

Catholic Universities as Juridical and Moral Agents of Integral Ecology

By Sr. Chin Ngoinso Kong Pia

This presentation examines Catholic universities as juridical and moral agents of integral ecology within the mission of the Church. Grounded in the canonical framework of the 1983 Code of Canon Law and the Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the study argues that Catholic universities are not merely academic institutions but ecclesial realities entrusted with a specific responsibility toward the care of creation. Drawing from the Church's contemporary magisterium, particularly *Laudato Si'* and *Laudate Deum*, the paper situates environmental responsibility at the heart of the Catholic university's identity and mission.

The presentation explores how integral ecology reshapes the understanding of Catholic higher education by integrating environmental stewardship into governance, teaching, research, and campus life. It highlights the juridical obligations of Catholic universities in the administration of temporal goods, institutional decision-making, and ecclesial accountability, while also emphasizing their moral role in forming consciences and promoting ecological conversion. Particular attention is given to the university as a "laboratory of ecological conversion," where sustainable practices, interdisciplinary dialogue, and ethical engagement with technoscience become concrete expressions of faith in action.

Ultimately, the study proposes that Catholic universities, faithful to their canonical identity and educational mission, are uniquely positioned to model a holistic response to the ecological crisis—one that unites faith, reason, law, and science in service of the common good and the dignity of creation.

Key words: Catholic Universities; Integral Ecology; Canon Law; Stewardship.