterial documents on formation from the time of Vatican II. Secondly, referring to the Indian context, the paper proposes a possible means to address this issue by incorporating sustainability education into training programmes for the formators of candidates to priestly and religious life. For this, the paper proposes a suggestion that links United Nations Principles of Responsible Management Education (UNPRME) with the Formators Training Programmes in India. Hence, a brief description on the UNPRME and the current ways of formators training in the context of India are also provided.

In short, the aim of this paper is to bring out the significant oversight in the Catholic clerical and religious formation system with regard to education for sustainability and propose a probable solution to address the issue in the context of India.