

# “EVERYTHING IS RELATED”

## Dialogue, network communication, and integral ecology

“TODO ESTÁ RELACIONADO”

Diálogo, comunicação em rede e ecologia integral

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**Abstract:** In the light of the Catholic Magisterium and the Franciscan intellectual tradition, this paper asserts that interaction and communication are constitutive aspects of all that exists. “Everything is related.” In this holistic perspective, “truth is *lógos* which creates *diá-logos*, and hence communication and communion” (CV 4). Being in relationship is not an option, but an intrinsic requirement for ourselves and for all creatures. Many scientific data prove that, in the entire ecosystem, collaboration prevails over conflict. We also share with many living beings the same physical-chemical substrate and “a good part of our genetic code” (138). Therefore, we must strengthen the “awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone” (202). Social media should reinforce this web of life, promoting dialogue and communication at all levels.

**Keywords:** Dialogue; Communication; Integral ecology; Internet; Digital era.

**Síntese:** À luz do Magistério católico e da Tradição intelectual franciscana, este artigo afirma que a interação e a comunicação são aspectos constitutivos da realidade. “Tudo está relacionado”. Nesta perspectiva holística, “a verdade é ‘lógos’ que cria ‘diá-logos’ e, portanto, comunicação

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e comunhão” (CV 4). Relacionar-se não é uma opção, mas uma exigência intrínseca, tanto para nós como para as demais criaturas. Muitos dados científicos demonstram que, no ecossistema como um todo, a colaboração é mais decisiva do que o conflito. Partilhamos com muitos seres vivos o mesmo substrato físico-químico e “boa parte de nossa informação genética” (138). Portanto, devemos fortalecer “a consciência de uma origem comum, de uma mútua pertença e de um futuro compartilhado por todos” (202). As redes sociais e os meios de comunicação social devem reforçar esta rede da vida, promovendo o diálogo e a comunicação em todos os níveis.

**Palabras clave:** Diálogo; Comunicação; Ecologia integral; Internet; Era digital.

“Everything is connected”.<sup>1</sup> Interaction and communication are constitutive aspects of the entire ecosystem. Being in relationship is not an option, but an unavoidable requirement, both for ourselves and for all other creatures. Many scientific data confirm that, in nature, collaboration prevails over conflict. We also share with many other beings the same chemical substratum and a “good part of our genetic code” (138). Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen “an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone” (202). Digital technologies and social media must reinforce this network of life, promoting dialogue and communication at all levels.

Assuming a holistic and relational perspective, based on the Catholic Magisterium and the Franciscan intellectual tradition, this article studies the concepts of truth, dialogue, communication, and integral ecology.<sup>2</sup> “Truth is *lógos* which creates *diá-logos*, and hence communication and communion”.<sup>3</sup> Dialogue helps establish, maintain, and deepen communication, which will be authentic if it creates communion and builds the community. This type of communication is not reduced to

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1. FRANCIS I, Pope, “*Laudato Si'*”, [LS], n. 240. In the body of the text, the quotations of the encyclical *Laudato Si'* will be indicated with just the numbers in brackets.

2. Integral ecology “can be understood on three levels: as an understanding that interconnection is the essence of reality,” as perceiving “interconnections among humans and the rest of creation and as moral principle for acting in harmony with them.” MILLER, *Integral Ecology*, p. 11.

3. BENEDICT XVI, Pope, *Caritas in Veritate*, [CV], n. 4. “Charity is love received and given”, CV, n. 5.

a simple bidirectional transmission of information,<sup>4</sup> but it must be an expression of personal self-giving. In fact, “communication is part of God’s plan for us and an essential way to experience fellowship”.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to this anthropological level, communication has also an ecological and a cosmological level. “Everything is interconnected” (70). The entire creation responds to the logic of gift (159) and is oriented towards universal communion (76).

We will highlight the need to overcome the ontic and ontological dualisms that have led us to a conflictual view of reality. Man is a unitary and dialogical being, who cannot stop communicating.<sup>6</sup> All his activities can be interpreted as processes of relationship and interaction. His actions always respond to this fundamental need of communication and friendship, also when he uses digital technologies and social networks.

The first part of the article clarifies the concept of truth and presents it as a basis for dialogue and communication. Journalists have the mission of making truth accessible, providing the information that man needs to develop his four fundamental relationships: with God, with others, with himself, and with creation. The second part is divided into four sections. Each of them focuses on one of those four fundamental relationships and outlines the possible ways of strengthening them to promote dialogue, communication, and integral ecology.<sup>7</sup>

## 1. Truth as the basis of dialogue and communication

The intra-Trinitarian life is dialogical, a continuous flow of love between Father, Son, and Spirit. That divine love also asks for our response; the *Logos* looks for a partner to make dialogue possible.<sup>8</sup> “All of

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4. On the origins of this way of understanding information: SHANNON; WEAVER, *La teoria matematica delle comunicazioni*. Cimatti affirms: “il linguaggio umano è solo una delle infinite forme di comunicazione – trasmissione bidirezionale di informazione – che sono riscontrabili in tutte le specie viventi”. TUGNOLI, *L’unità di tutto ciò che vive*, p. 62; CIMATTI, *La mente silenziosa*.

5. FRANCIS I, Pope, Message for the 52<sup>th</sup> World Communications Day (WCD). *OR*, Vatican, p. 6 (Jan. 25, 2018).

6. The Theory of Human Communication affirms that communication is the matrix of all human activities. Cf. BATESON; RUESCH, *Comunicación* (mainly the last chapter: “Por mucho que uno lo intente, no puede dejar de comunicar”); WATZLAWICK; BAVELAS; JACKSON, *Teoría de la comunicación humana*, p. 50.

7. The Italian version of this article will be published in: DI MURO; BIANCHI (Ed.), *In dialogo*, p. 131-149.

8. Cf. CARBAJO NÚÑEZ, “Tutto è collegato”.